

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, April 6, 1995**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 95/04/06

[The Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, seated in the Speaker's gallery this afternoon is Mr. Sandro DeBernardin, first counselor for economic, commercial, and financial affairs of the Italian embassy in Canada. Mr. DeBernardin was born in Venice and joined the Italian foreign service in 1973. He has been at the Italian embassy in Ottawa since November 2, 1994, and this is his first visit to our province. Accompanying the first counselor is Mr. Guiseppe Imbalzano, vice-consul of Italy for Alberta. I would ask both gentlemen to rise in the gallery and to accept the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present on behalf of 1,234 residents of northeast and east Alberta a petition asking that the Legislature "de-insure the performance of induced abortion" and also "use the community-based resources that are already in place that offer positive alternatives."

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bonnyville.

MR. VASSEUR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to present a petition signed by 1,079 residents of the Bonnyville-Cold Lake area urging the government to "de-insure the performance of induced abortion."

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

MRS. FORSYTH: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition with 3,470 signatures.

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to:

1. De-insure the performance of induced abortion under the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan Act.
2. Use the community-based resources that are already in place that offer positive alternatives to abortion.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

### **Bill 27 Livestock and Livestock Products Amendment Act, 1995**

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

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 27, being the Livestock and Livestock Products Amendment Act, 1995.

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the existing Act to ensure that the security of livestock producers is protected between the time they deliver livestock to a licensed livestock dealer and the time they're paid in full for the animals.

[Leave granted; Bill 27 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

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

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to table the 1993-94 annual report of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm tabling four copies of a speech by the Prime Minister of March 15, 1995, in which he outlines very clearly his expressed support of the five principles of the Canada Health Act, his opposition to user fees, and his opposition to any kind of two-tiered health care system in this province, despite what the Premier says that he says.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm tabling four copies of a letter from Sheila Ethier to the Premier. She has some very serious concerns with the direction the government has taken in health care. She has asked for a meeting with the Premier but has not heard back.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Mr. Speaker, it is a rare treat for me to introduce to you and to the members of this House a group of 40 stellar students, grade 5 and grade 6, from Vanier school in Edson. They're accompanied by teacher Mrs. McAndrews, by parents Mrs. Gardiner, Mrs. Laboucane, and Mrs. Duffy. Now, Mrs. Duffy was the one I perceived throwing herself into the arms of the Minister of Justice. I was somewhat taken aback by that, but there was no political attraction, she assured me. They're seated in the public gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this House.

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

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly 51 visitors from Edmonton-Manning. Once again they're from one of the finest high schools in Alberta, M.E. LaZerte. They're accompanied by Ms. Teresa Saley and Mrs. Brenda Shelton, who has come back for a second day. That makes I think 110 in the last two days from M.E. LaZerte. So I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my great pleasure to introduce Bernard and Nancy Tong, whose son Vincent is one of our very hardworking pages and is in the House today. I

would ask Mr. and Mrs. Tong, who are in your gallery, to rise and receive the very warm welcome of the House.

head:

### Oral Question Period

#### Health Care System

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier of this province is spinning away from his support for a two-tiered health care system by trying to blame this issue on the Prime Minister of Canada. Well, Albertans know what the Premier said, and they know exactly what he wants. He wants a two-tiered, Americanized health care system so that his rich, downtown friends can get better health care faster, and people who don't have money – well, the Premier won't care or listen to them. To the Minister of Health in the sudden absence of the Premier. I guess he's got the flu; he's got the two-tiered health care flu. Why won't the minister produce evidence of how the Premier's new two-tiered, Americanized health care system will result in better health care for all Albertans, not just his rich, downtown friends? He won't because he can't.

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

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, if anyone is trying to spin a two-tiered health system, an Americanized health system, it is not on this side of the House. The idea of two-tiered and Americanization is in one person's mind only, and again it is not on this side of the House. We have said consistently that we are adherents to the Canada Health Act, that we intend to be adherents to the Canada Health Act, and that we intend to ensure that Albertans have access to quality health services in a publicly funded system.

1:40

MR. MITCHELL: Well, for adherents to the Canada Health Act, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting they wouldn't vote for it.

If the minister on behalf of the Premier thinks that patients . . . [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order please. Question. It's a supplemental question, hon. leader.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, I'm asking the question. [interjections] I know they're in trouble, Mr. Speaker, but this is a legitimate question, and I want to ask it.

If the minister, on behalf of the Premier, thinks that patients paying cash to go to the head of the line for health care and that selling off hospital space to the highest bidder, both of which the Premier has been very, very clear in his support of, isn't a two-tiered health care system, I wonder if the minister could explain to us exactly what a two-tiered health care system would be?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I think the key words in the whole conversation, preamble, and whatever was in that question were: if someone thought. I think that if the member across would do some thinking, he would understand the folly of some of his questions.

Mr. Speaker, we have consistently said that we are adherents to the Canada Health Act, and we intend to continue to be that. What we've also said is that we would like clarification of the Canada Health Act to ensure that we can remain adherents to it and that it cannot be changed at whim.

MR. MITCHELL: I'm tabling, Mr. Speaker, a report by the National Forum on Health which supports very clearly public funding for health care. Why should Americans believe the Premier about this idea that we're not going to have a two-tiered, Americanized health care system and that somehow such a system would be better, when the renowned Canadian health care economist Robert Evans says, "The present American system can fairly be labelled 'catastrophic' – every country's example of what not to do." And it's happening right here in Alberta because of that Premier.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Again I have to reiterate that the notion of an Americanization of our health system is in one person's mind, and that person does not sit on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, the restructuring of our health system is a very important part of our government's agenda. I think it would behoove the hon. members of the opposition to act on behalf of Albertans to assist in that, not to try and put notions in people's heads that have no basis in fact. There is quite a difference between people from other places coming here to receive health care and Americanizing our health system.

MR. MITCHELL: The Premier's first effort to define essential services a year and a half ago with his special handpicked task force, headed up by the Member for Bow Valley, failed miserably, Mr. Speaker. It failed because our health care system is providing right now what most Albertans believe are in fact essential health care services. To this minister: will this minister give us some explanation, her explanation, of why the Premier's handpicked task force failed in its effort to define some kind of nonessential services in this Alberta health care system?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, there are some very large misconceptions about what the Canada Health Act is, and the first myth is that the Canada Health Act covers all health services. Now, let's be fair with the Alberta public and understand that the Canada Health Act is a funding document that covers hospitals and medically required services. In Alberta we provide services in health far beyond that. If we were strict adherents to that system, we would not cover physiotherapy. We would not have home care. We would not have many of the public health services we have today.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of our health system. This government wants to work with the health providers and the consumers in this province to ensure that we can continue to afford to have a system that will meet their needs.

MR. MITCHELL: Given that the Premier said yesterday that there are 100 services that he thinks are nonessential – but, Mr. Speaker, he didn't want to talk about them yesterday – could the minister please take a moment to talk about that list of 100 nonessential services today? Or is she afraid to talk about it because in fact they are not nonessential services; they are essential services for Albertans who couldn't afford them if they were dropped out of the health care system?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the hon. member that a number of services we consider essential for Albertans are not covered by the Canada Health Act.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member in his first preamble talked about a committee that he felt failed. In fact, the committee did not fail. What they did was come back to the minister and say:

"Madam Minister, this is a subject that should be discussed beyond Alberta. If we're going to continue to have portability, comprehensiveness, universality in our system, then this should be discussed at a national level with all ministers of health." I have agreed to do that.

Mr. Speaker, again I have to reiterate: the hon. member obviously does not understand the Canada Health Act and does not understand what essential service is. When the regional health authorities were planning their services, we developed what we called a core services document where we outlined a number of services that must be available in the regions or, if not, the regions had to show us where they were available. I can assure the hon. member that many of those services are not demanded under the Canada Health Act, but we think they're important to Albertans.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I want a straight, simple answer to a very specific question. Will the Minister of Health simply table in the House the 100 nonessential services that the Premier thinks are nonessential services, which he somehow didn't want to talk about yesterday and of course he's not here to talk about today?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, unlike the hon. member I don't do my research in the newspapers. I don't know that there was any 100-item list ever spoken about, other than a report that the hon. member states. I would like him to produce the document that states that we have a list of a hundred items. If the member can produce that list, I would be absolutely delighted to debate the list with him.

MR. MITCHELL: Most of the people in Calgary-McCall, Mr. Speaker, are average Albertans, average Albertans who won't be able to afford the Premier's two-tiered, Americanized health care system. [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order please. For the benefit of all hon. members, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is commencing his third main question. He has a preamble to this question.

MR. MITCHELL: A two-tiered, Americanized health care system where his friends . . . [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order.

MR. MITCHELL: I'll say it again: a two-tiered, Americanized health care system where his newly found rich friends will be able to afford better health care faster and the old friends that he used to have at the St. Louis Hotel but that he's now forgotten won't be able to afford it at all. Mr. Speaker, the Premier has changed. Will the Minister of Health and the Premier stop trying to deflect this issue onto the Prime Minister and admit what we all know the Prime Minister holds to be true: he supports the five principles of the Canada Health Act, he is adamantly opposed to user fees, and he fundamentally is adamantly opposed to a two-tiered health care system like the one the Premier wants to bring to Alberta, Americanized and all?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that if the hon. Leader of the Opposition repeats again and again and again "two-tiered" and "Americanization," the Alberta public will very quickly realize in whose mind that lies.

MR. MITCHELL: Will the Minister of Health take a moment to tell the Premier not to wait until next August, not to wait until

next summer to deal with the federal government on this but to talk to the Prime Minister next Thursday at 10 a.m., when he meets with him, to find out the straight goods from the Prime Minister of this country that he doesn't support what the Premier is doing in this province, despite the fact that the Premier wants to say that he does?

1:50

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, we'll go one step further than that. Next Monday, when I meet with my hon. colleagues from across Canada, I intend to discuss with them the comprehensiveness of the Canada Health Act, the portability of the Canada Health Act, certainly the universality of the Canada Health Act. I will press them very hard to work on a national basis on a clarification of the Canada Health Act so that all of us under the constitutional responsibility of each province delivering their health services will know clearly what the rules are.

MR. MITCHELL: Perhaps the minister could convey to the Premier, who has never ever had a mandate to Americanize this Alberta health care system, my challenge that he meet me in Calgary-McCall prior to the Calgary-McCall by-election to debate this very, very important issue to all Albertans and to establish once and for all in his mind that they don't want an Americanized, two-tiered health care system like Mr. Klein wants for his downtown rich friends.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, what I do think . . . [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. [interjections] Order.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I think the display and the comments and the question, if there was a question in that, clearly display to the Alberta public in whose mind an Americanized system is. It is not on this side of the House. [interjections]

#### Speaker's Ruling Decorum

THE SPEAKER: Order. Hon. Member for Edmonton-Glen-garry, this is not a choir you're in. [interjections] Order. It would appear that there is not much interest in question period at this time. The Assembly will recess for four minutes.

[The Assembly recessed from 1:53 p.m. to 1:57 p.m.]

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

#### Workers' Compensation Board

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you. Bill 16 proposes that the Workers' Compensation Board "may establish, fund and carry out programs directed at injury prevention and injury management in the workplace." This is a new direction for the Workers' Compensation Board. As you know, Mr. Speaker, Alberta Labour currently has a very successful occupational health and safety division, and they are committed to injury prevention and injury management in the workplace. They're also moving from intervention to facilitation and partnerships in this very area. My questions are to the Minister of Labour. Will the new mandate of the Workers' Compensation Board duplicate the service offered to Albertans through Alberta Labour's occupational health and safety division?

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, in the ongoing success story related to WCB, one of the areas that's been identified is that certain partnership programs and incentive programs that are offered through WCB have a profound effect in terms of injury reduction when they're able to offer those. So the position of occupational health and safety, in working with WCB, is to be one of encouraging these partnerships to happen, working with industry and safety associations, doing audit processes and procedures to make sure the processes are good.

As far as the concern about duplication, we've just instituted an arrangement which hasn't been in place before in which the senior officials and as a matter of fact the division head of occupational health and safety will report to WCB on a quarterly basis to make sure, as they identify the programs, that indeed there is no duplication. It's an area that employers are concerned about, so we've really tightened the process of reporting to make sure that duplication doesn't happen.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Workers' Compensation Board charge the costs for the new program back to the employer through assessment rates?

MR. DAY: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, most new programs involve introducing businesses or industry associations to the injury incentive programs, which result in less injury. All programs or anything done by the WCB is ultimately paid by the employer. All of the dollars that run that large corporation in fact come from employers; they don't come from the general and broad tax base. However, last fall there was a reduction in the rates which employers paid, a reduction of 7 and a half percent. With the numbers that we're seeing already at the end of February, there are possibilities – and I'm using the word "possibilities" – of either further rebates, further reductions in terms of assessment rates, or maybe even a combination of the two. The numbers are looking that positive. So, yes, the employers pay the cost. Because of these types of programs, the result is lower assessment rates.

2:00

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: does WCB's new role in handling injury prevention and injury management mean that government policy in this area will now be set by the Workers' Compensation Board?

MR. DAY: Well, actually both business and labour groups have wanted more of an arm's length from government so that the political aspect of life does not become involved in the operating and the managing of an insurance company. WCB's mandate is to listen to employers and the labour groups and the representatives from the public to make sure that they have the most responsive programs available, and that's always in conjunction and consultation with government. These are responsibilities of WCB.

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

### Gambling

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The March 18, 1995, edition of *The Economist* has an article entitled *Gambling Backlash*, that notes that the resistance to gambling in the United

States is growing. Part of the reason for this resistance is due to the fact that the social and criminal justice costs of gambling are up to six times greater than the revenue received by the government. In the same article – and I'll table four copies for members of the House – other studies have shown that gambling has a negative impact on small business and in particular the tourism industry. My question today is to the minister responsible for lotteries. What action has the government taken to ensure that the social and the criminal justice costs that can result from increased gambling do not outweigh the revenues that this province will receive?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I've been minister of lotteries for a short time, but I've come to realize that there are as many studies done – pro, con, and indifferent – on gambling as there are miles of road in the province of Alberta. I would like to see the report. When you try to put common sense into analysis of how many times crime has gone up versus cost, you have to take in so many variables that it has been impossible in most jurisdictions to ascertain a direct relationship between costs and revenues and the criminal element.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary question is also to the same minister. Since money that's thrown into the VLTs can't be spent in keeping small businesses alive, what plans does the government have to assist small business owners that are going to be negatively impacted by this government's venture into the gambling business?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, at the present time we have an extensive review going on in the province. We've had over 7,000 written submissions. There have been over 3,000 people attending the public meetings with some 400 to 500 oral presentations. We're in the process of ending that on about April 15. At that time we're going to compile all that information with other avenues of information that we have and try to put together a presentation to the standing committee as well as the cabinet and caucus and come forth with a policy in the future surrounding these events in the province.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, the question dealt with other small businesses.

