

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, April 12, 1995**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 95/04/12

[The Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

MR. SMITH: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Keeping consistent with the last day of the Assembly, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you today Mr. Dennis Biggs, consul general of the Republic of Chile. He's based in Vancouver. Mr. Biggs is accompanied by Mr. Domingo de la Cruz Chavez, the honorary consul for Chile in Edmonton. Mr. Biggs was appointed consul general in September of 1994 with jurisdiction for the province of Alberta. This is his first official visit to our province since that appointment. In 1994 total Alberta product exports to Chile were almost \$42 million. This is an increase of 146 percent over 1993. Chile is now Alberta's second largest export market in South America. I would ask that the consul general and Mr. Chavez rise in the gallery and receive the warm recognition and warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present a petition today signed by Albertans, including a fair number of constituents from Vegreville-Viking, which urges the government to "de-insure the performance of induced abortion under the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan Act."

head: **Notices of Motions**

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I serve notice of the following motion asking for unanimous consent of the Assembly to waive Standing Order 7(5) so that after question period today the hon. Opposition House Leader may ask his question pertaining to the order of projected government business for the week of April 24, '95.

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

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise now to give notice that I will stand again later at the appropriate time pursuant to Standing Order 40 to seek unanimous consent of the Assembly to deal with the following motion: "Be it resolved that this Assembly recognize April 16 to 22, 1995, as National Citizenship Week."

Thank you.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to table six copies of Alberta Education's three-year business plan, Meeting the Challenge II.

As well, I am also tabling six copies of a document released by the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities entitled *The Impact of Change: the Implications of the Government of Alberta's Three Year Business Plans for Albertans with Disabilities*.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to table the annual report of the Alberta Association of Architects as well as the annual report of the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, we're joined in the members' gallery today by two young men who've traveled here from Calgary and particularly the constituency of Calgary-Lougheed. Mr. Kyle Mack is a student at Henry Wise Wood high school, and his younger brother Kevin is a student at Woodman junior high school. I welcome them to the Legislature. I'd ask them to rise so that all members of the Assembly can give them a warm welcome to the Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. deputy Leader of the Opposition.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions today. The first one is a great personal pleasure for me because I am introducing to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly my nephew Kamran Haque. He is accompanied today by 59 of his classmates from Ekota school, and they are accompanied by teachers Don Briggs, Sharon Robertson, Gerry O'Riordan and parent helper Mr. Ian Crawford. I ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The second introduction I have today is 85 visitors from Dan Knott junior high school. I've been told that these grade 8 students are the most well-behaved grade 8 students they've had in the Legislature for some time, so I thank them for that. They are accompanied today by their teachers Miss Vivian Lilje, Mrs. Heather Chorley, and Mr. Bert LaBuick. I ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very honoured to introduce two people from Red Deer today. The first one is Mr. Tony Blake, who is with the Bull Trout Task Force – and that Bill should be up today – as well as with Trout Unlimited Canada. He is accompanied by his son Adam, a grade 5 student. Adam, I'm sure, is going to be a future advocate for the environment and sustainable development, which we have a lot of in this province. Would they please rise and receive the warm welcome.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce two constituents today from Red Deer-North. They are both students and part of the ever growing and burgeoning home schooling movement in Alberta. Their knowledge of the Legislature is already somewhat extensive, but they're here to learn even more today. They are Austin Hansen and Brooke Hansen. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MS LEBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure this afternoon to introduce two very close family friends. They are Wendy and David Freedman. With them this afternoon as well is David's sister Sheila, who's visiting us from Glasgow originally and now from London, England. If they'd please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

Thank you.

head:

Oral Question Period

Calgary Bid for 2005 World's Fair

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, Calgary's bid for the 2005 world's fair is projected to generate \$1.8 billion in revenues, thousands of jobs, 12 million tourist visits, and \$120 million in provincial and municipal tax revenues, all for the Alberta economy. On February 21 the Liberal opposition presented a motion in this Assembly in support of Calgary's bid. Now the Premier's statements regarding the province's financial participation require some clarification. My questions are to the Premier. What financial commitments has the Premier made in support of Calgary's bid for the world's fair, and to whom were those commitments made?

1:40

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. Leader of the Opposition for asking a good, straightforward question for a change. I was asked on February 21 to appear before the selection committee; that is, the committee from Ottawa that eventually makes the recommendation to cabinet. At that time I delivered a letter to Mr. Jack Perraton, who I'm sure is well known to the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition. In that letter, first of all, I indicated my tremendous support for this worthwhile endeavour, which will bring international exposure to Calgary and to Alberta, as the hon. member said, will inject in excess of a billion dollars into the economy, create over 30,000 new jobs. It will be an exciting time for this province and the city of Calgary.

On the issue of financing, Mr. Speaker, this is what the letter stated, and I reaffirmed this in a joint letter with the mayor today, again to the bid committee. I'll just quote the one paragraph that deals with the funding. First of all it says:

If the City of Calgary is awarded the right to host a World's Fair Exhibition in the year 2005, the Government of Alberta would look favourably upon the concept of a not-for-profit Corporation to manage the affairs of the World's Fair.

While the structure and membership of such a corporation are yet to be determined, it is imperative that the Governments of Canada, Alberta and Calgary be properly represented. In particular, the Government of Alberta and the Corporation of the City of Calgary should assume a proportionate share of responsibility and risk associated with the hosting of the Exposition.

Mr. Speaker, we don't know what that amounts to at this particular time. I guess what was disturbing to me was a report out of Ottawa that left the impression that Alberta would stand alone in guaranteeing any losses if indeed there were losses

resulting from this endeavour. I was asked that question by Mr. Reid of the committee. He said: will Alberta guarantee any losses, Alberta alone? I said: no, I cannot provide that guarantee.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, when the Premier wrote in his February 21 letter, and confirmed that today, that the government of Alberta should assume a proportionate share of the risk, will he confirm that he doesn't mean he would be signing a blank cheque but that instead there would be some kind of upper limit on any commitment that he is making on behalf of Alberta taxpayers?

MR. KLEIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I think that that stands to reason. If we participate with the city of Calgary and the government of Canada - by the way, there is no financial contribution required from the government of Canada, and it was made quite clear that the federal government would not contribute to this endeavour. So obviously the financial partnership will have to be between the city of Calgary - we'll put it in the right perspective, because the city of Calgary is indeed proposing to be the host city - the province of Alberta, and the various private-sector sponsors and contributors to this particular endeavour.

No, there won't be a blank cheque. It's just like the Olympic Games, and I was very involved in the bid preparation for the 1988 Winter Olympic Games. There was no blank cheque at that particular time from the province of Alberta, although I believe the province ended up contributing about \$125 million to infrastructure that still stands today and is still well used by the citizens of Alberta. So we will work in partnership with the city of Calgary to make sure that if we're fortunate enough to go to the next stage, proper financial plans are prepared.

MR. MITCHELL: Will the Premier commit today that whatever proper financial plans he develops will be brought before the Legislative Assembly for proper debate before they are approved?

MR. KLEIN: As a matter of fact, these endeavours always involve some sensitivities, and like the Olympic Games there was concern that this was going to generate a deficit. I indicated to the press today - and I remember quite well the very first question I was asked in Baden-Baden after we were given the right to host the games. It was from a reporter who said: do you feel pregnant, Mr. Mayor? That reporter was obviously alluding to the remarks of the former mayor of Montreal, Mr. Drapeau, who said that his games could no more have a deficit than he could have a baby. My reply was: no, we have budgeted for a surplus. As it turned out and as we all know, those games generated a profit of some \$110 million.

THE SPEAKER: Second main question, the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Health Care System

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Doctors are so fearful about what the Premier is doing to the health care system that they are demanding a one-year moratorium on further cuts. How does the Premier respond to the president of the Alberta Medical Association, who is now publicly pleading with him to stop these cuts for a year?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly Dr. Moriarty has expressed these concerns in the past. He is privy to the three-year business plans that have been articulated by the Department of

Health. He is privy now to the business plans that have been prepared by the various regional health authorities. Those plans are perfectly and entirely consistent with this government's program to reduce expenditures in health and find new and better and more effective and more efficient ways of doing things by the fiscal year 1996-97. So the program has been clearly laid out, and it has been there for some time.

MR. MITCHELL: Does the Premier not understand that if Dr. Moriarty has seen the three-year business plan, given his experience with the health care system as he sees it today, in fact his case for a moratorium is strengthened? He's obviously seen the plan, and he doesn't like it.

MR. KLEIN: Well, since there was no question, Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that that's Dr. Moriarty's opinion.

MR. MITCHELL: He represents quite a few doctors who know something about health care in this province.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier not understand that when the president of the Alberta Medical Association stands up publicly and says, "Stop these cuts," it is because he is terribly concerned about patient safety in our health care system? That is the Premier's responsibility.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has indicated that she would be willing to continue to work with the AMA to address some of these problems. Dr. Moriarty has indicated to me personally and privately - I've had the opportunity of meeting him in the airport from time to time as we're going back and forth to Calgary and in other places. We've had good private conversations. What Dr. Moriarty is saying in the press is not what he is saying to me. He is saying to me: lookit; we want to set up a process to work co-operatively to bring about in a reasonable fashion the kind of restructuring that is needed within the health care system.

MR. MITCHELL: The Premier is consulting doctors every time he bumps into one in the airport, Mr. Speaker.

Health Care Fees

MR. MITCHELL: The Premier says that he is in favour of charging user fees for essential medical services. This study by nationally renowned health care economist Dr. Robert Evans concludes that such charges don't reduce costs in the health care system. To the Premier: how much in extra user fees will an average family have to pay in Alberta under the Premier's new two-tiered, Americanized health care system?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, the only one who's talking about user fees in this Legislative Assembly is the leader of the Liberal Party. The only person who has used the word "Americanization," the only person who has used that word or who has alluded to America is the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition, and this hon. leader purports to know a lot about America. At least I know he knows a lot about Texas fax numbers and New York fax numbers. I know that for sure.

1:50

MR. MITCHELL: Where does the Premier expect an average family in this province to find the money for extra health care

user fees in his two-tiered, Americanized health care system? Would it be in their food budget, Mr. Speaker?

MR. KLEIN: You know, again I allude to these phrases and so on. They aren't my phrases. They belong to the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat disappointed that he would continue on this line. You know, they have spent \$90,000 to buy an image maker or a spin doctor. Then they rehearse their questions for 45 minutes every single day to know when they should point their fingers and act indignant. Now the hon. member has a little note on his desk saying: stand a little longer and sit straight. The next thing he'll be hiring is a makeup artist. You wonder if they're serious.

MR. MITCHELL: How can the Premier advocate more two-tiered, Americanized user fees when national experts like Dr. Evans in this report conclude that user fees lead to the reduction of health care services that people really need?

MR. KLEIN: You know, Mr. Speaker, we're glad to study all information that comes into our possession as we work through the resolution that was passed by the health ministers in Vancouver this week, and that is to get a clarification of what we can and what we can't do under the Canada Health Act, what is essential, what is not essential. Really we don't know at this particular time.

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

Trucking Fees

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been a growing number of British Columbia based trucks getting a free ride while hauling Alberta timber off private woodlots to mills back in B.C. This past winter mills in Alberta were required to pay a levy on each load of logs they received as part of the department's policy of cost recovery for road maintenance and construction in these areas. Logs hauled out of Alberta to mills in British Columbia were not subject to this levy. Out-of-province trucks that have no agreement in place with local authorities are placing a strain on roadways and leaving Albertans to pay a hundred percent of road repair and maintenance costs, this while Alberta-based trucks entering . . .

THE SPEAKER: Question, hon. member. Question. [interjections]

MS CALAHASEN: This is very important. [interjections] I know it's not to you.

THE SPEAKER: Order please. There is a limit on the length of preambles, hon. member. Question.

MS CALAHASEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think this is an important question. They may not think it's important.

THE SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair is not questioning the importance of the question. The Chair is questioning the length of the preamble. Question, please.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you. My question is to the Minister of Transportation and Utilities. What is the policy within the department of transportation regarding the assessment of levies on

these loads of timber being carried out of province by B.C.-based trucking companies?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the question's preamble led to some assumptions, and I want to correct a few of those. There have been articles published – and I'm sure the member has read those in her area – that insinuate that there is a differential between Alberta trucks and British Columbia trucks or any truck in this province. That's simply not true.

The levy that our log haulers pay is for winter overloads on our highways, and we put a fee on them. It's specifically for bridges, for the repair of bridges, and it's a winter overweight levy on those trucks. The trucks going to B.C. and coming out of those mills are all of legal weight, dimension, and load, just like a load of wheat or a load of coal or any type of load of any commercial product going down our highways. Therefore, those trucks are registered under Alberta registries and pay the fee and gasoline taxes and any other permits that are required, the same as any truck in the province of Alberta. So we are not giving any trucks or the trucking community any break over another one. That's a special levy in the log-hauling areas around mills for the development of our bridges and the repair of our bridges for winter overweight loads.

MS CALAHASEN: Mr. Speaker, there has been some talk about the fees that the Alberta truckers have to pay. Could the minister, then, indicate what the fees are? What is the differential between the fees in Alberta and B.C.?

DR. WEST: It applies to the trucking industry in British Columbia or any trucks coming from other provinces or Alberta. All those trucks are subject to a whole plethora of fees and taxes in British Columbia that we feel go beyond the requirements for public safety or for the natural revenue generation required for the repairing of highways and bridges and what have you. We have asked B.C. to look at that. It's not just unfair to Alberta truckers; it's applied to all the trucking industry. So those fees, yes, are higher in many cases than Alberta fees for like trucks, but that's a B.C. concern, both internally and for other provinces as well, not just picking on Alberta.

Regional Health Authorities

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, Alberta Liberals believe that there should be an open and accountable process for health care restructuring. The public must be included in this process, and they must be kept informed, but the Premier has set up a system that's clouded in secrecy and characterized by shut doors. I'd like to table four copies of a letter from the mayor of Heisler. He was locked out of the East Central health authority offices. Why would the Premier set up a system where regional health authorities like East Central can refuse to meet with members of the public and even shut the door in their faces?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would have to agree with the hon. member and say that if that indeed has happened, that is not a situation I personally would condone. We're encouraging the regional health authorities to meet with citizens, to meet with members of local councils, to meet with MLAs, whether they're government or opposition MLAs. I would certainly like to follow this up with the individual who was affected and with the chairman of that particular RHA, because I think the Minister of

Health has indicated in this Legislature that we want to encourage the RHAs to operate in just the opposite fashion.

MR. FISCHER: Mr. Speaker, just to supplement that a little bit. At our meeting last Tuesday night the RHA did agree to meet with them. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling

Responses outside Ministerial Responsibility

THE SPEAKER: Order please. Just for information, it appears that the hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services was giving information that he obtained being the MLA for the area, which is really not appropriate.

Supplemental question.

Regional Health Authorities

(continued)

MR. SAPERS: Thank you. I am pleased, though, with the Premier's response. Given that response, then, why doesn't the Premier insist that all of the regional health authorities live up to the letter of the law in this province and not only conduct all of their meetings in public but also release important consultants' reports to the public as well, the reports that they're basing their decisions on?

2:00

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly the hon. Minister of Health has encouraged the RHAs to operate in public as much as they possibly can, but there are matters that deal with issues of personnel and other issues that genuinely should be held in private, and that is common practice. In terms of having a public presence overall, we would encourage that.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you. Well, then, that's good news for Albertans.