My final supplementary question to the same minister then, Mr. Speaker: will the government stand up for Alberta families and say no to anymore VLTs and no to large for-profit, Las Vegas style casinos?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, we've just had the estimates of lotteries and had quite a discussion. The members from the Liberal caucus in that debate have made some interesting statements. Some were concerned because businessmen in their areas had renovated their hotels and couldn't get the VLTs because we had frozen them. So they were almost lobbying for that. In one statement the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo stated . . . [interjections] I'm trying to put some perspective into how ridiculous this question is.

The Member for Calgary-Buffalo sat here and said: we want the full removal of all VLTs and in the same debate within three sentences – and it's in *Hansard* – stood up and said: but we would like to see the VLTs put into the nonprofit casinos in this province. What relevance does the question . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjection] Order.

### Provincial Debt

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Alberta Chamber of Commerce held its political action day and met with members from both the government and the opposition. During the session it was said that the Liberal leader has claimed that his debt plan is better than the Premier's. Knowing that the Provincial Treasurer loves a good debate, can he outline concisely the points on which the government plan is based?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I was at the same meeting with the Alberta Chamber of Commerce, as were many of my colleagues from cabinet and caucus, and I was astonished to hear that the Liberal leader had sprinkled his fairy dust of alleged truths amongst the chambers of commerce. I think it's time to put some truth to some of the myths that are being perpetrated about the Liberal debt plan.

Let's be clear. The government's debt plan is legislated; the Liberal plan is not legislated. The government's debt plan makes deficits illegal; the Liberal plan, Mr. Speaker, allows deficits to happen. In fact, it's been suggested that it should happen every other year. You sort of wonder what might happen in a leap year.

Our plan says that you've got to live within the taxpayers' means; the Liberal plan says that they could run a deficit this year of nearly \$1.9 billion and next year up to \$1.5 billion. The government plan requires that annual surpluses go to pay down the debt; the Liberal plan sees the heritage fund being spent and squandered on day to day. The fact is that the Klein plan works for Albertans; the Mitchell plan clearly does not.

MR. DOERKSEN: Would the Treasurer also explain how he has factored into the plan safeguards to protect against revenue volatility?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, members on both sides of this House will recall voting for the Deficit Elimination Act. Both sides of the House did: Liberals, NDP, when they were here, and of course the Conservative government sponsored the Bill, so we voted in favour of the Deficit Elimination Act, which required that moneys be set aside in the way of a shock absorber for nonrenewable resource, or oil and gas, revenues. This time we've brought in the corporate income tax revenue also as an insurance policy, a shock absorber insurance policy, to ensure that we live up to our balanced budget commitment.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would say that our party is clear. The other party who voted for the Deficit Elimination Act is now walking away from their commitment to balanced budgets. It sort of makes Albertans want to come in front of the building and say: we want Laurence back; we want Laurence back. At least we had some leadership.

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Treasurer, how does the government approach to debt reduction deal with the heritage fund?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, clearly the government's position is fueled by the debate that occurred across this province where 78 percent of Albertans said to the government, said to a committee of which the Member for Lethbridge-West was the chairman – he had several colleagues from all sides of the House – that you should keep the fund not as the status quo, but you should keep it. The Premier said last year, of course, that he

would not be the Premier who sells off the heritage fund unless Albertans tell us loud and clear to do so. They've said not to.

The Liberal leader was in Hinton saying: I don't know why for the life of me they won't sell off the fund. The clarity is that the Liberals would sell off the fund. Albertans don't want it sold off. This government will not sell off the fund. It will not sell out Albertans like the Liberals would want us to.

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

2:10

### Poverty

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we have another embarrassing indicator pointing out the depth of hardship that's been created by this government. The National Council of Welfare, one of the most credible and respected social organizations in the country, in spite of what the minister's press officer says, reports that Alberta's poverty level is now the second highest in the country. Even the maritimes have fewer people living in poverty than we do. Not surprisingly, the council reports that half of all the people living below the poverty line are working. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Mr. Minister, do you accept the figures from the National Council of Welfare, and if not, what analysis do you have that proves the council's figures are wrong?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, that's a very interesting question, but this government does not accept poverty. It's unfortunate that there is poverty out there. It is unfortunate, but poverty is an issue that is hard to define and I think it is very, very important that the House, that Albertans know what we're talking about when we're trying to define poverty. Professor Sarlo of Laurentian University in a Fraser Institute study questions the various poverty lines, and this is very important for all the people to listen to. This is what they found: that 97 percent of people below the poverty line have telephones; 67 percent have colour TVs, cable TVs; 50 percent of the people below the poverty line have at least one car; 18 percent below the poverty line have a mortgage-free home, some with equity of over \$100,000.

This government does not deal with poverty by providing more welfare, Mr. Speaker. That report, by the way, was two years old. This government in the last two years created 80,000 jobs and, through my department alone, jointly with Advanced Education and Career Development, put through training over 17,000 individuals. Our plan is to train people and put people back into the workforce as a way to end poverty.

MS HANSON: And many of the people you took off welfare are working and in poverty.

Mr. Minister, since you don't accept the council's figures, what is your plan that will stop placing Albertans in low-paying, deadend jobs and get them out of poverty? What's your plan?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, our plan has not changed. Two years ago we announced the welfare reforms. Since then, we've reduced the welfare caseload by over 44 percent, and these are young, healthy Albertans or couples without children who are now working and not on welfare.

It is time that the Alberta Liberals got on the agenda. Listen to this. The new Liberal leader in the province of Ontario in the campaign platform on March 24, 1995, warned that people on welfare, even single mothers, are expected to see tough eligibility

requirements to perform community services or take job training to get their welfare cheques. This is what she also said: this is what Liberals have to do in the 1990s.

MS HANSON: Mr. Minister, we're in Alberta; we're not in Ontario. You're in the wrong province.

Will the minister ask his caucus to review the minimum wage levels in consultation with business groups?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, about three years ago I was involved in a review of the minimum wage in Alberta. A high percentage of the participants in that review were private businesspeople, and a higher percentage were small private businesspeople, and they assisted in setting up the minimum wage in Alberta. I think that was a good move.

Anywhere there is a person who does not have enough income, the wages are supplemented by my department or other support services. Therefore, I don't believe that is the issue. Our plan in Alberta is to continue creating the environment for private industry to create jobs. All of those people on welfare want to get back into the workforce, and our plan in my department is to make sure that they are given that opportunity.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Little Bow.

### Grain Marketing

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we experience beautiful weather similar to what we're experiencing outside this House today, farmers' thoughts are on spring work and seeding. Hopefully this year will be an excellent one for our producers where we'll be able to have a bountiful harvest of excellent crops, fine quality, throughout the world. Unfortunately there's one negative aspect that remains in place, and that's the lack that Alberta farmers have to obtain alternate markets for their wheat and barley products. My question today is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Are you prepared to do anything? If you are, what are you going to try to do to get this changed so that our farmers have and are able to take advantage of any and all marketing options?

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

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly when we discussed the issue with the farming community in the spring of 1994, one of the clear directions the agricultural community gave us was that they wanted access to dual marketing. They wanted to be able to make the marketing decisions that they wanted to make and not have someone making those decisions for them.

So, with that in mind, the Legislature passed a motion indicating that if indeed the farmers aren't able to access dual marketing, then perhaps a plebiscite has to be held to give clearer indication to the federal government, who has a responsibility and jurisdiction in this area, that the local farmers should have the opportunity of being in control of the marketing of grains. That being the case, a committee that will be industry led has been put together, and they will be meeting tomorrow to draft the terms of reference that will be used in the development of strategy to allow for dual marketing for producers in this province.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplemental to the minister is: are there any time lines established for this committee to operate under?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Yes. As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, the process will be industry driven, because really what we need here is a process that will allow the farm gate to realize a proper return for their product at the farm gate level. With that in mind, we've developed some terms of reference that will be discussed tomorrow. Basically the terms of reference will develop an industry vision for the marketing of wheat and barley in Alberta; develop goals, strategies, and actions to achieve this vision; develop detailed information on how a dual market would work for farmers and the industry and how the farmers will actually benefit from this so that when the time comes that there is a plebiscite, the farmers will be able to make an informed decision as to how they will benefit at the farm gate. This is really where it matters: at the farm gate. So it is our hope that the meetings will be completed early, hopefully before seeding if possible, and the information will be available to the producers so if indeed there is a plebiscite, a proper judgment can be made.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, who from the industry, then, will be involved in this committee?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: The industry that will be involved of course will be the stakeholders, and in the composition of this committee the western wheat growers will be represented, the soft white wheat growers, the winter wheat growers, the barley growers, the Barley Commission, Unifarm, and the Alberta Grain Commission. It is the intention that through the process of this summer all the information will be available.

By the way, this is under the jurisdiction of the federal government, and we have to understand that in order to allow this to happen, we have to get the co-operation of our federal cousins. They are the ones that have the legislative authority, and we have to influence them to make the changes that are required. If we have to go to a plebiscite, it's our hope that by early fall we'll be in a position to do that.

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

2:20

### Universal Industries Ltd.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, there's one more new loan guarantee. On October 19, 1994, this Treasurer in this government, in negotiations with Alberta Treasury Branches, approved an indemnity under which taxpayers could be on the hook for up to \$600,000 in preferred shares in a company called Universal Industries. An indemnity is – and I quote from the *Oxford Dictionary for the Business World* – an "agreement by one party to make good the losses suffered by another." This is a guarantee by another name. My questions are to the Provincial Treasurer. Can the Treasurer confirm that this deal, negotiated by his department just six months ago, includes provisions under which Alberta taxpayers would end up owning \$600,000 worth of shares in Universal Industries and also being responsible for the accrued and unpaid dividends on those shares?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, what I can confirm is that an order in council passed and made public on December 9, 1992, by

the government of the day provided for and authorized the giving by the Crown of an indemnity in respect of certain preferred shares. That was a commitment that was made in December of 1992. It was public. It was made public. The hon. member had access to this information, as did all Albertans at that time. I know that the hon. minister responsible for Economic Development and Tourism may want to supplement my answer, but clearly the fact is that this order in council was a public document in December of 1992.

DR. PERCY: Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Treasurer just can't say no. The order in council was announced in December of 1992, and this was renegotiated in October of '94. My question to the Provincial Treasurer is: when is he just going to say no to loan guarantees or indemnities or whatever he wants to call them?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that this document was public in December of 1992. That is a fact. It is on the public record. It is a guarantee that this government inherited. It was not a guarantee that this government gave, but it's a guarantee that this government has honoured.

DR. PERCY: Mr. Speaker, why will not the Treasurer just say no? He had two years in which to say no, cut his losses, and get out of the business of being in business. Just say no.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, when I look at the track record of this government in getting out of the business of business, we have a very good track record, and when I think about our divestiture of Syncrude shares, of Gainers, of North West Trust, of Intermodal Services, of a number of entities that were under the leadership of the minister responsible for Economic Development and Tourism, it's clear. Albertans know that this government is getting out of the business of business. We are not making those winning and losing choices anymore. Albertans are making those choices, and that's why this province led this country in per capita investment in 1993 and 1994, and that is why this province, the people of this province, not the government but the people, created over 89,000 jobs in the last two years. It wasn't the government; it was the people of Alberta who made those choices.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Pincher Creek-MacLeod.

#### **Shell Canada Limited**

MR. COUTTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Despite the best efforts of the Official Opposition to scare away business investment in Alberta, I have just been informed that Shell Canada is increasing its operations in the Fort Saskatchewan area. My question to the minister responsible for Economic Development and Tourism: can he provide any details on the upgrade?

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

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact that is true. Shell Canada Limited has announced investment of \$25 million in its Alberta petrochemical plant. As I've said before, the private sector always speaks better for itself, so I will be tabling their press release. It's in response to direct market growth of the petrochemical industry, and in fact Shell Canada is increasing its stake in Alberta.

MR. COUTTS: Mr. Speaker, my supplemental question to the same minister is: what direct financial incentives from the Alberta government were offered to Shell given that other provinces are offering tax holidays, incentives, and direct subsidies?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the incentive of a positive financial environment, a three-year business plan, no sales tax, a low corporate income tax, and a planned deficit elimination: those are the incentives that attract any company to locate in Alberta. In fact, it's important to note that Shell is taking part in an overall tremendous expansion in this market. The fact that they've chosen Alberta I think is a compliment not only to Albertans but certainly to the skilled workforce that work in the Shell environment.

MR. COUTTS: Mr. Speaker, my final question to the same minister is: what economic benefits will the province of Alberta receive from this move?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, in fact, the \$25 million will result in 75 to 100 construction jobs, and the expansion of styrene production will result in an economic multiplier to small business and various suppliers throughout Alberta and certainly in Edmonton. I think the important message from here is that there's continued emphasis on Alberta and the Alberta economy. It's becoming an absolute world-class site for the processing of natural gas liquids.

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

#### **Treasury Branches**

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Provincial Treasurer claims that he, his department, and his Tory government are not involved in the operations of the Alberta Treasury Branches, yet the recent Universal Industries loan guarantee shows that this government, this Tory government, has been involved in the operations of the Alberta Treasury Branches and, in fact, in a significant way. Last week the Treasurer wanted to know where the Liberals would draw the line. Clearly where it should have been drawn was between private interests and taxpayers' money. The Treasurer should be protecting the taxpayers' interests. To the Provincial Treasurer: why did you tell Albertans that the government doesn't get involved in the activities of the Alberta Treasury Branches when you are using taxpayers' money to guarantee the Treasury Branches' private investments?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Provincial Treasurer has not gotten involved in the day-to-day activities of the Treasury Branches. Universal Industries apparently has struck its banking arrangements with Alberta Treasury Branches. It basically took the guarantee that the government in 1989 provided to Universal Industries to Alberta Treasury Branches by their own volition. That had absolutely nothing to do with the choice made by the provincial government or by the Treasurer. I simply don't get involved. I will not get involved. The hon. member would not want me to be drawn across that magical Dinning/Percy line as to which clients of the Treasury Branches ought to be divulged and talked about on the floor of this Assembly. I will not engage in that.

MR. SEKULIC: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting because the agreement reads: Her Majesty the Queen in right of Alberta, as represented by the Provincial Treasurer. To the best of my knowledge, that's the Provincial Treasurer.