Maybe the Premier will commit to now allowing regional health authorities to be elected in this fall's municipal elections to make these boards really accountable so they can't act in secret.

MR. KLEIN: Well, as you know, Mr. Speaker, a report is now being prepared on the whole question of governance relative to regional health authorities. That report should be submitted to the minister very shortly. As I indicated earlier and as the minister has indicated, it would be almost physically impossible to get the process in place for an election this fall, but we are not ruling out – and we're waiting for the results of the report to determine whether in future years elections can be held to have members of the RHA elected in a democratic fashion.

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

Employment Statistics

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Monday in question period the Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development stood in this Chamber and stated to this Assembly that during the past year over 30,000 people have found jobs in the Edmonton area. With all due respect, given some of the experiences I'm hearing from my constituents, realtors, develop-

ers, I'm still a little skeptical. My questions are all to the Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development. If indeed Edmonton is experiencing employment growth, where are these jobs coming from?

MR. ADY: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member has skepticism, he probably should be taking the issue up with Stats Canada, because that's where we draw our statistics from. As a matter of fact, in March of this year Edmonton benefited by an increase of 4,700 jobs. In year over year, March of 1994 to March of 1995, Edmonton did in fact gain 30,200 jobs, this very city.

We do analyze these job statistics given to us by StatsCan. They identify what job trends are taking place in our economy, and so far our information is telling us that Edmonton is experiencing a double dose of the Alberta advantage. First of all, inside the city and in the surrounding areas virtually all of the jobs came from the private sector. That certainly speaks well for what's happening. This tells us that business and industry see this city as a place to establish and expand and hire people in this environment. Secondly, Edmonton is benefiting from the tremendous growth and activity in northern Alberta with the oil and gas industry booming there.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister be more specific on the types of private-sector jobs that are being created?

MR. ADY: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister of Economic Development and Tourism may want to supplement this, because he's closer to the business sector than I am. The sectors that we're seeing strong growth in are agriculture and some of the spin-off industries from that such as construction and manufacturing and business services and transportation and storage. Those are the sectors that the hon. member can explore. There's where the growth is, according to StatsCan.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister of Economic Development and Tourism wishes to augment.

MR. SMITH: Yes. Thank you. In order to shed light on this important issue, not only are the companies that are here doing well, Mr. Speaker, but more specifically Banner foods, Ronald's printing, Alta-Therm Industries, Quatex Corporations, Sunland foods, Hanson and Associates, Saxby Foods Ltd. are just a few . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: I want more. Give us more.

MR. SMITH: I know there are more. In fact, I know that the opposition, Mr. Speaker, doesn't have the same cordial relationship with the business community as this government does, but I was talking with a realtor of 17 years experience in the Edmonton market who assured me that their sales are up 50 percent higher than ever before. This is doing well.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will forgo my second supplementary.

Pulp Mill Monitoring

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister denied that his department had allowed pulp mills to reduce the monitoring of their effluent, preferring instead to confuse monitoring with reporting. The letter I tabled yesterday from Environmental Protection says:

Only Weldwood has been issued an amendment to their approval to reduce the monitoring requirements, the other two applications are still being processed.

The letter I tabled on March 22, 1995, says: "Weyerhaeuser Canada Ltd. is requesting reduced monitoring requirements." The licence that was changed for Weldwood is in table 3, Monitoring Requirements. My question is to the Minister of Environmental Protection. Now that the minister is clear that we're talking about monitoring requirements, not reporting requirements, why did the minister allow pulp mills to do this when he said on March 22 that he was "not in any way interested in reducing the monitoring"?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, my reference to monitoring is where they have to look at the effluent, analyze it, and determine whether in fact there is anything that could be harmful to the river. That hasn't changed. They still must monitor. When we talked about the frequency, the situation is that if in fact over a period of one to two years there has been no change or it's very constant and well below the limits that are acceptable, they can do the reporting on a less frequent basis. I see nothing wrong with that.

The fact is that the companies themselves in Alberta are spending far in excess of other parts of the world. As a matter of fact, Sweden is held up as one of the glowing environmental centres in the world, and they spend about \$96,000, while Alberta pulp mills are spending somewhere over \$200,000 on average on this very issue of pollutants in the water stream.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Mr. Speaker, given that answer, I'd like to ask the minister why he didn't give that explanation on March 22, when I asked exactly the same question, instead of saying in this House, "No, we're not in any way interested in reducing the monitoring." His words.

MR. LUND: Well, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the hon. member, he's been playing some games here. The very first day he filed a letter that I had never seen before. I didn't have any idea what was in the letter. The monitoring I'm talking about is what I explained today.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Mr. Speaker, then for what it's worth, so that we can get it on the record, to the Minister of Environment Protection: have you or when will you give the other pulp mills approval to reduce their monitoring requirements even though you said you wouldn't?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, the monitoring that I'm talking about was well described in my first answer. If the other mills in fact can show that over a long period of time their effluent is similar and it's well below the levels that are required by our standards, we will reduce the frequency that they have to report. It's also very important to understand that in their licence, if there is an upset in their operation, then they must start reporting much more regularly until we're absolutely satisfied that things are back to normal and that the process is working and that the effluent is safe.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Peace River.

2:10

Right-to-Work Study

MR. FRIEDEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 14 this Legislature passed a motion asking for the government to study the implementation of right-to-work legislation in this province. Since that motion was passed, I've been asked by a number of workers and union people and employers alike when the government is going to proceed with this study. As you may be aware, in the last few days there's been a flurry of speculation in that regard. To the Minister of Labour: I wonder if he could tell us what steps have been taken to implement that study on right-to-work legislation.

MR. DAY: Well, Mr. Speaker, almost immediately following the vote on the motion which passed in this Assembly directing the government to do a study, we had discussions with a variety of individuals, people on both the labour side of things and also industry and business, and, within a few days of that, made a decision to contact the Economic Development Authority and its co-chair Mr. Art Smith and asked if that particular authority would look at the resources available to them in terms of people to undertake such a study. As we know today, that was taken to the board of that authority, and it was decided that the human resource committee and their regulatory committee would form a joint panel and undertake such a study.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. FRIEDEL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister could explain the reason for selecting the Alberta Economic Development Authority to do the study.

MR. DAY: Well, certainly under Mr. Art Smith's capable experience, it's a known fact that he takes a balanced approach to issues that are economic and that affect the vitality of certainly the city of Calgary and now, of course, the province of Alberta in his present situation. The makeup of that particular authority has drawn from a wide spectrum of individuals in the labour community, business, and industry, and it also has even enhanced ability beyond that to draw individuals into that particular discussion. So because of their stature, their perception that they can do a job and do it well in an unbiased way, and their ability to draw on a number of people: those were some of the reasons I made that decision.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. FRIEDEL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given that many people and groups have expressed an interest in providing input into the study, I wonder if the minister could explain how they might go about doing that now that the committee is for all intents and purposes established.

MR. DAY: Well, now that Mr. Art Smith has taken it to the authority and the decision's been made in terms of a group of people that can do the study, Albertans should know that that particular group will draw up the terms of reference and will also sometime over the next two to three weeks make it known just how Albertans can send in their information and have that information considered.

They should know also that I've had discussions even as recently as today with individuals whom we believe are key stakeholders. Audrey Cormack, the newly elected president of the

AFL, for instance: I called today and in a conversation with her did suggest that it would be valuable for the AFL to have some representation on such a committee. There's also, as I've indicated, business and industry representation there.

As that committee develops their terms of reference and the way in which they're going to operate, that will be made public, and people can send in their information.

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

Grain Transportation

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the minister of agriculture if he understands the market system and how it's used to value farm assets?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good answer.

Then why are you violating all aspects of market system resource valuation by opposing the landowners getting the western grain transportation payment?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: A very interesting question now that I can at least understand what the question's intentions are all about. The western grain transportation program was put in place to enhance the export of grain. It was put in place to assist in the transportation of grain. The producer is the person who produces the grain and markets the grain, not the landowner. The landowner, through a different process, has established a way of being compensated for the value of his land. Consequently, when we have leases, all leases vary. They vary according to productivity of land. They vary according to the cultivated land, the acres that are cultivated. But it's ultimately the producer that markets the grain.

Under the WGTA the program was established to assist in the payment of transporting grain. When the producer grows the grain, when the producer markets the grain, it would seem to me to be fair that the producer should also get the assistance in moving that grain.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's obvious the minister doesn't quite understand, so no more questions.

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

Young Offenders

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question of what to do with teenagers who commit dreadful crimes is one that taxes the mind, wrenches the heart, and fuels public interest. Questions that are continually asked are: should someone not old enough to vote be . . . [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order.

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you.

Questions that are continually asked are: should someone not old enough to vote be held criminally responsible for careless or

ill-considered acts of violence, and how can we protect society from the enraged rebellion of youth? My questions today are to the Minister of Health. Will the minister now push the federal minister to address the principles of the Act as recommended by the young offenders task force?

MR. EVANS: I definitely don't want to answer any health questions, Mr. Speaker, but I believe the hon. member was directing the question to me.

I have been working, of course, with my counterpart the hon. federal Minister of Justice and have provided to him the reports that the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek and her Task Force on the Young Offenders Act provided to this House and very, very good recommendations both with respect to the Act and with respect to the administration of justice. The point in the report on the Act that I think should be made is that we should be focusing in this province and elsewhere in the country on offender accountability and on the protection of society. Those are the two principles of the task force report. I made those points very strongly to the federal Minister of Justice, and I believe that when the Act itself is reviewed in a comprehensive way, those two principles will certainly be taken into account.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you. My next question is to the Minister of Justice. When will the Justice minister begin to ignore the young offenders' rights and dwell on their responsibilities?

MR. EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, with responsibility goes right and with right goes responsibility. I think it is extremely important that we recognize that in a law-abiding society we do have rights. Those must be recognized. They must be respected. By the same token, we must ensure that in order to have rights and to have a society that operates by the rule of law, we must be responsible for our actions. I believe that that responsibility is something that we should all be working on, and when we create laws, we should be focusing on that very important component of living in a free and democratic society.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was recently reported that the minister is suggesting young offenders should face the death penalty for heinous crimes. What does he consider a heinous crime?

2:20

MR. EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would say first of all that I have a great respect for the sanctity of life. The comments that I have made recently are consistent with views that I have had for many years, and that is that in matters of heinous criminal activity – and I'm talking about the Clifford Olsons of the world, the serial killers of the world. These people, in my opinion, do not deserve the protection of law-abiding society because they are continuing risks to society.

Now, that said, Mr. Speaker, I also believe that the breadth or the spectrum of types of offences where an individual would be held accountable and subject to a death penalty if that legislation were changed at the federal level should be very narrow. If in fact a young offender were guilty of the same kind of heinous crimes, serial killing, wanton and reckless abandonment of the rights of law-abiding citizens, then I do not think young people

should be excluded from those kinds of provisions. They should be included just as adults would be.

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

Child Welfare

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The child welfare reforms are making Albertans upset, confused, and angry. People tell us that they learn about the information meetings by chance, and when they attend, they leave confused. And worse, some agencies, such as the women's shelters, have attended the meetings expecting to be indirectly affected to discover that their entire program is going to be swallowed up by the new children's regional board. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services: how can you tamper with the objectives and mandate of agencies like the women's shelters without asking the professionals who are involved? Your government wouldn't treat businesses that way, Mr. Minister.

MR. CARDINAL: We do not tamper with agencies, Mr. Speaker, but we do fund over 150 agencies through my department, and I believe that about 27 of those agencies are in the Edmonton area. As a responsible government we need to, on an ongoing basis, review all the programs provided by the agencies to make sure that programs are up to date and provide the most effective and the best service for the clientele they serve. As we move forward with the reshaping of child welfare, of course the support services that participate in provision of services to children will have to be reviewed accordingly, keeping one thing in mind, that we will provide a better service for the children.

MS HANSON: Mr. Minister, how is it that the government will advertise fireside chats, lottery reviews, and assorted other changes, yet the restructuring of child welfare doesn't even warrant a public service announcement? Why is it slot machines instead of kids?

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, there are, of course, different ways of reviewing programs in departments, and I find that the last two years' review of programs in the Family and Social Services and the aboriginal affairs department has been very successful. There was a limited amount of public hearings; there was a limited amount of roundtables because this government had a plan. The plan was that we had enough dollars in the system, but too many young, healthy Albertans were using those dollars that were intended for the high-needs areas.

Specifically in relation to the public advertisements for the hearings of the child welfare review, if we had advertised across the province, we would have spent \$50,000. In the process we used, Mr. Speaker, we spent \$25,000, and as of March 1, which is over a month ago, 890 people attended the meetings, and 153 people agreed to volunteer in the process. I believe that the best use of dollars is to make sure those dollars are not wasted in public advertising or roundtables but that they go to service delivery.

MS HANSON: Mr. Minister, the people don't know about them.

Will the minister commit to provincewide advertising so at least families have a fair chance to find out what's going on with the child welfare system that's going to affect their communities? People don't know about these. You didn't tell them.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, maybe the Liberals don't know about them, but I'll tell you one thing: the people that are interested in providing a better service for children definitely know what's happening in relation to children's services.

As you're aware, the whole process of reviewing child welfare in Alberta is very complicated and one of the most sensitive processes around. That is why over 3,000 people were contacted by the commissioner, Mr. Speaker, in order to design a plan as to how we would move forward, including an implementation plan, including time lines, including costing as to how children will be provided the most effective and efficient service in the future.

As you are aware, as I've mentioned before, it is unfortunate that over 50 percent of the children in care are of aboriginal ancestry, Mr. Speaker. That is tied in with poverty, and we're also dealing with that by creating jobs, moving people off welfare into jobs to deal with that particular issue. The aboriginal . . . [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order.
The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

Calgary Remand Centre

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In September of 1993 the new Calgary Remand Centre opened their doors, and I'm told by the Remand Centre that on average the daily intake is about 320 offenders. Of these offenders approximately 35 to 40 go to Calgary daily for court appearances. My questions today are for the Minister of Justice. When the new Calgary Remand Centre opened, we were informed that offenders would be able to make court appearances through the use of video technology. Can you please provide a status update?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct that when the Remand Centre opened, the fact that it's in the north-west part of Calgary and the provincial court is downtown caused quite a logistical problem for the Remand Centre and the provincial court with respect to first appearances, bail applications, and offenders who were appearing on remand. So what we looked at was an opportunity to save some money by setting up an electronic linkup between the Remand Centre and the downtown courtroom. I'm pleased to say that some renovations were completed, and as of this week we are now in a situation where the courts can deal with these bail applications, first appearances, and remands from the courthouse downtown, and the prisoners can remain at the Remand Centre in the northwest part of the city.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the Minister of Justice: is this process voluntary, and how often will it be used?

MR. EVANS: Well, it's voluntary in the sense that if counsel representing one of those who is housed at the Remand Centre has any problem, he or she can make an application to the court for a specific appearance. The control factor, Mr. Speaker, is always with the presiding judge.

It does, however, allow us to be much more efficient in the way that we administer justice, and it does give as well an opportunity through another part of this process for legal counsel to meet with their clients without being face-to-face. There are two separate rooms that are set aside, so they can contact back and forth by video rather than by telephone, which was the old process. I

think we're going to have legal counsel finding that this is a very efficient and effective way that we can operate in the fiscal realities of the '90s.