Mr. Speaker, my next question is to the Provincial Treasurer. Why do you continue to put Alberta taxpayers on the hook for private interests instead of simply complying with the recommendations of the Auditor General, the Alberta Financial Review Commission, the Flynn report, and, in fact, the Mazankowski committee?

2:30

MR. DINNING: Well, those are exactly the steps we have taken since March of 1993 and since December of 1992, with the exception of the PWA loan guarantee and what the Auditor General subsequently acknowledged was an extension of an already existing guarantee provided to Bovar. That is not a business we have chosen to be in. We believe there are others, especially Albertans, private, individual Albertans, who can best make those decisions, Mr. Speaker. We are not engaged in that business any longer.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The recommendations that I'd like this Treasurer to comment on are those that are in regards to the improvement of governance of the Alberta Treasury Branches. What has he done? How has he acted on those recommendations?

MR. DINNING: Well, thanks to the extensively good research of the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, it's very clear, Mr. Speaker, that this government has gone about taking the recommendations of the Financial Review Commission and the Auditor General to do a review, to say: "What kind of governance structure ought to exist in the Treasury Branches in the 1990s?" Clearly, when those people have come forward and said that we should establish an advisory board at Treasury Branches, we took that advice and asked Mr. Gordon Flynn to do a report for us on that. Mr. Mazankowski led a committee that reviewed that report. I've acknowledged in this Assembly that it's a matter that's under discussion amongst my colleagues in cabinet and caucus and that in time I would be able to report to the Assembly the steps that we will take to improve the governance of Treasury Branches so that it's more fitting with the 1990s.

Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. Treasury Branches is an institution in which hundreds of thousands of Albertans have confidence, and nothing - nothing - that this government will do will in any way imperil or undermine or disadvantage that confidence that several thousands of Albertans have in that important institution, that is an important part of the lives and the financial security of Albertans from one end of the province to the other.

head: **Members' Statements**

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

### Polio

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow, April 7, is World Health Day. This year the World Health Organization is celebrating the achievements in controlling poliomyelitis.

When I was growing up, Mr. Speaker, there was one word that would strike terror in the minds of every parent. It was polio, or

infantile paralysis, as it was known in those days, because it was thought to be a disease that attacked only the young. Of course, doctors now know it to be a virus that attacks any age group, and while not always paralysing its victim, there are few communicable diseases that have as drastic and long-lasting effects as polio.

It wasn't until 1955 that an effective vaccine was developed by a man named Jonas Salk of the University of Pittsburgh after running a test of 1,800,000 school-aged children, one of the largest medical field trials in history. Later an oral vaccine was developed by Albert Sabin of the University of Cincinnati.

Paralysis developed in up to 75 percent of all cases, usually in the leg, arm, and trunk muscles, and generally lasted for life. Now this disease is under control, and that's what the World Health Organization is celebrating today. This year's health day theme is Target 2000: A World without Polio. Alberta hasn't had a case of polio in the last 16 years, but as recently as 1992 a wild polio virus was imported into Alberta from Holland. Fortunately for Albertans the public health staff and the Provincial Laboratory were able to monitor the virus and prevent an outbreak here.

The World Health Organization and the Canadian Society for International Health are organizing this year's health day. Perhaps the day will come when they will celebrate the eradication of cancer in much the same way. Until then, however, I encourage all Albertans to participate in the recognition of World Health Day and to live life to the fullest by adopting a healthier lifestyle.

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

### National Information Rights Week

MR. DICKSON: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to stand and recognize and encourage all members to recognize that this is National Information Rights Week, April 3 to April 10, 1995. I think this is a particularly significant event and one that we should pay some special heed to because we're on the eve of Bill 19, which is amendments, of course, to our new freedom of information legislative regime.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it also causes us to recognize that there are some pretty significant limitations to freedom of information, as the Act currently has it, serious limitations in terms of the impact it will have on this province. I think what many Albertans don't realize is that the Act only deals with information maintained by government. What it doesn't address is the enormous amount of information, personal information about each of us that is retained by the private sector, by nongovernmental agencies.

I think that all of us ought to consider the powerful message that came from a select special committee of this Legislature in 1970. Even before anybody had thought of fax machines or E-mail, the farsighted legislators in this province identified that there was a compelling need to start looking at the loss of privacy that each of us have. What we've seen in the intervening couple of decades is that those MLAs were indeed farsighted, because we now effectively have no boundaries and little regulatory control over that use, dissemination, and abuse of personal data, personal information.

So I hope that members in this Assembly that so enthusiastically embraced freedom of information when it was dealt with last spring and hopefully will see the sense in making some serious amendments to Bill 19 will look for legislation in the private sector next, Mr. Speaker. Thanks very much.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Macleod.



### Alberta Vacation Supermarket

MR. COUTTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Wednesday, March 29, saw the opening of the Alberta Vacation Supermarket in conjunction with the four-day Edmonton Home and Garden Show. This exciting new component to an already successful show enhanced the exposure of every corner of our beautiful province not only to Edmontonians but to the world.

This event brought together over 50 private-sector operators, traditional and nontraditional partners, and government, in particular the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, working together to build on tourism, one of the strengths of this province. Tourism is Alberta's fastest growing industry, largest employer, and third largest economic generator, just behind agriculture and oil and gas.

Mr. Speaker, tourism is a highly competitive industry where innovation and teamwork are a key to success. The Alberta Vacation Supermarket was a success. This joint marketing initiative was designed to bring targeted Alberta consumers directly in contact with Alberta tourism suppliers. At this Vacation Supermarket 50,000 Albertans had an opportunity to discover the distinctive world-class facilities and vacation and recreational opportunities which abound in our beautiful province. The supermarket also provided 50-plus Alberta tourism suppliers with a tremendous opportunity to showcase and sell their tourism products directly to the Alberta consumer.

An equally important component of this outstanding concept was the invitation that was sent to 200 travel trade and travel media representatives from Alberta, British Columbia, and seven states in the United States. These tour operators, travel counselors, travel agents, and business media are the key people in Alberta's tourism industry. I am confident that our friends and guests took full advantage of this opportunity to discover the natural beauty and the diversity of our province, the abundance and the quality of the Alberta tourism product, and the friendliness of our citizens.

What a shining example of Albertans, both private sector and government, working in partnership, promoting the Alberta advantage, and participating in this new way of doing business.

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

#### Point of Order

#### Oral Question Period Rules

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd first like to refer to *Beauchesne* 481(c), and then I'll make another reference to 409(2). Section 481(c) talks about a member referring "to the presence or absence of specific Members." That happened at least twice in preambles by the Leader of the Opposition. If you want to refer to that one and then 409(2), the reason I'm putting these together is that I'd like to make an overriding comment about how the two are linked.

2:40

In talking about oral questions, 409(2) is very clear that "the question must be brief. A preamble need not exceed one carefully drawn sentence." I know it's been the precedent of the House on the main question to allow for more than that. I respect that. It goes on to warn about long preambles, and it says very clearly – and it echoes what you have said, Mr. Speaker, in days past – that "a supplementary question should need no preamble." I don't know how many different ways we can spell no, but I only know it to be spelled one way, and that's n-o. No preamble.

The reason I've mentioned both of those together, Mr. Speaker, is that I believe the ongoing ignoring, in fact close to being contemptuous ignoring of these rules leads to a high degree of aggravation among members here in the Assembly. I won't even break this into something partisan. I'm referring my comments to all members here in the Assembly. We have all been guilty of deliberately ignoring the rules of the House at different times, but because of that deliberate ignoring, of course other members get infuriated with what they perceive to be contemptuous ignoring of the rules of the House, and therefore people get worked up and get excited and get noisy. Some break into song. Some break into shouting. It results in a case where you have no recourse but in fact to do what you must do, and that is recess the Assembly. That deprives all of us of the ability to answer questions, because during the recess the clock keeps running, appropriately so, and question time is lost.

I am asking, Mr. Speaker, if you would allow me to ask this, for not just a ruling today in terms of what is a very deliberate ignoring of the rules. On the first occasion of the ignoring of 481(c), which is referring to absence of a member, there was quite a bit of reaction from this side of the House when the opposition leader did that. Then for him to do it a second time was, I think, doubly aggravating.

Then making reference back to the preambles, it occurred in a number of situations today, and I won't even say which side. I'm sure it occurs on both, but the preambles to the supplementaries, where it's very clearly ruled against, is an extreme source of irritation. I'm not excusing members on either side of the House for reacting to that, but that is in fact what happens. The temperature rises, and it puts you in a very difficult situation.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if people in your office could review *Hansard* over the last couple of weeks and see where that trend lies, deal with members individually either by notes or calls, and let them know that in fact strictly adhered to will be the rules of the Assembly, that there is no preamble to a supplementary – that goes for members on either side – and even to the controlling of the microphone and to the loss of any other further supplementaries if members choose to show that degree of contempt for you and for the rules. I'd like consideration of those points.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did want to speak to this purported point of order by the Government House Leader. I'm a little concerned with the comments made by the Government House Leader in what appeared to me to be criticisms of the Speaker himself, and under *Beauchesne* 168, of course, it's pretty clear that that is entirely inappropriate.

However, the member did raise the issue of the leader's question, and of course the reference in *Erskine May* is pretty clear. On page 200 it says:

The importance of the Opposition in the system of parliamentary government has long received practical recognition in the procedure of Parliament . . . The Leader of the Opposition is by custom accorded certain peculiar rights in asking questions of Ministers, and members of the Shadow Cabinet and other official Opposition spokesmen are also given some precedence in asking questions and in debate.

So clearly the Leader of the Opposition has a duty to rise to his feet.

Now, with respect to the issue, then, of duty, which brings me to *Beauchesne* 410(5): "The primary purpose of the Question Period is the seeking of information and calling the Government

to account." Certainly that's what the member was attempting to do with his questions. I also note *Beauchesne* 419: "The Prime Minister answers for the government as a whole and is entitled to answer any question relating to any ministerial portfolio." Well, clearly in our situation that would be the Premier.

Now, with respect to the particular issue of referring to the absence of a member, the other thing we need to do is look in particular at Speakers' rulings themselves. I note in the *Hansard* of April 4, page 1025, there were two times that the Speaker himself referred to the absence of the Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert. So I take it from that, that kind of comment is in order and therefore there is no point of order from the Government House Leader.

THE SPEAKER: Well, the Chair would respectfully disagree with the hon. Opposition House Leader in his comments. There is definitely a point of order here.

If the hon. member would look at the full report of *Hansard*, the Chair said that he certainly understood that she was away on her duties, as members are allowed to do, and it was not any type of comment saying that she was absent without excuse.

The hon. Opposition House Leader has also misrepresented what was said in *Erskine May*. The Prime Minister is certainly entitled to answer anything he wants, but there's a big difference between entitled and compelled or having the duty to do it. It is absolutely clear that the Leader of the Opposition, who is almost an officer of the Assembly – he gets special pay for his role – should obey those basic rules.

As far as the questions were concerned, the Chair thinks the first three questions were absolutely atrocious in meeting the requirements of 409. They were asking for comments on this, that, and the other thing. They were not in order according to the way *Beauchesne* says they should be, and the Leader of the Opposition should know better.

The Chair certainly does find that the hon. Government House Leader has raised a proper point of order. Look where those questions led. The Chair hears things around here that there are sometimes rehearsals about questions, and if there was any rehearsal of today's question period, I think there needs to be a rethinking of the way it's to be conducted, because it's just not right.

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

#### Point of Order

##### Factual Accuracy

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under Standing Order 23, either (h) or (i), and it's with reference to statements by the hon. Provincial Treasurer, who was commenting upon the Leader of the Official Opposition and his comments to the Alberta Chamber of Commerce. In his comments the hon. Provincial Treasurer alleged that the Leader of the Opposition had claimed that the debt management plan of the Official Opposition was better.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: It is.

DR. PERCY: Well, that may be true, Mr. Speaker. In point of fact, the hon. Leader of the Opposition was commenting that the Fraser Institute itself, which in fact was cited earlier in question period I believe by the minister of social services, had said that this was a more fiscally responsible and aggressive debt management plan. I would also note that . . .

MR. DINNING: File it.

DR. PERCY: . . . the hon. Provincial Treasurer has – this would be the third time we would have tabled it, Mr. Speaker, the 2020 Vision, and I'm sure that at some point we'll read it to the Treasurer – made other statements with regards to the plan that I believe clearly suggest that he had not read the plan and was commenting either in hearsay or the like.

My point of order in fact is the allegation. The Leader of the Opposition was very careful to cite the Fraser Institute in his comments, and I think that is in part what made the Chamber of Commerce sit up and take notice, because it was a nonpartisan statement about the documentation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, you know me; I wouldn't want to engage in a debate about the Liberal plan. That would not be a reasonable point of order. In fact, it would not be a point of order at all; it would be a point of clarification. What the hon. member is trying to do is clarify, backtrack on a plan that they have put before this Assembly before the Assembly even met, I believe, and then brought forward in the form of Bill 205, which, I would remind members of the Assembly, has been defeated.

#### 2:50

There was not much link between the 2020 Vision, which was over there on the left, and Bill 205, which was even further over there to the left. There was no link, and for the hon. member to suggest that the Fraser Institute had spoken glowingly of 2020 Vision or Bill 205 . . . In his dreams. The Fraser Institute said no such thing on paper, and in fact when they found, to their alarm, that the hon. member in a press release on the 24th of March was promoting deficits, possibly deficits every other year, they reeled in fright at the thought that the Liberals would ever come to govern in this province. They were flabbergasted, as were we, because we thought the hon. gentleman was onside. Then we find now that he's saying deficits, not necessarily deficits but, if necessary, deficits.

Clearly, if the hon. member was trying to make a point of clarification, he's welcome to do that, but he ought to do that in debate, not as a point of order. Wouldn't you think, Mr. Speaker?

THE SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo have a point in this same area?

MR. DICKSON: I do indeed, Mr. Speaker. Well, it was related to a different response from a minister. So if you wish to deal with this one first, I'm happy to . . .

THE SPEAKER: Well, this sounds like a fundamental disagreement on a difference of opinion between the hon. members, which no doubt will be the subject of ongoing debate in this Chamber as time moves on, but the Chair can't find a point of order on this argument.

The hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo.

#### Point of Order

##### Factual Accuracy

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising on a point of order, and I guess I'd cite Standing Orders 23(h), (i), and (j), *Beauchesne* 480, 481(f), 484(3). What caused me to rise on this is the fact that the Minister of Transportation and Utilities was responding to a very thoughtful question posed by my colleague

from Calgary-North West. My colleague had asked a question relative to the concern Albertans have about lotteries and video lottery terminals in particular.