2:30

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final supplemental is: will the system be used for anything beyond first appearances, and will it be expanded to other locations?

MR. EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, we've taken into the loop to set up this process the judiciary, the bar, certainly Public Works, Supply and Services, and our own department. We want to see how this pilot program works. We are quite confident that it will be effective. If it is effective, we may go beyond the first appearances, the bail applications, and the remands, and we may go to other locations, but that will take some time. We will take the time that is necessary and document the savings and the efficiency of the process.

THE SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired.

head: Projected Government Business

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 7(5) relates to projected government business and refers specifically to Thursday. Today being Wednesday, we'd still like to communicate the business when we return. So I would request unanimous consent of the Assembly to waive Standing Order 7(5) so that the Opposition House Leader can ask the question pertaining to the order of government business for the week of April 24, '95.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.
The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Government House Leader if he'll provide us with the information about the activities for the week of April 24.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, as we are doing some business tonight and not knowing exactly how much may be accomplished, we are still projecting on Monday, April 24, to do Royal Assent for those Bills which would be ready as per the Order Paper and then move into second readings for the rest of the afternoon and into the evening. Then on Tuesday in the afternoon we will have third readings according to the Order Paper, and the evening would be second reading and then Committee of the Whole again as per the Order Paper and depending on progress. On Wednesday in the evening we will continue in Committee of the Whole, possibly moving to second reading if we exhaust the committee time, and then on Thursday, April 27, in the afternoon we will be looking at second readings.

Mr. Speaker, as there is now quite an array of Bills at various stages, we will continue the practice which seems to be working successfully between the Opposition House Leader and myself, and that is to go each day with the guidelines that have been laid

out in projected business and then to give as precise details as we can agree on in terms of the actual Bills.

THE SPEAKER: Would there be unanimous consent in the Assembly for reversion to Introduction of Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was such a pleasure to introduce this class earlier that I'd like to reintroduce them with your permission now that they are seated in the members' gallery. It's my very great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Legislative Assembly my nephew Kamran Haque, who is accompanied today by 59 of his classmates and teachers Don Briggs, Sharon Robertson, Gerry O'Riordan, and parent helper Ian Crawford. I would ask that they all now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSZYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've noticed a very well-known and very respected and successful Edmonton businessman in the members' gallery. He's also a very good community supporter, and he's throwing his weight behind the Alberta Summer Games in the constituencies of Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert and Stony Plain, I might add. I'd ask Mr. Gerry Levasseur to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MR. HLADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you today two gentlemen from the city of Calgary who've worked very hard at bringing the quality of life up in Calgary through their special interest in art. I'd like to ask Peter Boyd and Yves Trepanier to please stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: Might the Chair now ask if there's unanimous consent in the Assembly for reverting to tablings?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed?

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**
(*reversion*)

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Premier to file in the Assembly two letters: one to Mr. Jack Perraton, chairman of the Canada 2005 world's fair corporation, dated February 21, '95, from Premier Klein, as well as a joint letter from Premier Klein and Mayor Al Duerr dated April 12 to the Hon. Michel Dupuy, Minister of Canadian Heritage.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

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

National Citizenship Week

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak briefly to the urgency regarding this matter. I think we all recognize that there is tremendous significance attached to citizenship and the rights and freedoms that go along with it and that we surely as an Assembly must stand in a leadership position when it comes to bringing these kinds of issues to the fore. Since today is our final day of sitting before the spring break and since National Citizenship Week officially occurs next week, at a time when this Assembly stands adjourned, and we don't return until after that week, this is really our final opportunity to in fact recognize this extremely auspicious occasion, which most people would argue is in fact the most precious week of all in the year to these new people who have chosen Canada as their new home.

I would, therefore, beg the indulgence of the Assembly to allow this motion to recognize next week as National Citizenship Week to proceed. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Is there unanimous consent in the Assembly for the placing of this motion before it?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed?

Moved by Mr. Zwozdesky:

Be it resolved that this Assembly recognize April 16 to 22, 1995, as National Citizenship Week.

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

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll get to the question shortly. I won't take too long. I just want to dwell briefly on the meaning and significance and the overall importance of what citizenship really means to these newfound Canadians and at the same time what it means to those of us who have had the good fortune of being born here and have a longer history than many of these people that will be sworn in next week and over the next few weeks thereafter.

In most cases, Mr. Speaker, these new people to Canada, these new Canadians, have chosen this country because they know that Canada still ranks as the first most preferred place for people to live in the whole world. In many cases these people have chosen Canada as a result of escaping religious persecution in their homeland or some form of political or social unrest or racial discrimination or some other form of strife. Here we stand in a democratic country welcoming these people to in fact come in and be part of our family, to share this great country with us, and through our recognition of National Citizenship Week we are in effect extending to them a tremendously warm and heartfelt thanks at the same time as we welcome them as contributors to our great country.

Canada stands recognized as a place built on democracy, where we exhibit tremendous national pride and where national feelings run very high at all times but especially so next week. Patriotism and loyalty are not words to be taken lightly by anyone, least of all certainly by this Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

Mr. Speaker, we frequently tend to take a lot for granted in this country, and a lot of the rights and freedoms and privileges that come with citizenship have to be focused upon solidly at least

once during the year. We have a number of examples of organizations that are pledged to promoting things like citizenship and other related aspects that go along with that. We have, for example, the Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations, NAARR, as it is known, who undertake the tremendous promotion of International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in this country. Of course, it was disappointing to us to see members opposite vote down the motion which the Liberal caucus presented to recognize that day back on March 21.

In spite of that, we move forward. We know that racism does exist in our streets and in our schools and even in some of our nightclubs, but we can't take that for granted and stand back and do nothing. Yet here we have an opportunity, a positive opportunity to welcome these new people and shed them of their fears, because a lot of them would be and are from countries where, through some of these other examples of members from those countries, they have been perhaps discriminated against.

It's for those kinds of reasons, Mr. Speaker, that as we recognize National Citizenship Week in this country, we also must recognize the role of important organizations that keep the national spirit alive all year long and protect that national spirit and our identity as individuals and as individuals from cultural heritages other than what is perceived to be the mainstream. So we have organizations like the Human Rights Commission in this province who are pledged to ensuring and, if necessary, even policing the fundamental freedoms that must occur in this province and elsewhere.

2:40

Mr. Speaker, I've had some personal experiences with several citizenship courts in these last several years. I've attended these citizenship courts, and I can speak as a witness to the tremendous emotion that fills the hearts and minds and speech of these new Canadians as they take and swear their oath of allegiance to this country.

Not long ago the hon. Member for Barrhead-Westlock raised in his private member's statement the Polish centenary, and I commend him on doing that. At the same time, I also want to commend other individuals who in 1991 celebrated the Ukrainian centenary. As a person of that heritage myself, Mr. Speaker, I took that occasion to reaffirm my own citizenship in this country along with my family. We did this at the site of the first settlement, the first homestead, of Ukrainian immigrants near Edna-Star, just north of Lamont and Mundare. It was a tremendous opportunity for us to reflect on what citizenship here really means.

So I know, Mr. Speaker, that you'll agree with me that this House epitomizes what citizenship is all about, the rights and freedoms and privileges, the rights and freedoms of expression that come with it. We stand here today as elected representatives of these people who are coming to Canada, who are joining us, and we take this opportunity to show some leadership and extend to them our sincerest thanks for choosing Canada. We extend to them a very warm welcome to join our family. We know that they are tremendous contributors and they have a lot to offer this country.

Mr. Speaker, this country and this province in particular were founded by groups who came from countries such as the people whom we'll be celebrating next week. I think that through this particular motion we exhibit our commitment as legislators, our commitment as individuals who, too, have a national pride and a heritage that goes beyond the obvious.