The Minister of Transportation and Utilities curiously in response did some wandering. In the course of his wandering, Mr. Speaker, he identified this member, and he alleged that I had made inconsistent statements in debate on the lottery estimates on Tuesday, April 4. Now, if that had happened simply the night before and the minister didn't have the chance to review *Hansard*, he might be expected to not know verbatim what had been said. But in this case *Hansard* is in front of us, and I'd refer the Speaker to pages 1046 and 1047. I've looked carefully through, because I thought maybe the hon. minister's memory might be better than mine. I looked as closely as I could to find the allegedly inconsistent statements he'd made.

What I found were three references that touch on the point raised by the minister. The first reference was at the bottom of page 1046. I should back up and say that the minister said at one moment that I said that we should eliminate VLTs. He then went on to say that this member said that we should have VLTs only in casinos. Well, in fact these are the closest references I can find, Mr. Speaker. The first one is at the bottom of page 1046:

The other concern has to do with video slot machines. I want to tell the minister that what I hear from people in Calgary in particular is that they take little comfort from the ceiling of 6,000 machines.

I go on to say some other things, referencing again comments that I've heard from my constituents, from Calgarians.

I say in the second column:

What many Calgarians would like to see would be not simply a cap at 6,000 machines but to reduce the number, and if there are to be VLTs in this province, they would only be available in casino sites and not in every lounge and restaurant in the province.

Then if you move on to page 1047, second column, part way down, second paragraph:

The same point was made by the Calgary Aquabelles, who had a great deal of concern that as a result of video lottery terminals they're seeing just a dramatic decrease in the sort of revenue available to their organization.

Then, finally, Mr. Speaker, I said at the bottom of page 1047 – I put this in a context that obviously was missed by the hon. minister when I said that I as well as my colleagues from Calgary-North West and Calgary-West appreciated the opportunity to hear submissions from 19 different groups and individuals in the city of Calgary.

It was helpful for us in terms of determining what advice we can give our caucus and what kinds of representations we can make in this Chamber.

So the minister has got it dead wrong on a number of counts. He clearly was playing fast and loose with the truth that was available to him in *Hansard*, and I think it would be in order – and I say it with respect – for the hon. minister to apologize for, firstly, I guess, willful blindness in terms of failing to reference *Hansard* and imputing motives and making allegations that are totally at variance with the facts. I think *Hansard* is self-evident. I think it speaks for itself. I'd encourage you, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that particularly ministers of the Crown take their responsibility to the Legislature seriously and ensure that if they're going to stand up and attempt to paraphrase things that have been said in past debate, they're absolutely accurate, and if they're inaccurate, they do the appropriate thing and apologize.

Thanks very much.

THE SPEAKER: The Chair would also find, from what has been said, that there's a difference of interpretation and conclusions drawn from words that other members have been using. It's just a disagreement here as well.

head: **Projected Government Business**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Now that we are finished estimates, I would ask the Government House Leader what the projected order of business is, in as much detail as possible, please, for next week.

MR. DAY: Continuing the high level of co-operation between the Opposition House Leader and myself, I want to be as detailed as I can be about next week. In the afternoon of Monday we'll be looking at second reading of Bills 20, 25, and 26. If there's time, we'd go to third readings as per the Order Paper and depending on discussions today in committee. If those move along, which some of them may, we'd go back to second reading of Bills 1 and 5. So it'll just be a matter of time then. In the evening, committee study on Bills 29 and 30, of course, which are the appropriation Bills, and then in order on the Order Paper starting with Bills 17, 18, 22, 23, and 24.

On Tuesday again much of that will depend on the committee discussions on Monday evening, so as early as possible on Tuesday I'll be in discussions with the Opposition House Leader, but basically Committee of the Whole as per the Order Paper on Tuesday in the afternoon. Then in the evening second readings as per the Order Paper, and then we'll look at third readings – this is Tuesday night – of 29 and 30, which, again, are the appropriation Bills, and then Bills 6, 10, and 11.

Wednesday afternoon we'll be in second readings as per the Order Paper; however, we will begin with Bill 19 on Wednesday afternoon as the . . .

MR. BRUSEKER: Wednesday evening.

MR. DAY: I'm sorry. That's the evening. Thank you for the correction. That's Wednesday evening.

Of course, on Thursday afternoon anybody who is here can discuss pretty well whatever they like.

head: **Orders of the Day**  
3:00  
head: **Government Bills and Orders**  
head: **Committee of the Whole**

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

THE CHAIRMAN: Order. I'd like to call the committee to order. The committee is reminded that we will again observe the convention of one person standing and speaking at the same time.

For the purposes of the spectators in the gallery, I would remind them that this is the informal stage of a Legislature. We're now studying a Bill in Committee of the Whole, where we can go through it point by point, and people can get up and speak more than once to an issue. It's less formal in the sense that you can take your jacket off, have a cup of coffee, and you may find that many people are not sitting in their own seats, which is therefore quite different from the formal part.

**Bill 3**  
**Managerial Exclusion Act**

THE CHAIRMAN: With that in mind, we'll ask the hon. Minister of Labour to begin this afternoon's discussion. No? We're not going to have the Minister of Labour. All right. We're going to have the hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yes, sir. Thank you. I appreciate that. I just have a few comments to make with respect to Bill 3. In my constituency office I received a letter from His Worship Mayor Al Duerr, mayor of the city of Calgary, encouraging me to support this Bill. Now, I have a great deal of respect for the mayor, but I thought what I would do is go speak to some of the firefighters who live and work in my constituency. They were quite concerned about the Bill, and they had concerns with section 2(1) and, in particular, the words "managerial functions."

Now, the minister did introduce an amendment, which I understand now has been passed, that talks about "certification . . . shall be granted on the basis that all firefighters . . . shall be included in one bargaining unit." While that gave them some comfort, the firefighters within my constituency with whom I spoke were still concerned about the words "managerial functions."

I have three points to make and suggestions for the Minister of Labour. The first request. This was from the firefighters. This included, by the way, a couple of captains and three lieutenants and then the frontline firefighters in the constituency. They're still concerned about the words "managerial functions." So request number one was: please define the words "managerial functions." By that, they're wondering: to whom does that apply? Where will this cutoff be? Will it be at the lieutenant level, at the captain level, at district chief, at deputy chief? At what level? So the first request was: please define that.

The second request was: put that in the Bill, if you could. You know, make a definition of what level of firefighter officer the Bill refers to. Put that into the Bill. I'm not going to suggest an amendment here today. I see the minister writing down my suggestions.

If those two things were to occur, I suspect that much of the concern that certainly I heard, Mr. Chairman, from the firefighters in my constituency would probably be resolved. Now, admittedly I haven't spoken to as many firefighters as the minister has, but I think that if it were clear to the firefighters, at least the ones that I spoke with, that this would not include lieutenants, would not include captains that are in the fire halls, that would resolve a lot of problems.

My third suggestion is that if indeed he could do that, define it, put it into the Bill, then I would be more than prepared to take it back to the firefighters in my constituency, and I suspect they would accept it, and if we were to hold off for a week and I could raise it with the firefighters, I suspect it would receive a much wider acceptance level amongst all the firefighters. In fact, if the Minister of Labour were to do that in committee stage, and if we had the Easter break week, which starts next week, I think we could probably go back to our constituencies, speak with our firefighters that are in the constituency, and if indeed that were there, I suspect that it would resolve many of the problems. As I listened to the Minister of Labour introduce it, I don't think this Bill is targeting lieutenants or captains in the fire halls, but I think the lieutenants and captains in the fire halls would like to see that explicit, rather than implicit, as it is now.

I put those suggestions forward to the minister, and I hope he will take those under advisement.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just very briefly, following on the heels of the Member for Calgary-North West. Again I want to make a reference - and possibly when the minister stands up to respond at committee stage here, he can answer this question. I have a similar concern as to whether the mayor of Edmonton may in fact be endorsing the position of management within the firefighters or the position of the minister, let's put it that way. I hope that's not the case, but somewhere along the line it had been filtered back to me that the mayor of Edmonton in fact had been supportive on that side. If it were the case, it would surprise me.

I had the opportunity, of course, of being on city council for a number of years, and we had many civic unions and many civic associations that we were in continuous contact with. I can recall when the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry was the mayor of Edmonton. He had a very, very good working relationship with the Edmonton Fire Fighters' Union. There's no reason that can't continue, but this particular piece of legislation isn't going to assist in that direction.

This particular piece of legislation, I fear, is going to drive a wedge in the concept of the fire department being a team, of being one unit, where firefighters, no matter what their rank, respond jointly as a team. If there is any aspect of civic government where a team approach is essential, it has to be within that fire department. I have a real concern that that's going to be lost, that you're going to have two factions. You're going to end up with the firefighters' unions opposed to management. The management under this scheme, of course, would become larger, and that whole team thing starts to fall apart.

Now, I'm not going to get into the aspects of union busting and that type of thing, and there has been some question as to whether that's the underlying motive. I prefer to dwell on this particular aspect. For that reason, along with some other reasons, I'm one member of this caucus that cannot support Bill 3.

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

MS LEBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This issue is an issue that has generated a lot of controversy and a lot of questions in terms of the reason for the government to actually step into the pile, so to speak, with both feet. What we've seen happen in the last week is that the Alberta Fire Fighters Association has managed to actually come to agreement with their particular jurisdictions. Five out of seven, is my understanding, have signed agreements or are pretty close to signing, and the other two are probably very close to there as well. So in actual fact it does appear that the firefighters' unions have come to agreement with their particular jurisdictions with regards to the intent, shall we say, of Bill 3. That still begs the question: why do we need to go ahead with this piece of legislation? But again, for some reason we're back here with the piles of paper and the differing versions as to whether there was or was not consultation that took place.

Now, it's rather interesting, given that there has been about a month since the introduction of this Bill and now consultation is taking place, that we're able to come to an agreement. Before that, where supposedly we've had years and years of consultation, there was no agreement. So I wonder if right now we are not at a point in the history of the firefighters' unions, the AUMA, and the fire chiefs where everyone is willing to sit around the table and come to agreement on an issue that is very divisive and to

come to a proposal and to come to a settlement that in fact makes sense for each one of the bargaining units. We've seen in Edmonton where that did in fact happen, where through the negotiation process there was the ability to say: "Okay. Maybe there are certain positions that should be within the managerial classes." Now the other jurisdictions are following suit, but again for some reason we have to have this piece of legislation.

### 3:10

We have received numerous letters on this issue, and I'd like to table with the Legislative Assembly one letter that recently came from a Mr. Herman in Lethbridge with regards to the Managerial Exclusion Act. In it he says – and this is written to the hon. Minister of Labour – that he wishes to reiterate his "strong concerns regarding specifics to the passage of the . . . bill." He understands that his "beliefs will be recognized and represented by you" – I'm assuming that means the Minister of Labour – "during the Question Period." Seeing that didn't come up, I feel that it's important to table it. The rationale for his beliefs are as follows:

1. Low level managers will be created wherein the private & public sector such managers are presently being culled out as redundant.
2. Our main focus and highest priority is performance (protection of lives and property) and safety. These two focuses will become components of a general management's perspective and will not always be on the highest rung of the priority ladder.
3. Teamwork is a necessary function in [various activities, such as] emergency response teams . . . This bill would threaten this team concept for the Fire Department.

I strongly urge that the decision for this bill be extended to allow time and attention to be given to this matter as it deserves.

He thanks the minister for his consideration and says that you can contact him at the above numbers.

This is just an example of many letters that we've received from individuals saying: "Take your time. Don't push it through. In reality do you really need to do what you're doing?"

There's another letter here as well that I'd like to table. It's from a Ron Mann. The reason that I'm tabling this is to indicate that there are a number of issues that this particular legislation is now putting forward that previously had not been issues. What these issues now are is whether there should be one bargaining unit for firefighters or two bargaining units for firefighters. In the past this was never at issue. There was never a discussion around that. There was only one bargaining unit. There are two unions that represent firefighters, but there was never a questions as to: did there need to be a union for junior officers and did there need to be a union for senior officers?

Now as a result of the legislation and the amendment that's been put forward from the Minister of Labour – and I'd still like to hear from the Minister of Labour if he's considered the fact that the amendment that was put forward could put at jeopardy the certification for the ambulance workers within the city of Edmonton. In effect, this issue has been created in this Legislative Assembly. The government who keeps saying that they want to stay out of regulations and stay out of legislation has now gone into it, and again it's not clear why that occurred.

In this particular letter Mr. Mann is indicating that there should be "two bargaining units." Now, again, the reason I said I was tabling that was to show that this Legislative Assembly is becoming involved in creating unrest in a unionized situation where in fact that unrest did not exist before.

There are a number of issues that the firefighters have put forward in terms of this particular piece of legislation. I don't

know that it's necessary to go through it again as the majority of members by now must be well versed in terms of what the legislation is about and what the effects of that legislation are and how it can well have a detrimental effect on the ability of firefighters to work together as a team. In fact, one of the largest fears is that in a firefighter grouping you may have as many as one-third of your individuals being requested to be excluded from the bargaining unit, whether that occurs or not, whether the Labour Relations Board says, yes, this is a good thing or, yes, this will in fact happen.

Can you imagine the unrest in a labour relation situation where you've got the employer saying to 200 out of 800 workers perhaps: "We're going to try and get you excluded from the union. We're going to try and separate you from your fellow firefighters. In the meantime, make sure you don't talk to each other because you might be in management tomorrow." That may go on not for a day, not for a month, not for three months; it may go on for years. That may go on for years because the LRB might make a decision; it might be appealed. The lawyers will go back and forth. We know what will happen. Is this a way of ensuring that there is going to be labour peace? Is this a way of ensuring that when that fire alarm rings, when the emergency bells go off, in effect, that team is going to be a cohesive whole, that I and everyone else in this room will be aware and will be assured that our house fire will be fought to the best of the firefighters' capabilities?

Now, I know that the firefighters are professional enough that they're going to put that aside. But why do we need to put additional stress on a job that's already stressful? What's the purpose? Again, there doesn't seem to be any indication other than AUMA passed a resolution. Well, that resolution was contingent; that resolution was conditional. In fact, the majority of AUMA members have absolutely no interest in the resolution because there are only 10 jurisdictions in all of Alberta that deal with professional firefighters who are in the union.

What I'd like to do at this point is put forward an amendment. The Member for Calgary-North West had alluded to some areas that might be rectified within the legislation. I'll wait till that's distributed.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** The Chair would note that the necessary signatures of Parliamentary Counsel and the sponsor of this amendment are on the documents.

**MS LEBOVICI:** I want to excuse myself for coughing and sniffing into the microphone, but I came from my sickbed to address this particular issue. I thought it was so important. [interjections] This is the truth.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Hon. members, this amendment will be called A2, and we'll invite Edmonton-Meadowlark then to begin her comments.