We have many, many new Canadians coming to this country. I'll just close by saying that anywhere from 90,000 to 200,000 new immigrants, new Canadians, can be expected in this country

between now and the turn of the century. That's each year, Mr. Speaker. So with this opportunity, I will close by simply asking this House to please endorse this motion to recognize next week for its tremendous significance and importance, that being National Citizenship Week for all of Canada. I raise my flag in first salute.

Thank you.

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege for me to stand and make a few comments about this particular occasion, being next week when the federal government has declared citizenship and immigration week throughout Canada. Many of us in this Legislature today honour the efforts of those who came to Canada and indeed to Alberta from other parts of the country and from other countries.

I should say that immigration touches all of us, either through association or perhaps in our own family. I must say that my own roots go back to immigrants quite quickly, albeit from the United States. Without the influence of the people born in Alberta and those who came to this great province from other parts of the world, we would not have settled this land as we have, despite the climate being so extreme, and made it the prosperous province that it is and that we all enjoy.

We are made stronger and we are made more open to ideas by blending different cultures into our society. There are no limits to the opportunities we share as Canadians, no limits to those we share as Albertans. We have a democratic way of life that offers and protects many basic rights. It also comes with some demands and certain responsibilities. Those who are fortunate enough to hold citizenship in this country hold a privilege and an honour that is respected throughout the world, Mr. Speaker. In this country it means respecting others, because we share the values of freedom, equality, and respect for human dignity.

I understand that ceremonies will be held at Canada Place at the beginning of the week. Celebrations are also planned in many communities throughout the province next week. Just let me mention a couple of other events. There will be a public forum on citizenship and immigration known as *Toward the Next Millennium*. It will be held at the University of Alberta. The Edmonton Labour Market Information Centre will be hosting an information session for community agencies who work with immigrants. I encourage all Albertans to take this opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the exciting differences and contributions new Canadians and new Albertans bring to our province.

Let me sum up by restating our government's support for immigration and our support for citizenship and immigration week. Our province welcomes about 18,000 immigrants per year, the fourth largest destination province after Ontario, B.C., and Quebec. Immigrants make a very valuable contribution to Alberta's economy and society. I encourage all Albertans to take this opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge this important week.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to add a few words in recognition of National Citizenship Week as we recognize the values of Canada, as we recognize the great country that Canada is. As we do that – and my colleague from Edmonton-Avonmore said it so well – at the same time, let's not forget the hardworking immigrants that have come to this country, that have built this country, that have made their valuable contributions to this country.

As we recognize National Citizenship Week and the joy it is to be Canadian, at the same time we have to recognize the joy it is to have had immigrants come to Canada and build this country to what it is, whether we look back decades ago, generations ago, at the Ukrainian population that came to Canada, that came here to Alberta and were the pioneers of this province, or whether we talk about the large numbers of immigrants that came from Italy in the '50s. We go to Italy now in the 95th Street area on a Saturday afternoon in the summer, and there's no greater joy than sitting in the backyard of Spinelli's and sampling some of his sausages and Italian goods that he has there. It's a real treat.

We look at those that have come from countries like Vietnam, our friend in the back or our guests in the very front row here. I can look at the Finlanders like my father, who came from Finland about 65 years ago, and his contribution in Port Arthur, Ontario, or my wife and her family, that came from Germany in the early '50s.

Heritage Days in the summer: that's my most celebrated celebration in terms of the summer expositions because it truly shows what this country is all about. It shows that it is a country that is appreciative of the hard work, the talent, the skills that people from other countries give and that they recognize. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we're thankful for the opportunity to be part of this country because there's no country, in my opinion, in the world that can stack up to Canada.

THE SPEAKER: Is the Assembly ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: The question, then, is on the motion proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

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

Bill 207
Maintenance Enforcement Amendment Act, 1995

[Adjourned debate April 11: Mrs. Hewes]

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

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to join in the debate of 207 this afternoon. One, of course, is to accept the responsibilities that I have as a member of this Legislature, but secondly, I have some experience in this field, having been a payer of maintenance enforcement for some 12 years now. I'm happy to continue to do this and certainly will continue to work through my obligations. I'm at an absolute loss, at least in my case, how other fathers could possibly walk away from their children in such a manner.

2:50

Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in reading this Bill because it claimed to make one of the best maintenance enforcement

programs in Canada even better. However, after carefully examining the contents of this Bill, I have to agree with the views expressed in this House by my colleagues. I don't see how the hon. member thinks that the amendments she proposes would actually improve our program. Bill 207 would only be an administrative hassle for both employers and the program, while incurring unnecessary expenses.

The members opposite just don't get it. Good, effective government doesn't mean more government. It does not mean more bureaucracy, and it definitely doesn't mean expending unnecessary tax dollars. Bill 207 would require wage garnishment even in cases where there may never be payment problems. Why would the hon. member target these people? Bill 207 would duplicate a lot of the work that our program already does. Yes, our program does garnishee the wages of debtors, but only those debtors in default. Mr. Speaker, our program targets only those people who do not live up to their responsibilities, not the ones who live up to their duty. What kind of program is the hon. member suggesting we put in its place? There are some debtors that, despite our efforts, avoid making their maintenance payments, but to lump the good with the bad is not the solution.

Our program, instead, has stepped up its efforts to catch those debtors who go to great lengths to avoid living up to their commitments. Our program can now access social insurance numbers and place of employment through provincial data banks. This information will assist the program by the interception of federal funds, such as unemployment insurance benefits, GST rebates, and income tax refunds. Our program can also garnishee joint bank accounts. If a debtor maintains a joint bank account with another party or a multiple account with many persons in order to avoid maintenance enforcement, a maximum of 50 percent of that account can be intercepted to satisfy maintenance arrears. Mr. Speaker, it's amazing what some people will do to try and avoid paying their orders, but our program attempts to stay a step ahead of them. We currently work together with other maintenance enforcement programs across the country to collect from those debtors who have moved outside the province.

AN HON. MEMBER: Brain-dead.

MR. SEKULIC: He's not talking about you, Clint.

MR. DUNFORD: I knew he couldn't be talking about me. To use the term "brain-dead," he could not have been talking about me.

Now, we can refuse motor vehicle services to those persons who are negligent in paying their maintenance. As everyone can see, our program is continually improving its efficiency while concentrating its efforts on those debtors who refuse to make their maintenance payments, not on the people who are responsible and always are paying their orders. Doesn't this make more sense than using up resources on enforcing orders that would likely be paid in any event?

Bill 207 would also cause significant hassles for employers, and this may deter some employers from hiring a debtor. If a person isn't working, they obviously cannot pay for maintenance. Is this what the hon. member wants: to make it harder for debtors to get a job or to keep a job and, in turn, have difficulties making their payments? Instead, Mr. Speaker, our program works with both debtors and creditors to come up with solutions, not create more problems or more bureaucracy.

Mr. Speaker, we currently have one of the best maintenance enforcement programs in the country. Bill 207 would be a step backwards and, as my colleague from Calgary-East stated, a step

in the wrong direction. That is why I will be voting against this Bill here today, and I would encourage everyone to do the same.

THE SPEAKER: Order please. Before proceeding further, there's a matter that should be cleaned up that was inadvertently passed over earlier. Could there be consent to revert to what should have been the first orders of business, which are Written Questions and Motions for Returns?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed?