### 3:20

**MS LEBOVICI:** Thank you. As the members can see, the amendment that's proposed is amending section 2(1) and also section 3(1)(i). The amendment says that section 2(1) is amended by striking out "exercise managerial functions" and by adding "primarily and actually exercise independent managerial decision making functions" after "of the board." Section 3 is amended in clause (1)(i) by striking out "exercise managerial functions" and by adding "primarily and actually exercise independent managerial decision making functions" after "of the Board." Now, what I'd

like to state is that both myself and the firefighter unions are flexible.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I just wonder whether or not the committee would prefer to have these dealt with as two or one.

MS LEIBOVICI: I think we can deal with them as one.

THE CHAIRMAN: One. Okay.

MS LEIBOVICI: Because they do work together, I think it makes sense to work them as one.

In terms of the wording, it's the intent of showing that the managerial functions are indeed related to management decision-making functions. There are other wordings that over the period of the last three weeks have been put forward as well, one of which was put forward in the meeting that was held with the AUMA, the fire chiefs, and the firefighters, and those were: consistently and exclusively. There is other language as well that's been put forward that talks about primarily and actually exercising management decision-making functions.

The point is, Mr. Minister, that any one of these wordings would, I believe, ensure that the Labour Relations Board has some kind of guidance when they are making the decisions in terms of excluding individuals from the bargaining unit, if that does occur. So it's very clear that when we're talking about the managerial exclusions, we are talking only about those people who do exercise independent managerial decision-making functions.

Therefore, this amendment is extremely important to the intent of the Bill and is extremely important to, I believe, the harmonious firefighter labour relations in this province.

Thank you.

MR. DAY: I'll just briefly speak to the amendment. Actually, a number of comments by colleagues of the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark are also germane to the actual amendment. So if I can, just looking at the amendment, include those comments and concerns, because it all sort of ties in.

The issue of managerial functions has also been brought up not just by members opposite; the Member for Highwood had some concerns on that. The fact of the matter is that the process allows for a discussion on – it could be a captain; it could be a lieutenant. As a matter of fact, it could even be a deputy chief. As the legislation now reads, deputy chiefs come out automatically, if management so desires, without any discussion with the bargaining unit. That could be seen as not being fair. So even now deputy chiefs would be subjected to the discussion and to the negotiation process.

The other very important aspect of the legislation. Members have received copies of a letter to me from Mayor Reimer. I won't read the whole letter; I have referred to it before. She is expressing support for Bill 3. She says on page 2, "I applaud you for bringing forward a legislative resolution to this long standing issue." That's really all I want to say in terms of the time. I know the time factor has come up, and members are asking for more time. This has gone on for decades. There's been a lot of consultation. I know that there's been feeling that the consultation has been less than productive or successful. I appreciate that. I don't want to list all the dates that it occurred, but consultation has been extensive, even though people may not have felt good about it.

Even after introducing the Bill – and this is in reference to the concerns with the amendment here, even with the Bill itself – if members recall, I introduced it, and then at the request of the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark and others, we held it. We had a meeting with firefighters, representatives from both the Edmonton-St. Albert area and provincially. That meeting did not yield anything that could resolve it, at least in my view, and I'll take responsibility for that. It was introduced again in the Legislature: some discussion. Again I was asked if we could hold it. I did, and then a two-day meeting was held, looking at considerations like this amendment by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark. Nothing there was resolved to the place where there was unanimous feeling that there was now a better way to resolve this. Again last week it was introduced, and we discussed it for awhile. Again at the request of the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark – and I don't mind giving her the credit for this – I was asked if we could hold it another week to allow at the local level the discussions to happen with municipalities and administrators, et cetera. So we've held it actually a week and a half.

As an example, there were discussions in Medicine Hat. Possible solutions were brought forward, and when it went to city council, the possible solution was voted down. So the time has been extensive; the consultation has been extensive. We've allowed for these things to happen and considered possible amendments, not exactly like this but similar to this.

What Mayor Reimer has to say – and it relates to the amendment here – is very, very important. I want to say something, first of all, about her letter. I respect the fact that she wrote this letter of support, because Mayor Reimer makes no bones about the fact that she looks to the labour community for support, and she indeed believes strongly in the concerns within the labour community. She's always been very up front with that, and though she and I may have differences about labour law, I respect the fact that she always speaks strongly for that constituency. Actually, I do too, I think, but not as strongly as she does. She is philosophically very closely tied to that community. In spite of that very close tie and in an election year, I might add – whether or not the mayor is running again, we don't know – she has still come forward. Knowing that there's a risk of alienating some of that constituency, she has come forward to say that she supports this.

What's very important is to read the next sentence here on page 2, where she says, "I am particularly pleased with the permissive nature of the Bill." That's what is key here: "the permissive nature of the Bill." It is not compelling. That's where I'm sure within her own strong, philosophical feelings she can support this Bill. It allows for the negotiation, the discussion, and it's permissive. The city of Edmonton, if they don't want to, does not have to enact the provisions of this Bill. That's what is very important.

In a recent meeting with the mayor of Fort McMurray, which I followed up with a letter to him, he said that their business plan did not contemplate for the next three years, at the very least, even having to ever use this Bill, that he was not opposed to it and would not be opposed to it, but in fact they had no contemplation of using the provisions of this Bill for at the very least the next three years. That again . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister, I'm sorry that I'm missing your logic. Could we deal with the amendment and then return to the Bill.

MR. DAY: Thanks for the vote of support there, Mr. Chairman.

Again, what this amendment is asking for are some specifics, which just aren't necessary. Because of the permissive nature of this Bill, a municipality in discussion with its firefighters does not have to enact the provision of the Bill. Therefore, it's on that basis that those amendments are not required, because full discussion and unanimity can happen at a local level still. But in cases where all negotiations break down, does this Bill say that administration will then have the final say? No. It then goes on to the Labour Relations Board for adjudication, just like every other labour group in the province. That is the basic and simple provision that we're referring to.

I appreciate the thought that's gone into this amendment and the insight which is reflected here, but it is not necessary to see this Bill continue in its permissive nature, allowing communities to work together. That's why I will be voting against this particular amendment, given the fact there was a lot of thought that went into it, which I appreciate.

3:30

MS LEIBOVICI: If I might just ask the minister a question. If this puts you on the spot, I guess you're good enough at dancing around that I don't think I need to worry about it. If in fact the firefighters' worst nightmare comes true – that is, due to the permissive nature of this particular clause and the wording, a municipality might well say: "Okay. We're going to go after one-quarter of your unit. If it's a hundred firefighters, we're going to go after 25 or 30 of those to be put into management. If it's a thousand, we're going to go after 250 of those." If the minister sees that there is a clear abuse of the process, is he ready to intervene and then change the legislation at that point in time?

MR. DAY: I'm pleased to answer that question: unequivocally yes, defining clear abuse, not just one side nit-picking against the other. In fact, as with any legislation and especially with this, because I do feel strongly about our firefighters – they are professional, committed, and dedicated people, and we don't want to hamper that. Yes, if there was clear abuse, undeniable, clear abuse of this provision, which I've said before is virtually impossible to happen, if that was evident to me, then, yes, I would take steps to correct that. Absolutely.

[Motion on amendment A2 lost]

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

DR. L. TAYLOR: Thank you. I'd just like to address the Bill, if I could, for a minute or two, Mr. Chairman, and some questions for the minister. I spent a considerable amount of time talking with one of my constituents, Ron Robinson, who is a firefighter. He's concerned about the process that they will have to go through, and I would just like to get it in *Hansard* from the minister.

Mr. Robinson was looking to a process that would allow the Labour Relations Board to get involved initially in the process; that is, before they could exclude people from the management unit, the Labour Relations Board would have to be involved. As I understand it, that is no longer to be the case. In fact, Mr. Robinson through me sent an amendment to the minister along these lines. What the minister told me was that really the amendment was redundant because the Act, the Bill, was theoretically going to work that way anyway in terms of allowing the Labour Relations Board to be involved.

I guess I have a concern, you know: if it's not there, how do we know it's going to work that way? Just to reassure the firefighters, because really the firefighters are very important to our society. They are good supporters, and they're reasonable and rational people, and it's important that we have some reasonable and rational answers for those people. So I would just ask the minister if he could explain how this is going to work and why he felt that that amendment that was proposed by Ron and his group was redundant.

Thank you.

MR. DAY: Well, in fact we did look at the amendment which the hon. member brought forward at the request of Mr. Robinson. I guess it's the simplicity of this Bill and the brevity of the Bill that maybe raises eyebrows; I'm not sure. In fact, I can give assurance to the member that the Bill absolutely guarantees that that process will happen, that if a municipality does not come up with an agreement of their own with the firefighters, and if they reach a point at which there is not agreement on who should come out of the bargaining unit, then in fact it does go to the LRB, which have clearly laid out criteria, time-tested criteria that make it possible to see if this is a genuine, bona fide managerial position or an attempt by some administration to do something less than to move somebody into management.

So it is guaranteed that process will happen, and that's why the amendment as brought forward by the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat is in fact redundant. It's already a virtual guarantee in the process that will flow because of this permissive legislation.

MS LEIBOVICI: I'm not sure, in terms of the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, if he actually put forward an amendment, but that's what I'm planning to do on very much the same lines that the member was talking about. What this amendment says is that

the Labour Relations Board shall not allow an exclusion under subsection (1) unless the Labour Relations Board is satisfied that all avenues of negotiation and mediation have been exhausted.

Now, I understand that the minister is saying that this is in effect going to happen. But the reality is that it doesn't have to happen. What a jurisdiction can do, what a municipality can do – and I think the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat needs to understand this – is they can go directly to the LRB without negotiation, without mediation and say, "We want to take these people out of the bargaining unit." The fact is that given the history behind this whole issue, I would not be surprised to see jurisdictions doing that, saying: "Well, there's no point in negotiating. We've tried for many years. There's no point in going through any kind of a mediation process. What we might as well do is just go directly to the LRB."

Though the intent of the minister is well meaning, the actual facts are that this does not necessarily have to happen unless it is in legislation that makes it so.

THE CHAIRMAN: The pages are now delivering the next amendment, which will be referred to as A3.

MRS. HEWES: I like this. This is a good idea, Stockwell.

THE CHAIRMAN: Because the Chair interrupted the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, do you have any further comments?

MS LEIBOVICI: Yes. I thought you wanted me to sit down.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, I did. I did at the time, and now I'm inviting you, since the amendments are being circulated and nearly everyone has them, to begin.

MS LEIBOVICI: Okay. Well, thank you. I don't know if it's begin or continue. This is, as the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar indicated, a good amendment. It's not an amendment that takes away the permissive nature of the Bill. What it does is it ensures that the process that the Minister of Labour has indicated will occur will in fact occur, that there can be no subterfuge, that there can be no way of moving around the particular process of negotiation and mediation. Then at that point, if there's no resolve to the situation, the LRB in actual fact can make a decision and can look at the requirements under the Act.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Labour on the amendment.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, very specifically on the amendment. The reason that I have the confidence, the only reason that I would even ever think of moving this legislation forward is because indeed this is part of the practice of the Labour Relations Board. One of the things they do when they get a request on an item like this or in fact any item is a scrutiny to make sure all the avenues have been followed. I could show some records because they're readily available. The LRB publishes, first of all, all of their decisions, but also in the publishing and in the communication of that, there are clearly times, in reviewing the request, for them to be involved in the decision. They'll look at it and say: we don't think there's been sufficient discussion here or sufficient discussion there.

3:40

It parallels a similar process in a collective agreement, as the member is aware, when there is a request for a mediator and that request comes to my department, or for arbitration, even more specifically. Again, before that automatically kicks into place and an arbitrator goes into the situation, it is looked at. I have personally signed letters myself on those requests, saying, "We have looked at the discussions to this point, and we have deemed that there is more that could be done; therefore you are not going to be able to avail yourselves . . ." let's say, of the arbitration that they were requesting, and they have to go back to discussion. That's an absolute principle that is in place.

That is why this would be redundant, and that's the only reason that I will not be voting for this. Again, it's an expression of concern, but it is redundant for the fact it is built in there. The concern is valid though.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: If the concern is valid – and the minister and I have sparred on this issue before in terms of: do we want to see something placed in legislation or don't we, to ensure that certain things that we believe should happen will happen? The minister sometimes takes the route: no; let's leave it out of the legislation, and let's have faith in the body that the decisions are vested in.

I would beg to differ. In terms of the situation being as sensitive as it is, one of the ways of ensuring that the firefighter groups feel that their concerns are being heard and their issues are being listened to is by an amendment such as this, which would ensure, if it is in fact already happening within the LRB, that it will happen, that there is no way that the LRB could potentially

say, "Well, you know, you've talked about this for a week. You've had negotiations. We'll look at this issue now." So I think this is an extremely important sign of good faith, almost, in the process to say, "Yes, this is an amendment that is worth while looking at and including in Bill 3."

I urge the minister to perhaps reconsider his appraisal of the amendment and the need for the amendment. This goes back to my earlier question. If by chance this amendment is not voted for – though I can't imagine why members on both sides of the Legislative Assembly would not vote for this particular amendment – I would again ask the minister: if there appear to be instances where the avenue that's been outlined in this Legislative Assembly, of negotiation and mediation being exhausted before the LRB looks at a particular exclusion – if that does not occur, would the minister be willing to step in at that point as well?

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I don't take that as a questioning of my word; I take it as a valid request. I'll again publicly and in *Hansard* go on record as saying that if there is any relaxing of this provision that's already in the LRB, if in fact LRB officials for whatever reason were moving ahead before all avenues of negotiation and mediation had been explored, I would be the first to ask for an amendment and would give the credit to the member for the amendment along this line here.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of comments. Looking at the amendment put forward by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, the concern that I heard from the firefighters in my constituency was exactly on this issue. Speaking to the Bill as a whole, the minister has referred to this as being a permissive Bill. I think that is precisely what the concern is, at least that I heard, and I think this amendment would go a long way towards addressing that concern.

The amendment proposes that nothing would happen unless there was a roadblock, I guess, that all routes of negotiation and mediation had been exhausted and you couldn't go any further. I think that by putting this amendment into the Bill and adding it as a new section to subsection (2), in fact it would alleviate the concerns that I heard from the firefighters in my constituency: that perhaps rather arbitrary decisions could be made. In speaking to the Bill, I suggested that perhaps there might be another way to deal with it. This amendment would, I think, ensure that for the processes of deciding who is and who is not part of that bargaining unit, in fact you would have to follow what have been accepted labour practices around the province.