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

head: **Written Questions**

MR. EVANS: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I would move that the written questions stand and return their places on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

MR. EVANS: Moving right along, then, Mr. Speaker, I would also move that motions for returns stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

head: **Public Bills and Orders Other than
Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading**

**Bill 207
Maintenance Enforcement Amendment Act, 1995
(continued)**

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

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak in favour of Bill 207, the Maintenance Enforcement Amendment Act, 1995. I just want to start off by saying that there are three key points that this Bill is moving to try to amend the current legislation. Clearly the first one is: strengthen the collection provisions for child maintenance by deducting support payments at source. Secondly, it improves the reporting requirements of the government by calling on the director, in section 3, to make annual reports to the minister. Thirdly, it introduces important considerations that must be taken into account prior to the director terminating a continuing attachment and maintenance deduction orders filed with the director. Mr. Speaker, this is making a good Bill better. It's making good legislation better.

I was compelled to my feet, I was compelled to speak to this Bill because of the comments that I heard yesterday coming from my colleague, now government member, from Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont. Although our two constituencies are adjacent, we're separated by two sets of railroad tracks, and I see that on this issue we're not separated by the width of those tracks but rather by the length of those tracks. Earlier this afternoon the hon. Minister of Justice, you know, put something before this Assembly, words of wisdom. If he could just turn and convey those to that Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont. Those comments were: with rights goes responsibility, and with responsibility go rights. He went on to say that we must be responsible for our actions. This is what this legislation is clearly stating.

Mr. Speaker, I go to the comments in *Hansard* that the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont made. He goes on to say that this is "basically singling out men as the only offenders." It goes on to say, "We have so-called vindictive leech moms." It goes on to say:

The custody of children is a choice . . . and courts have traditionally awarded the choice to the mother. Now, if child support is such a problem, perhaps the courts are awarding the choice to the wrong person.

You know, after reading those comments, I had to take a second look at this Bill. I looked at Bill 207 very closely. You know what? It says nothing about gender, nothing at all. It doesn't say anything about men; it doesn't say anything about women. It speaks to rights and responsibilities, Mr. Speaker, and that member, if he had taken the time to read it, might not have made these comments.

He goes on to say, "And I refer to income tax bulletin 994. I ask you: is this fair?" Mr. Speaker, the last time I looked this was the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Now, this is a federal matter, and there may be some concerns there. I'm not sure as to the legitimacy of those concerns. Surely he should run for federal office, and if he has a concern, change those. We are in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. We are talking about a provincial piece of legislation, which we collectively have the ability to change. I would encourage him to read it because he may agree with it if he were to read it.

Mr. Speaker, then I go on to page 1172 in *Hansard*. These are the comments of the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont. He says:

Maybe dad is really struggling to keep his business going or to keep his job, in fact. On the other hand, the ex-wife may have a good job, may have friends, and may be even remarried but yet keeps suing for more maintenance. I know of such instances also.

But here's where the kicker comes: "now, if you want a real eye-opener, then listen to some of the talk shows." I would say that's a private educational system in this instance. It says:

Listen to the talk shows where the subject of deadbeat dads is discussed, and you will hear firsthand what I'm talking about.

You will hear successful businessmen crying on public radio about the things I've just outlined.

Like I said, there's no reference to deadbeat dads in here. I wouldn't even bring that argument up. This is about responsible parenting. Even after the marriage breaks up, this is about responsible parenting. This is about rights, and this is about responsibilities. You can walk away from a marriage, but you can never walk away from the financial responsibilities of raising your children. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family and Social Services should rise on this point, because a lot of people – I won't say victims – who have the misfortune of having their marriage fall apart and have the custody of their child unfortunately often end up on social assistance.

3:00

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont – maybe he could answer that question: who provides the funding? Where does that money come from that goes to those families? He may come to the conclusion – but I'm not sure he will – that in fact the taxpayer does. So if you want to look at the most expensive alternative, it's the one we're currently in, and there is a way to better this.

Then the member goes on. He has solutions. Now that he has identified the problem, he has some solutions. He has three of them: "for society to return to the traditional, co-operative family values." That's number one. Who would disagree with that?

Secondly: "What about equality and fairness?" That's the second solution. Thirdly: "Take the job of assessing maintenance payments away from overworked judges and set up an audit board." These are the solutions, Mr. Speaker. You know what? If society had no problems, the three solutions which that member posed may be the solutions for that society, if the society had no problems, but unfortunately we don't live in that utopia.

So, Mr. Speaker, with some of those comments, I think this piece of legislation is proactive. It's a betterment to what's out there. It speaks to responsibility and it speaks to rights. Most importantly, it speaks to the maintenance of children. I would encourage all members of this Assembly to support this legislation because it is exactly that: for the children. Every child I consider to be all of our children. If you want to make society a better place to live, that's the way we have to start thinking. It's one big family, and when one falls, we assist one another. When somebody walks away from the responsibility, sometimes we have to enforce that responsibility.

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my place.

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

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After listening to the debate here this afternoon, it is quite clear that the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert is very concerned with this very important issue. It is also obvious that she would like to ensure that all debtors who can make payments but choose not to are forced to make their payments. I think we can all agree with her on that point. However, the type of enforcement tool which she proposes in Bill 207 would be administratively cumbersome and costly, and it would not lead to significantly better enforcement. [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjection] Hon. Member for Redwater.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

MRS. FORSYTH: Mr. Speaker, there is a word called courtesy in this wonderful world. [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order, hon. members.

MRS. FORSYTH: May I continue?

THE SPEAKER: Yes, you may.

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you. First of all, the cost to implement the amendments proposed by the hon. member would be unacceptably high. Most debtors pay their orders. Secondly, our program can already easily attach the wages of these debtors who are in default. I don't see the point of spending extra funds in trying to garnishee the wages of those debtors who actually pay and who have never had any problems. I'm not sure how the hon. member would propose that we fund this. However, I know that I can think of better ways to spend taxpayer money.

Bill 207 proposes that the courts be involved every time the program makes a maintenance deduction order, every time they make an amendment, and every time they make a suspension. These court-related procedures are time consuming and create considerable backlogs. This continual scheduling of court hearings could be used by the debtor as a potential delaying tactic to avoid paying maintenance.

The program in Alberta is already extremely successful and efficient and has the broadest range of enforcement tools of any maintenance program in Canada. There are always those who will go to great lengths to try and avoid making their maintenance payments, and even the best programs that I have heard of have a tough time tracking their every move. Yes, Mr. Speaker, even the best programs have some room for improvement. However, Bill 207 would not improve our program but hold it back from being efficient and from responding to the ever changing needs of Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have to address not only maintenance but visitation rights. I've had many calls from constituents who pay their maintenance but do not get visitation. Yes, they can access the courts, but it is usually a six months' wait, and it's six months that the parent has not seen their children. Interestingly enough, I received a call from an Edmonton resident who was very upset about the Bill and had called and talked to the hon. member who is proposing these amendments. Her husband pays \$3,000 a month and has but still isn't getting the visitation rights, that he deserves to have, to see his children.

Mr. Speaker, this is why I cannot support this Bill. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Leduc.

MR. KIRKLAND: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to add my comments to Bill 207 this afternoon. I think I'll open by reiterating the comments of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly. The Bill is written with the best interests of children in mind. When I listen to some of the discussion, I think we lose sight of that. There can be no question that there is not a perfect maintenance enforcement system in place in Canada or elsewhere in the world today, but I would suggest that Bill 207 is a small step in attempting to improve the system that's there. I would suggest that improve we must.

I had a constituent in my office this very week, Mr. Speaker, whose maintenance enforcement arrears are now at \$18,000. Her chances of recovering that are limited, it would seem, and even though Bill 207 may not in fact do that, it illustrates to me that there are deficiencies within this Bill that we must address.

It would seem, as I've listened to the discussion here this afternoon and I've quickly scanned through *Hansard*, that the largest concern that has been brought forth in regards to this Bill is the fact that it will increase the bureaucracy. Mr. Speaker, anytime we introduce a new program, there certainly is going to be an increase in bureaucracy. It has a tendency to level itself out. I think that if we look at the facts, we'll find in the long term that it would be beneficial and that bureaucracy ultimately would diminish.