Indeed, if this amendment is not going to be accepted by the minister, then I think there is still a problem which needs to be addressed, which is: how do you ensure that the permissiveness does not override the concerns of the firefighters? I think this amendment would do that. So I guess I'm looking for some assurances from the minister that, indeed, if this amendment is not accepted, those concerns can be addressed, because I think they're legitimate concerns. Certainly that was the perception that I heard from, as I said, the firefighters in my constituency.

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

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I rise to speak in favour of this amendment. We all know that we live in very volatile political times. While the minister is saying that we've



got to have faith and trust in his word in this Assembly, I think we would be doing a disservice to the firefighters and to even the Labour Relations Board to say that if the intent of the Labour Relations Board legislation didn't come about, the minister would indeed step in. We know that cabinets can change overnight and that, indeed, you could have a totally different Minister of Labour at that time. So when we're talking about good faith, let's not be politically naive and fall into the trap of being trusting.

You know, the minister has acknowledged that the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark has a valid concern, but in the same breath he says that really this amendment is redundant. He can't have it both ways, Mr. Chairman. If it's a valid concern, then we should make sure that it is part of the legislation. I certainly would accept the minister's word, but I have watched in this Assembly portfolios change. I have seen, particularly in Municipal Affairs and in transportation, significant philosophical differences even within the same cabinet, the same Executive Council. So I would say that it would be politically naive to go on good faith that somehow this government would intervene with the Labour Relations Board and make sure that what this amendment is saying indeed would happen.

I'd ask the minister: please, if you're sincere about the valid concern, let's not double-talk. Let's see for once the government stand up and accept this good, strong amendment that does exactly what you as Minister of Labour indicated should be done, that you've given your word in this House through *Hansard* that you would intervene and make sure happened. We can't run the risk that you're not there in that portfolio, Mr. Minister. So I'd say: urge your colleagues to support this amendment and demonstrate trust to the firefighters.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, very briefly, because I have similar comments to the previous speaker, the Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan. There is a valid fear. Nobody, of course, is going to dispute the word of the minister responsible for workers' compensation and Labour that presently occupies that post, but things do change, and things can change very rapidly.

There are two possibilities that we have to take into consideration. One is a possibility of a cabinet shuffle. Secondly – and I know the government members hesitate or are very, very reluctant to accept the reality of political life – there could be a change in government. In fact, there could very likely be a change in government. On the expectation that it would be a Liberal government, well, then there would be no difficulty in terms of this particular legislation, but other things have been known to happen.

Mr. Chairman, to sum up from the firefighters' point of view, what really counts to them is what's in legislation, not some statement made in *Hansard* – taking one's word for it – because that's what governs future direction of this government or future direction of any government, unless that legislation is amended down the road. So to give that ironclad assurance that the firefighters are entitled to, this amendment has to be approved.

3:50

MR. DAY: I appreciate the vote of confidence in myself as far as maintaining this provision. Saying that the concern is valid doesn't invalidate the redundancy that I see. It would be similar to us passing a law saying to all judges, "Before you pronounce someone guilty, please be sure he's guilty." It would be redundant, it would be weak in terms of legislation, and I think a lot of people would question whether we even trust our judges.

Certainly I am backing up the guarantee with my word here that if something were to happen, I would want to see a provision like this, but the fact is that the guarantee is already in legislation, dealing with the very procedures by which the Labour Relations Board operates. I may not always like the decisions of the LRB, but their record is impeccable in terms of making sure that they follow their procedures, which are published procedures. That's what gives it the guarantee. That's why I can't vote for the amendment. It's redundant. The concern is valid, but the concern is enshrined in the procedures, the legislated, regulated procedures under which they operate.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look at it as a valid concern. I think it's very important to note. I take the minister at his word, but changes can happen. I don't know how many times in this Legislative Assembly I've heard the words: that was then, and this is now. That was then, this is now, and it can change overnight. It can change in a moment. So to make sure that it's in, it would be important that we pass this amendment. Not only do we take his word – it's in *Hansard* – but we also enshrine it in the legislation.

Thank you.

[Motion on amendment A3 lost]

MS LEBOVICI: I'd just like to summarize, before we move ahead, in terms of some of the comments that have been made and some of the questions with regards to the whole Bill. I'm actually just looking through the Labour Relations Code to try and find in here where it says, if it does – I need my memory jogged – that the Labour Relations Board has to look at negotiation and mediation first. At this point in time I still have not found that.

One of the interesting things with this particular Bill is that it's a very short Bill. It's only about three or four clauses long. In effect, though, it has the ability to significantly change the labour relations climate within a particular group of employees and within a particular jurisdiction, change it not necessarily for the better. The cautions have been – and I think the firefighters from across the province have been very reasonable, have been very articulate, have looked at what the issues are, have figured out what the odds are of winning certain parts of those issues, and have tried to make, as it were, lemonade out of lemons, where if you're given a lemon, you can, I guess, choose to suck on it or you can choose to try and turn it into lemonade and make it a little bit more palatable. That in effect I think is what the firefighters have tried to do. The minister has provided for there to be time for the firefighters to try and come to some kind of livable arrangement within their particular jurisdictions. That is still ongoing, yet we're still pushing through with the Bill.

I would hope that the minister, between Committee of the Whole stage and third reading, gets a chance to again look at some of the arguments that have been put forward, look at whether or not the understanding of negotiation and mediation is really that built into the Labour Relations Board's process, and look at how this particular Bill can be perhaps softened with regards to the implementation of the Bill when it is proclaimed. These are all issues that I think the firefighters across this province are going to be looking at and considering very carefully. Quite frankly, they're worried about the implications of the Bill.

This is not an easy issue for many of the members in this Assembly. Quite frankly, I'm surprised that some of the government members have not been more vocal in terms of questioning

the rationale for this particular Bill, as well as questioning whether there's another and better way to do this, and doing that within the Legislative Assembly. It may well be that they've availed themselves of that directly to the Minister of Labour, but it would probably be useful for all of us to have heard some of the interchange in terms of some of the questions that the members had as a result of their constituents asking questions.

Again, there's a short time span between now and third reading, and I would hope that the minister looks at the implications and looks at the particular Bill very carefully.

If I may, before I sit down, I'd like to revert to Introduction of Guests.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would the committee agree to the introduction of guests? All those in favour?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

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

MS LEBOVICI: Thank you. I'd like to introduce three members of the Edmonton Fire Fighters' Union. They are John Downs, the treasurer; Keith Woodruff, the first VP; and Dale McLean, the second VP. The Edmonton Fire Fighters' Union has in the past month, I am sure, learnt more about the parliamentary process than they thought they would ever learn, and I hope they've not become too disappointed in the process as a result of what they're seeing this afternoon.

Thank you very much.

**Bill 3**  
**Managerial Exclusion Act**  
(*continued*)

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of brief comments in closing as well. The minister has said that this is indeed a permissive Bill. With all due respect to the minister – and I do accept his word that he's referred to – I honestly don't believe that the Bill as it has been amended by the government, by adding that one section, really goes far enough to satisfy the concerns that the Calgary firefighters have expressed to me.

Their concern once again is: exactly where does that cutoff occur, or where is it that the intention is even that the cutoff would occur between those who will be excluded, or potentially will be excluded under section 2(1), and those who will remain in the bargaining unit? For that reason, Mr. Chairman, I will be voting against this Bill as it's been amended, because I don't think it does address that concern clearly enough, certainly for the firefighters that I represent in my constituency.

4:00

I would hope that the minister would address that concern at some point, perhaps in third reading, and come back with another amendment, or perhaps hold off on this one until an amendment does come forward. But that is a concern I wanted to express on behalf of the firefighters I represent.

Thank you.

[The sections of Bill 3 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

THE CHAIRMAN: This is a new one. Shall the Bill be reported? Are you agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Carried.

MR. DAY: I move that the Bill . . . I move that I sit down and listen to you for a minute.

**Chairman's Ruling**  
**Reporting Bills from Committee**

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. members will reflect back to when a certain Bill that was sponsored by Calgary-Fish Creek was defeated in committee stage. We've changed the wording to make it very clear so that when it is reported, the concurrence of the committee is clear. That's why we had four questions, instead of the regular two, and then the minister or the sponsor of the Bill getting up and moving the reporting stage. That's why it took so long to go through there. So it's no longer necessary, because we have voted, that it shall be reported.

With that in mind, we're ready for the next Bill.

**Bill 17**  
**Public Sector Pension Plans Amendment Act, 1995**

THE CHAIRMAN: We'll invite Grande Prairie-Wapiti to begin the afternoon's discussion at committee stage.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My comments are going to be very brief, and they're going to be related to some issues that were raised by the Member for Edmonton-Manning during second reading. I'd like to deal with the questions in the same order that he posed them. First of all, he asked: how many employees are currently involved in pension administration? That number is 140.

The second question was: how many employees will be affected by the move towards corporatization? Will there be any layoffs, and were these anticipated in the budget that the Treasurer put forward? First of all, all of the current employees will continue to be involved in pension plan administration, and the corporatization itself will not result in any layoffs. Now, whether there are any layoffs further down the road would depend on other factors. For example, the pension boards could, if they wished, through automation or some other processes over time, gain efficiencies that would reduce the cost of the administration to their plans.

The third question was: in terms of protection of the employees' successor rights through the AUPE, would they be protected? It is proposed that the corporation's employees will be covered by the collective agreement with the AUPE.

The fourth question was: what cost-benefit analysis or studies have been conducted that indicate that corporatization will reduce costs, increase cost recovery for services provided, and lead to greater efficiencies in providing these services to the pension plans? Well, essentially what is happening now and what will continue to happen is that the full cost of that pension administration will continue to be recovered. Really the primary purpose of

this corporatization is to facilitate the eventual transfer of the responsibility for pension administration to the actual pension boards themselves. So although this will not result in any immediate cost savings, presumably, again down the line, there could be some streamlining.

The fifth question was: has a business plan been prepared by the new corporation, will the business plan be made public, and what performance criteria will the corporation be expected to meet? The corporatization of pension plan administration was identified as a strategy in the Treasurer's business plan. At the present time a detailed business plan is being worked on for the actual corporation. The pension boards will also be consulted before that business plan is finalized.

The sixth question: will investment and financial management services continue to be administered by Treasury in-house, or will it be devolved into the pension administration corporation? It will continue to be managed by Treasury in-house for the present time, and how those services might be provided in the future again will be discussed with the pension boards.

The last question, Mr. Chairman, number 7: is the corporatization of pension administration a preliminary step towards full privatization of pension administration by a private-sector corporation or delegated administrative organization, a DAO? Will employees be represented on the DAO board? The answer to that is yes, corporatization is a preliminary step towards ultimately transferring full responsibility for the administration of the pensions to the pension boards themselves. Once that transfer has taken place, then the form in which that pension administration would be delivered would be for the pension boards themselves to decide.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will conclude my comments and yield to the hon. member. Thank you.

DR. PERCY: I'd just like to thank the Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti for his answers to the questions that were posed. We appreciate it very much. They certainly address any of our concerns.

I guess the only other issue that would arise – and this is in the broader context of the amendments to the public-sector pension plan – is that it would have been very useful had one of the requirements of this corporatization, which we support because there may well be efficiencies – if there was some mechanism for ensuring that the actuarial assessments were publicly available on either a two- or three-year period, because this pension plan and the unfunded liability is handled quite separately under the Deficit Elimination Act. There's this flow of payments, and those payments are very sensitive to changes in actuarial assumptions. We've seen that with the Workers' Compensation Board, that just changes in those assumptions can lead to a very dramatic movement in the unfunded liability, which will then impinge on the size of the deficit and changes in the deficit on a consolidated basis for the province.

Certainly we support this Bill, but we hope that at some point an amendment is brought forward by the clients themselves or some requirement is made that the actuarial assessments are available at least on five-year periods, because it has such a dramatic effect now on the overall financial position of the province given the unfunded liability in this payment. Given that the magnitude of the pension funds we're dealing with are \$8.6 billion of total fund assets and given that the payout is so sensitive, it's something that should be dealt with in the corporate structure and/or in the business plan.

With those comments I will conclude and call for the question.

4:10

[The sections of Bill 17 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

THE CHAIRMAN: Shall the Bill be reported? Are you agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

### Bill 18

#### Environmental Protection Statutes Repeal Act

THE CHAIRMAN: To begin this afternoon's deliberations, we'll call on the hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said in second reading, this Bill is the repeal of the Alberta Environmental Research Trust Act, the Environment Council Act, and the Water Resources Commission Act.

The Environmental Research Trust has done a lot of good work. I believe, though, it is probably doing some overlap, and as we move forward and try to eliminate this overlap and duplication, I believe the work that it was doing can be handled through the new ministry of research and technology. The trust did a lot of work with the university, with the private sector, with the Environmental Centre at Vegreville. I think, probably through the new arrangement, we'll be able to in fact leverage the money from the private sector even greater than we did through this trust. While I of course hate to see it go, having served as a board member on this trust – I do have some very fond memories of working with it – really I believe that we can accomplish more with those dollars in the new arrangement.

The Environment Council of Alberta, as I stated in second reading, of course has been around for many years. It's done a tremendous amount of work and was very valuable in gathering information and looking at issues all through its life. Once again I think we can continue to get that input from the public. As issues come up, we can strike ministerial committees that would have the ability to go out and gather input on specific issues. We're going to continue to have the environmental advisory committee. As a matter of fact, we're going to reshape that committee somewhat so that it deals with all of the issues in this huge ministry, as opposed to looking more at the fish and wildlife/land use kinds of issues. I believe we'll be able to have them give us a lot of advice and work through the issues as well.

The Water Resources Commission is of course another fine body, and I have some very fond memories of that one as well, having served as a board member. The work of the commission has laid a very good framework for policy and legislation as it relates to water resources, but once again I believe we can accommodate the needs of government and the public through ministerial appointments and committees, by having them go out and gather information when it's necessary.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased this afternoon to join debate in committee stage on Bill 18, the Environmental Protection Statutes Repeal Act. As you know, I spoke in second reading with respect to each of the components of this particular Bill and expressed less concern about the repeal

of the Alberta Environmental Research Trust Act and the Water Resources Commission Act than I did with the Environment Council Act.

I continue to believe that the Environment Council fulfilled a very positive and significant role to government as an arm's-length body, providing government with some insights into important environmental initiatives – in fact, even more than initiatives, probably environmental values of the people of the province of Alberta – and to articulate those values and then find some various actions plans to put those values into action. The Environment Council must be commended for the work they have done in their field. They have been very professional. They have provided significant input and insight to the government over the years on what governments ought to, should be, and should continue to be doing in the area of environmental protection.

The Water Resources Commission Act as a component of Bill 18 is interesting in that with the passage of Bill 18, should it pass, the Water Resources Commission Act will be canceled, will be eliminated once the Act comes into force. That will be, presumably, at some time during this fiscal year. I did raise this issue with the minister when we did our subcommittee of supply on the estimates of Environmental Protection. The reason I did, Mr. Chairman, was because I noted in the budget estimates documents that the budgeted amount this year for the Water Resources Commission was identical to the budgeted amount for last year. Now, what strikes me as interesting is that if the Water Resources Commission is being eliminated by virtue of Bill 18, they why would we have to have the same dollars budgeted for the Water Resources Commission, a commission that will no longer exist?

Now, Mr. Chairman, my recollection – because I don't have the documents in front of me – is that the amount for the Water Resources Commission budgeted for this year is something in the range of \$459,000, almost a half million dollars. For the most part, the response that we received during our subcommittee of supply estimates was: well, perhaps the number is slightly overstated. Well, if we're going to repeal the Water Resources Commission, I guess the number is significantly overstated. As the minister has alluded to already in introducing this particular Bill in committee stage, a lot of the work that the Water Resources Commission has done – as we move to a new Water Resources Act through the draft legislation that is open for public input now, we don't need the budgeted amount. I raise that today because it's very interesting to note that on the one hand the government is repealing the Water Resources Commission by virtue of this Bill and, on the other hand, the budget documents still imply, if nothing else, that the Water Resources Commission is a living, breathing, money-using entity.

So I wouldn't mind, Mr. Chairman, in committee debate this afternoon if the minister commented on the inclusion of the Water Resources Commission in this Bill, in the repeal statute that we're debating today, given what the minister is saying in his budget documents, on the other hand.

I want to spend a little bit of time, Mr. Chairman, in referring specifically to section 2 of this particular Bill and perhaps refer some questions to the minister that he can answer. The provisions of section 2 essentially deal with the transfer of property and assets from the various entities that are being repealed and where ultimately those assets will end up.

4:20

With respect to the Environmental Research Trust, the information I'm looking at, Mr. Chairman, is the statement of revenue expenditures and unexpended funds for the year ended March 31,

1993. There may be an updated version. Perhaps the minister can advise. My point on this is that there are donations outside of government donations to the Alberta Environmental Research Trust. Whether those are in the form of bequests or how they come in I'm not quite sure. In fact, I'll accept that I'm somewhat ignorant on how the donations do come in to the Alberta Environmental Research Trust.

Nonetheless, if they do come in as bequests to the trust and the government takes on the responsibility of being trustee, I'll assume for the purpose of debate, Mr. Chairman, that there are some conditions or may be some conditions imposed on how property or money or other assets come into the trust, and in the transitional provisions, where those various assets find their way into a different entity, how the government, how the minister is going to deal with anything that may in fact be coming into the trust by way of a bequest, if there are any conditions for the trust actually receiving that property as beneficiary. I think that's an important point. Whenever you dissolve a trust, you have to take those kinds of concerns into consideration, and I think it's important to be prepared as to how you're going to deal with the transfer on the transition provision of those kinds of assets.

Now, just as a continuation of that point, anything that does come from the Environmental Research Trust will actually transfer into the environmental protection and enhancement fund. What I also don't know on this point, Mr. Chairman, is: because some of the funds do come as grants from the provincial government, do we have a situation where funds from the general revenue fund go over to the Environmental Research Trust and then we'll find those dollars which were general revenue funds actually coming back into the environmental protection and enhancement fund, so we've got a bit of a circuitous route? I'm just wondering if that will happen: if there are moneys from the GRF to the trust and then back again, I guess either from the last fiscal year or this fiscal year, if they are unexpended funds that came through as grants from the province of Alberta. Now, I guess that's complicated somewhat in the fact that the funds would probably be coming from the minister's department. So they are ministerial funds from GRF, over to the Environmental Research Trust fund, and now back into the environmental protection and enhancement fund, just so that we're clear on how these transition provisions are going to work in the way the Bill is set out.

A similar concern is with respect to article 2(1)(b), "Property of the Trust other than money." Now, Mr. Chairman, because section 2 has been broken down in the way that it has, again I'm going to assume that "property" referred to in the (b) clause will be real property rather than money or other assets. So the property of the trust will then vest to the Crown and the right of the province of Alberta as real property.

Then I want to just drop down to subsection (2) of the transitional provisions, which gives the Crown the right to dispose of the "property of the trust referred to in subsection (1)(b)." My main question to the minister on this one, again assuming that we're talking about real property there, is: what conditions or rules are imposed on the Crown for the real property that comes to it via the trust? Again, I am thinking in terms of conditions that may be imposed on any of those lands. What checks and balances, what limits, what restrictions are there on the disposition of that land by the Crown so that it can liquidate that asset, turn it into cash, and then put the money back into the environmental protection and enhancement fund?

It concerns me, Mr. Chairman, that the Crown may have the opportunity to take real property, immediately liquidate it, turn it

into cash, and put it into the environmental protection and enhancement fund – and I admit to hon. members and to the minister that I am making some assumptions in my debate this afternoon – because some of that real property that is part of the trust is going to be land that is appropriate for preservation or conservation or part of research studies on protection or conservation. I would be concerned if the Crown then has the unconditional right to dispose of the land. So in respect to the provisions in article 2(1)(b) and article 2(2), I'd like the minister to tell us how the Crown can dispose of property that it receives from the trust, with the net proceeds going to the environmental protection and enhancement fund.

Mr. Chairman, similar provisions do exist for the assets and liabilities of the Environment Council of Alberta and the Water Resources Commission. Within the text of the Bill itself, of course, we don't know what kind of value that is. We don't know what we're dealing with when we talk about the assets and liabilities of each of those. It is, of course, recognized that ultimately they are assets and liabilities of the Crown under a different structure, so they're simply coming back to the Crown in and of the province of Alberta, in and of itself rather than as a separate entity. What exactly there are for assets and liabilities of each of the Environment Council and the Water Resources Commission would be interesting to know.

Mr. Chairman, I think those are the comments that I want to make at committee stage. The minister knows – and I've indicated my position to all hon. members – that the inclusion of the Environment Council and the proactive work that the Environment Council does as an arm's-length body from government should continue. With it, in fact, being included in the Bill, it makes the Bill much less palatable. With the repeal of the Environmental Research Trust and the Water Resources Commission, that's more palatable.

The concern has been expressed by me and other members, I believe, that the elimination of the Water Resources Commission has a very odd timing, given that we are still in the middle of the draft water resources management legislation. There is potential at this point in time for there to be further public consultation, given the last round of public consultation on the draft water resources and management Bill. It may in fact be appropriate for the Water Resources Commission to be the body that continues that public consultation process rather than having to try and gear it up with other staff members in the department, if the Water Resources Commission is already prepared and has gone through that process at this point in time.

So, Mr. Chairman, I leave those questions on those specific provisions to the minister, indicating, of course, to him that I won't be able to support the Bill because of the repeal of the Environment Council. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister, since we have other members, I wondered whether or not you wanted to answer them each time a member asks a question or after several members. Do you wish to answer the questions, hon. minister?

MR. LUND: Well, while they're all fresh, I would like to answer the hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

First of all, dealing with the budget for the Water Resources Commission, of course you're absolutely right. They may be involved if there is another round. This Act comes into force on proclamation, and it is my intention to involve them, certainly in the initial stages. But if there is another round of hearings, then

they are the logical ones to do it, so that would be the thinking there. Even if they don't, with the work – the gathering of the information, the setting up of the new Act and taking it back out to the public – there's going to be a lot of expense in that area. So whether that budget is the exact right amount or not of course is a subject for debate, but that's why that was in there.

4:30

You talked about the money in the Environmental Research Trust. Yes, there is some cash. For example, the money flowed from two sources: lottery funds and from the Department of Environmental Protection's budget via the Vegreville research station. The way it's going to work is that there are a number of projects that are committed – I believe there are a couple of them that are even for a couple more years – so the money will come over into the environmental enhancement trust. Those projects will be paid out through the trust fund within the department.

The real property that you're referring to, if there was any. There was an ability in the old Act for it to come through bequests. The reason that we put this in here was in case something happened in the very near future. We do not have any real property at this point, but in case there was something. Now, if it would be possible to put it back to the estate, that would happen, and gifts, if there are any that come, will be returned in the interim. The other kinds of assets they're talking about, furniture and these types of things, they become the property of the Crown, of course. The same thing applies with the Environment Council and the Water Resources Commission.

So I think that caught all the questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to make a few comments, certainly not talking against the Bill whatsoever. But I think I'd be remiss, being that I was chairman of the Water Resources Commission, and I wanted to make sure, when I looked at the Bill and saw that the following Acts are repealed – and I'm really not that familiar with the first two. But with the Water Resources Act, like I said earlier, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that the Act was created in 1983 under the leadership or chairmanship of the late Henry Kroeger. Now, there are many in the House that didn't know Henry Kroeger, and I wish many of us – and I will include myself – would in fact follow the same rules as Henry Kroeger. He never spoke too much in the House, but when Henry spoke, everybody listened. I don't speak very much either, so just listen for a minute or two. Now the Whip tells me that he doesn't listen either.

It was formed under the chairmanship of Henry Kroeger, and he was from a very dry area. I'm not too sure if it was called Chinook at the time; it probably was. Over the years since 1983, if you talked water, if it was management, subbasin, the commission, anything to do with water – and I was fortunate in 1986 to be a member of the commission under the leadership of Henry Kroeger. I believe it was 1988 when Mr. Kroeger died, and I took over as chairman until 1989. I took over as chairman again in '93, but that's not important, that I took the chairmanship over.

However, this was a good commission, and the reason it's being disbanded is not because they didn't do their work. They did great work. The reason it's being disbanded or repealed, I guess is the right word, is that it's part of the government's restructuring. I think the minister alluded to the fact that we can probably have the same results by just doing it in a different way.

I'll tell you that what I was always excited about with the commission was that we had five departments – ADMs, I might add – working along with four members at large: one from the city of Edmonton, one from the city of Calgary, one from southern Alberta, and one from northern Alberta. We had a good, broad view of all the wants and needs for water in general throughout Alberta with those five departments. I think today in government we lack departments working together. We're trying to create that, and I think it's important that we keep that theme in place, that people work together. Over the years that I've been around, people have said: well, the department of agriculture doesn't know what Environmental Protection's doing. This was a body that was all five departments working together.

I have four pages here, but I'm not going to read them because I don't believe in reading. [interjections] I don't believe in reading for 20 minutes just to take all my time.

The history of the Water Resources Commission will be filed in this House with the final report of the Water Resources Commission. I just invite you when we get that annual report, when it's compiled, to all take time and read what the commission has done over the last 12 years, and you'll see that it has been very worth while. I'm not going to sit here and say that these other Acts haven't been worth while either, because I'm sure they have.

I just wanted to make those few remarks, and I think we can get the same results the way the minister has reorganized. Thank you.

[The sections of Bill 18 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

THE CHAIRMAN: Shall the Bill be reported? Are you agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? Carried.

### Bill 23

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

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

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We had raised a number of questions with respect to this series of amendments and had posed them as questions to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. I might add that in estimates I think we posed about 120 questions to the hon. Treasurer, and we have not had a reply to a single one nor a reply to any of the questions regarding Bill 23, whereas other ministers are very good in terms of estimates, of shipping stuff over, and in terms of answering questions. So as we go into this stage, we have not yet had any of our concerns addressed. I might add that in the previous Bill the Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti had addressed the issues in questions that we had raised. So there were a series of questions that are still awaiting answers, and I won't repeat them for the sake of brevity.

I would say again that with regards to the issue of loans, the tabling of loan guarantees, loan and share agreements, et cetera, we initially had thought there was a little bit of a loophole here because it tied the tabling to supply votes. There are mechanisms through nonbudgetary disbursements we thought might have provided a venue, and there's a particular process through order in council. But in discussions with the Auditor General we find that our concerns in this regard really have no merit and that section 59 and section 76 are sufficiently thorough that it would

mean that there would be tablings of, for example, the Universal Industries material if that were subsequently re-entered or renegotiated. So that concern of ours was addressed.

The other areas, with regards to write-offs, compromises, and remissions, rectify a problem that had arisen under a previous amendment to the Financial Administration Act. Again we had requested some clarification why sunset provisions that were part of the Financial Administration Act – the Act itself is being amended – had not been proclaimed. The Credit Union Act amendments: we've checked again with stakeholders, and there appear to be no concerns on their part.

We do, however, have one or two concerns that we may address through amendment, and some of colleagues will speak to that.

4:40

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is my first opportunity to speak to this Bill, so I'd just like to make a few comments on it. I like some of the objectives in the Bill: that it repeals a number of the legislative statutes that are no longer applicable to the operation of government; that it eliminates the separate regulated funds for small business term assistance and farm credit stability programs and these programs will continue with their transactions handled through the general revenue fund; that it amends the Credit Union Act to require disclosure of executive salaries and benefits for credit unions with assets not exceeding \$500 million; and that it makes a number of changes to the Financial Administration Act. The most significant, I think, is the requirement for the government to table all loans, loan guarantees, and share purchase agreements in the Legislative Assembly. This is certainly something that's due and timely.

I do have a few concerns, primarily relative to reducing the reporting requirements for write-offs; the failure to include indemnity agreements in the tabling provisions; the failure to implement sunset provisions for agencies and funds, as my colleague mentioned; the need to develop more proactive asset management policies; and concern over the use of derivative instruments.

So with those comments, I would like to move an amendment on behalf of my colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud. I move that Bill 23 be amended as follows. [interjection] It is distributed.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is the one beginning with "B"? Okay. This will be known as A1. Everyone has received that; have they not?

Okay. On the amendment, Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Okay. I move that section 4(20) is amended in section 50 by striking out section 50(2) and renumbering them: section 50(3) as section 50(2); section 50(4) as section 50(3); section 50(5) as section 50(4); section 50(6) as section 50(5); and section 50(7) as section 50(6).

Now, just to refresh everyone's memory with regard to this, section 50(1) states:

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.

Now, we fully agree with this section, and it's a very good section to have in this Bill. We're very satisfied that the Treasurer saw fit to put it in there.

Unfortunately, it's followed by section 50(2), which says, "The contravention of subsection (1) does not by itself make any agreement or transaction void or invalid." So by having this section in here, what you're basically allowing or giving permission to the Treasurer to do is to "adhere to investment and lending policies, standards and procedures that" a not reasonable and nonprudent person would be applying with respect to the portfolio. This is exactly not what we would want to see in this Bill, and it gives the Provincial Treasurer a way out in terms of being satisfactorily accountable. For that reason we want this section to be withdrawn and feel that there are some very, very strong arguments to be made on that case.

So with those comments, I'll let my other colleagues address this specific issue.

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

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise to speak to the amendment brought forward by my colleague from Edmonton-Ellerslie. The amendment, I think, makes eminent sense. We heard the hon. House leader just a few minutes ago in terms of Bill 3 say: why would you ever bring forward legislation that was redundant? If you read, if hon. members wish to follow along, page 10 of Bill 23, sections 50(1) and 50(2), as the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie noted, in there is a section that, well, basically exhorts the Treasurer to be prudent, to use common sense in terms of investment strategies, and "to avoid undue risk of loss and obtain a reasonable return," all things we should view as being reasonable.

Section (2) then says, "The contravention of subsection (1) does not by itself make any agreement or transaction void or invalid." What type of gobbledygook is that? Why would you have a clause in there that says, "We want prudence," and then on the other hand, even if you enter into an agreement that you absolutely, utterly screw up – you're basically negligent or incompetent, and you enter into an agreement where there are significant losses – this says there's no cost, that "the contravention . . . does not by itself make any agreement or transaction void or invalid"? Why have that section in there if you're going to say in the next section that it's basically nothing more than a motherhood statement? I mean, legislation ought not to be composed of motherhood statements. That was the hon. House leader's point of attack with one of the amendments: that you don't have clauses or amendments that are redundant.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

Clearly, if in fact the violation of 50(1) has in itself no penalty and allows the agreement that was in contravention of 50(1) to remain in force, what's the point of having 50(1) there? It makes absolutely no sense. So I think the only reasonable way of addressing this is to get rid of 50(2), the contravention. Why not basically put a wall around the Provincial Treasurer and require him or her in subsequent periods to be prudent? I mean, Provincial Treasurers in the future will be bound by this legislation. Why not make it very clear that it is legislatively required, the "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"?

Section 50(2) just means that the Provincial Treasurer can say, "Sorry, I made a mistake, but the deal still stands." I would think if there's any consistency on the part of the government in

this regard, I would expect the Government House Leader to support this amendment just on the grounds of logical consistency. It's pretty clear that if you have 50(1) in there, a requirement for prudence, and then he says, "Notwithstanding that, it doesn't matter," one of those has to go. So the amendment that has been brought forward is one that really requires the Provincial Treasurer to be prudent, and if he is not or if subsequent Provincial Treasurers are not, it would then require that the transaction be null and void. I mean, surely this legislation requires the Provincial Treasurer to be consistent. Why require the Provincial Treasurer to "avoid undue risk of loss and obtain a reasonable return," yet if the Provincial Treasurer fails to comply with 50(1), ensure that you can't negate the deal?

There are a number of bad deals that have been entered into, and when we bring them up in the House, what the Provincial Treasurer says is: "Well, look; that was then. This was negotiated in December of 1992, and my hands are tied. I can't do anything. I have to live with the renegotiation, so in October of 1994 I entered into a new agreement." Well, this amendment would give the Provincial Treasurer the ability and, in fact, would require him to make null and void bad deals. This is the mechanism by which the Provincial Treasurer can say no to bad decisions that have been made by others. Clearly, there ought to be a role for this.

#### 4:50

I think that, on one hand, while there are some admirable qualities to Bill 23, if any member on that side of the House looks at page 10, goes to section 50(2) and compares it to 50(1), it doesn't make a lot of sense. What the government does need is a mechanism by which they can declare null and void deals that are not in the best interests of taxpayers. So why require the Provincial Treasurer to be prudent and apply reasonable . . . Let me read it.

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's fair, but then why negate it by saying that even if he isn't prudent, it doesn't matter? So I think this is not an unfriendly amendment. It just says that there's a logical inconsistency here.

I would just draw hon. members to the position that the Provincial Treasurer found himself in today in saying: that was a deal done in December of 1992, but, gosh, I'm stuck with a bad deal; that was then, this is now, but I still had to do something. Well, if this amendment is passed, he won't be forced to be weaselly. He won't be forced to be mealymouthed. He can say: "It's a bad deal. Let's get rid of it and move on."

So I would urge all members on both sides of the House to support this amendment.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Mr. Chairman, I would simply rise and make only a few brief comments in support of the amendment that is under debate at this point in time, following up on the comments of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, my colleague, about an approach with this amendment that will help the Provincial Treasurer avoid the pitfalls and the traps that he unfortunately finds himself stepping into once in a while.

I was listening earlier today, Mr. Chairman, to the answers in question period to questions posed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud with respect to the Universal Industries loan agreement, now called indemnities, and I couldn't help but recall that the same argument was used by the Provincial Treasurer when he got

caught with the Bovar loan guarantee for \$100 million. Members will recall that at that point in time the Premier and the Provincial Treasurer said: oh, there's nothing we can do about it; it's a prior arrangement that we have to follow through on in terms of commitment. They followed that argument, and they stuck to their guns on that argument for weeks and weeks, and then at some point the Treasurer finally broke down and said: okay, okay; it is a new loan guarantee.

We've heard today in debate, we've heard today in question period with respect to the Universal Industries matter that it was renegotiated in October of 1994. Nonetheless, the Provincial Treasurer continues to say: oh, it was an old commitment; there was nothing I could do. The same lines recycled: it was a prior commitment; it was a bad deal; we're stuck with it. Sooner or later I think we'll probably end up in exactly the same scenario, where ultimately the Provincial Treasurer is going to have to admit that it isn't a prior commitment, that it's a new arrangement in October of 1994 as negotiated.

To avoid the concerns, to avoid the traps the Provincial Treasurer falls in in trying to argue away new loan guarantees given by this provincial government on the basis of prior commitments, those problems will be solved with the provision of this amendment as proposed. So, Mr. Chairman, as I recall the events of the two loan guarantees that we were certainly made aware of, the Bovar one and the Universal Industries one, this I think is timely and important as we debate this particular Bill.

Those are my comments. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Labour.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, given the time, I would move that we do adjourn debate on the amendment.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We have a motion by the Government House Leader that we adjourn debate on the amendment. All agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? Carried.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain Bills. The committee reports the following: Bill 17, Bill 18. The committee reports the following Bill with some amendments: Bill 3. The committee reports progress on the following: Bill 23. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: All those in favour of the report as submitted by the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried.

**head: Government Bills and Orders**  
**head: Second Reading**

**5:00**

**Bill 29**  
**Appropriation Act, 1995**

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

MR. DINNING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to move second reading of Bill 29, the Appropriation Act, 1995.

I must applaud the Government House Leader and the Opposition House Leader for their brilliant discussions prior to the start of the legislative session this spring. We went through 20 days of estimates in the primary part of the budget and then two evenings of lottery fund estimates. I believe the debate was of some value. Certainly the researchers were up to their typical performance in providing ammunition to our brethren and sisters on the other side of the Assembly and reading off a cacophony of questions. I know that my colleagues on this side of the Assembly are scrambling to answer those questions as well as they possibly can. The debate was informed, was helpful. Clearly, this government is on a track that is consistent with the plan that we spelled out in May of 1993, when we said that we were going to reduce our spending by \$2.7 billion, nearly 20 percent off the '92-93 expenditure base.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, coming from the Dunvegan constituency, in the case of Ralph Klein's government a promise made is a promise kept. We have fulfilled the promise that we spelled out before we went to the polls in 1993. Albertans sent us to do their business. In a manner they said: "It's tough. It's going to hurt. It's not going to be easy, it's not going to be pleasant, but in the end Alberta and Albertans, young and old, are going to be better off for the actions that you must take. Are you going to get it right, a hundred percent the first time out?" No. And we've never promised that. We've never promised that we were going to do it a hundred percent right all the time. But I say with some humility that Albertans have said: "We know you're not going to get it right. We admire your honesty in saying that you're not going to get it right. So as difficult as it is, overall we give you the provincial government, Ralph Klein, an approval rating of some 73 percent." Seventy-three percent of Albertans in a rather, I'd say, independent poll, a rather independently initiated survey, piece of research, very independent, very removed from the provincial government, from the Conservative government - they shall go nameless; I wouldn't want to give them any additional publicity. They said that 73 percent of Albertans approved of the actions taken by the Premier, by this government. I won't remind Liberal members that their approval rating wasn't quite as high.

MR. WICKMAN: Seventy-one percent.

MR. DINNING: I think the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford said 71. Obviously, the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford might suffer from a certain degree of dyslexia in that I think it was not 71, but instead it was . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: One, seven.



MR. DINNING: Seventeen percent. My colleagues know that number like clockwork, Mr. Speaker. I do admire my colleagues' familiarity with numbers, because numbers are near and dear to my heart, and it is part of the promise that we made to Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues, especially my colleagues in Health and social services and Education and advanced education. These are the colleagues, along with all of the members of our caucus, who are out there on the front line talking with Albertans, listening to what they have to say, and hearing their concerns and being mindful that these are Albertans that we are serving. We do not take our responsibilities lightly, and there are some sleepless nights about some of the actions that we are taking, but we simply have heard from Albertans that there is absolutely no choice.

In the interests of not prolonging the debate because of the weariness and perhaps even the wariness of my colleagues – but I'm reminded, Mr. Speaker, of my colleague's, I think it's fair to say the Minister of Health, story that she told me this afternoon about some woman who was before her at a mall this afternoon. She stopped the Minister of Health, took her physically by the arm. The Minister of Health was a little leery about this. The woman said, "You're in Health. We know about you from Health." The Minister of Health said: "Yes. Actually, I'll confess; I'm the Minister of Health." She said: "Well, my dear, you are on the right track. You're making some tough decisions. We know that's difficult, but we encourage you to stay the course." It's tough, but we have the resolve of our caucus. We have the resolve of Albertans.

Knowing the anxiety of hon. members that I sit down so that they can listen to the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud speak for 20 minutes, I'm in the Assembly's hands, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, the minutes racked up by Edmonton-Whitemud in fact exceed the minutes racked up by Calgary-Lougheed. I think it's safe to say that I would like to ensure that Calgary-Lougheed gets its fair share of the words so that Edmonton-Whitemud doesn't feel that he has too much support from all quarters of the Assembly.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I think I've finished the anecdote of my colleague the Minister of Health. The bottom line is that Albertans have said, "It's tough. We'll grit our teeth. We'll work with you. We ask you to make adjustments where there are some mistakes." We're doing that, but we are determined to stay this course, determined to stay with reducing our spending by stopping running deficits, to prevent further deficits from being run up by making sure that the Liberals won't get into office. They have made that promise; they've made that commitment: not necessarily deficits, but if necessary, deficits. I think that is something that is quite out of touch with what Albertans have said to us: "Stay the course. Stay out of our pockets. Do what needs to be done. Get it done, and get it done fast, and don't blink."

Mr. Speaker, I would close my comments with that.

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

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to Bill 29. Several points I'd like to make. The first is that this appropriation Bill is different in some respects than last year's in that we're now back to gross budgeting, rather than net. That's certainly more sensible. We still have some of the problems that we've commented upon, that we see in the estimates, that of dedicated revenue. We've raised the issue that we think in fact that dedicated revenues to a department create a variety of problems that in the longer term are just going to lead to a lot of administrative bloat and inefficiency and waste.

In terms of other substantive issues, again behind this budget in the appropriations for various departments lie a series of business plans. In many instances, those business plans still tell us what is going to be cut but not what is going to be produced for the moneys expended. Nor do we see in the appropriation Bill, Mr. Speaker, a specific link between what is appropriated and key benchmarks or performance or outcome measures, as is done in other provinces. Might I even say that Texas has a link between appropriations and budgetary expenditures so when you vote on something, you know what you're going to get, not just what you're going to spend.

That's the essence of what good government is, Mr. Speaker: you know what you're going to get for your money. What the appropriation Bill tells you is what you're going to spend. I think that's one of the problems that Albertans have had with government. They know how much is spent, but they don't know if they're getting value for money. That's why I think a greater focus on outcomes and a specific link between outcomes and expenditure is more important and should be in fact linked in the appropriation Bill.

I would make one other point. The hon. Provincial Treasurer says: well, you know, we come close sometimes. But I believe there's an expression that close counts in hand grenades and horseshoes. When you deal with other major problems, when you're dealing with health care, education, advanced education, and social services, close isn't good enough. You've got to be on target, because you're dealing with people's lives. And that's the issue.

#### 5:10

The Provincial Treasurer has also said on occasion that, you know, you can't cross a chasm in two leaps. That's true, but not many people I know would ever attempt to leap a chasm that they'd need two leaps for. They'd build a bridge. They'd actually plan, and they'd get across in an orderly fashion. The Provincial Treasurer says: look; we're doing our best if we come close. I think the real issue is that you've got to come better than close. You've got to be right on when it comes to health care, education, advanced education, and social services.

So with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I'll close and call for the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 29 read a second time]

### Bill 30 Appropriation (Lottery Fund) Act, 1995

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I move Bill 30, the Appropriation (Lottery Fund) Act, 1995, for second reading.

I won't, as tempting as it might be, comment at length on Bill 30. I do think it important that *Hansard* be informed that the Liberal opposition voted against expenditures for health and education and social programs in voting against Bill 29. It's on the record, Mr. Speaker. They voted against programs that provide services to Albertans, and they voted against programs for kids. They voted against ECS funding. They voted against providing welfare for those who truly need it. They voted against providing training to welfare recipients so that they can get off welfare. No. The Liberals would want those people to continue to rely on the government, on the state, and I think it's shameful, Mr. Speaker, but the record simply must show it.

I would still move second reading of Bill 30.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just very briefly. The good of appropriation Bill 30 is that there is some degree of accountability that had not been there before in that at least we have two days of debate on budget estimates, which we did not have for the first four years that I was in this Legislative Assembly.

The bad part of Bill 30, even though it does state where the revenues are obtained and the different means of – well, actually it doesn't. We know what the revenues are, and it states the expenditures to a degree, the \$125 million that are handed out to various foundations and groups. What's lacking, what's really lacking, Mr. Speaker, is accountability for the social consequences

that occur as a result of those dollars being raised. In other words, there are X number of dollars being raised, X number of dollars being spent, but that portion in between is missing. How much does it advance crime? How much does it advance the problems within social services, family breakdown, and so on? Somewhere along the line the government has to come to grips with that. Questions were asked in question period today about revenues in the United States and the social impacts and such.

For that reason, with a good conscience, I cannot support appropriation Bill 30.

[Motion carried; Bill 30 read a second time]

[At 5:15 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]