The other concern that's been expressed here – and I would suggest it's a misconception, Mr. Speaker – is that Bill 207 will require more stops in the courts. That simply is not the case.

The third concern I've heard, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that it punishes, or penalizes, the good as well as the bad payers of maintenance enforcement. If that is a large concern in the minds of one and all, obviously the solution to that, I would suggest, is before everybody here; that is, send this Bill on to Committee of the Whole and amend that. I mean, it is not so difficult to do that at Committee of the Whole.

I think probably the most unsettling comment I've heard here, Mr. Speaker, is one of possessiveness. I keep hearing the term: our maintenance enforcement Bill is the best in the country. Well, they may want to claim ownership to it, but by claiming

ownership, they're being very protective of it and, I would suggest, somewhat close-minded about the potential to improve upon the Bill.

There are many in this Legislature that have had maintenance enforcement problems in their offices that they've had difficulty solving. I would suggest that 207 would assist them in searching for solutions and ultimately bringing matters to a conclusion.

3:10

One item that seems to be – and I will use it, Mr. Speaker, just to illustrate the fact that there are some deficiencies. I'm told that if in fact you're on social services, maintenance enforcement is very quick to find the individuals and collect money from them to avoid what the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning had indicated was a cost to the taxpayer. Well, I would suggest that if in fact we're simply looking after the government's arrears on a very efficient basis, perhaps we can find some more efficiencies dealing with those that aren't on social assistance. That again would illustrate a deficiency in the Bill, as I have dealt with the matter.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think the side opposite can fear sending this Bill to the next stage. If there are some deficiencies or if they have some concerns – and they have indicated that they have some solutions – then let those solutions in their bright minds come forth and change the Bill, as it will assist the children of Alberta. Clearly, that is the major segment of the population that is paying the price for a system that has been in place since '86. It has had some improvements over those years, but it certainly has not reached the stage of perfection.

I would suggest that anytime we have a solution coming forth, we do not immediately dismiss it because we see a few mountains to climb within it. We conquer those mountains and make sure that the Bill addresses the concerns that are expressed there. Let's simply put our efforts towards making the province of Alberta a little more compassionate place for the children.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to join the debate this afternoon on Bill 207, the Maintenance Enforcement Amendment Act. I, too, am compelled to rise and enter the debate, given the comments yesterday in debate by the Progressive Conservative Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont.

Mr. Speaker, I think it has been said both yesterday and today that the purpose of the Bill is to ensure stability in the upbringing and maintenance of children. The issue is children. The issue is not, as the Progressive Conservative Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont attempts to suggest, women against men, mothers against fathers. The lopsided legislation that he refers to, indeed not referring to Bill 207, but in fact in his remarks refers to the existing legislation that we have right now. Bill 207 is an attempt by the sponsor of this Bill to provide greater stability and assurance of income for children. That was what the issue was about.

The Progressive Conservative Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont was suggesting that perhaps the court is awarding custody to the wrong parent. If the father is rich and the mother is poor, then why aren't we giving the children to the father so that they can enjoy a rich lifestyle, rather than being with the mother who of course is having to live in much less pleasurable circumstances? But, Mr. Speaker, I think what the member has to realize and what he has to understand and what all members have to understand is that the courts award custody with respect to the best interests of the child. The court does not decide who is richer, in

terms of giving custody of the child. The court decides on the best interests of the child.

The member suggests in his comments that "Bill 207 will further increase the persecution by allowing courts to enforce maintenance deduction orders through employers" – persecution. Mr. Speaker, I will admit to the hon. member and to all hon. members that this would not be my personal first choice in solving this problem, but we are dealing with a situation where there are instances where those who are obligated by a court order to pay for maintenance refuse or fail to do so. I think what should happen for those who are delinquent is that the courts should find those individuals in contempt and should throw them in jail. I'd suggest to the Progressive Conservative Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont that his business friends who can't pay their maintenance payments because they're struggling to get their businesses going could run their businesses from jail and do it that way.

Mr. Speaker, the member also suggests that businesspeople are trying to get their businesses up and running and they can't afford maintenance payments when they have their businesses to take care of. Well, perhaps what should happen, then, is that that business . . . [interjections] That's what he said. That's what he said. I think the hon. member should recognize that the business environment of that individual who can't pay his maintenance because he's trying to get his business going may have creditors himself – may have creditors himself – outstanding accounts receivable that have to be collected. So his customers then say: "Well, I'm trying to get my own business going. I can't pay your bills. I should be excused because I'm trying to get my business up and running. I know I owe you money, but I just can't afford to pay you right now, so don't do anything about it."

Mr. Speaker, we have rules and regulations. We have laws. We have court orders that compel individuals to pay their maintenance payments. The system is breaking down, as the Member for Leduc has indicated. The system is breaking down in certain circumstances. In the text of Bill 207 what the Bill does is it allows for prevention of those problems taking place and does not allow the kinds of excuses that the Progressive Conservative Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont continues to talk about in his debate from yesterday's *Hansard*.

Now, when you look specifically at the Bill, it does say and I'll admit that it says – and I'm reading specifically from article 7.1(1) – that "maintenance on a periodic basis at regular intervals shall also make a maintenance deduction order." In other words, there's direction to the court that they shall also make a maintenance deduction order. In response to the comments from the Member for Lethbridge-West – he is concerned that in fact it is happening in all cases rather than only in delinquent cases. I would suggest to the hon. member that if he is consistent with the comments he made at the opening of his debate, that there are problems in the system, that there are individuals who fail to live up to their obligations, in Committee of the Whole that word "shall" could be changed to "may", and it becomes a decision of the court as to whether or not that takes place. That is a debate, Mr. Speaker, that we can conduct in Committee of the Whole, if this Bill passes second reading so that we can have that debate.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you and I submit to all hon. members that that debate is worth while having, but in terms of the concept of the Bill, to create a better maintenance enforcement system through a system like the one proposed in Bill 207, I would suspect that all hon. members will want to accept the proposition in this Bill that along with rights come responsibilities. That's the concept that we're dealing with in Bill 207: rights and responsi-

bilities. Let us move this Bill on from second reading and accept that proposition, as all hon. members should, and then let's have the debate as to whether or not it should be for all maintenance payments or whether it should be in circumstances where the court can establish the delinquency and lack of attention to a very important issue. It can be done through the legislative framework in the court system.

That's what should happen, Mr. Speaker, and I encourage all hon. members to support Bill 207.

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

3:20

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to Bill 207, and I'll do so briefly. In my constituency office the issue that I find most intractable, most disheartening is that of maintenance enforcement. It involves children. I mean, it leaves you with a horrific feeling in terms of your inability to do anything except write a letter, cast it into the waters, and see what happens. Six weeks later you come back and nothing has happened.

I've looked at this Bill, and I've looked at what has happened in Ontario. I think this Bill makes good economic sense, good social sense, and it's in the best interests of children. Certainly when you consider the fact that it's usually a single mother who ends up on social assistance as a consequence of not being able to get these orders enforced, it just makes eminent sense that we move towards this type of system. I think it's in the best interests of the children of Alberta; I think it's in the best interests of the economy of Alberta. I think this is a good addition to the legislation which is already on the books.

I concur with the hon. members on the other side. We have a good Maintenance Enforcement Act, but it can be made better. So I would urge all hon. members to support this, and I would just add my voice to others. This is a gender-free piece of legislation, regardless of what others read into it.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Until the bell rings, the hon. Member for St. Albert.

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't going to stand and speak to this, but after I heard some comments from the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont - I know he's a Tory bright light and rising star over there - I wondered what world he lives in.

Again our greatest concern, as members from both sides have said, is what happens to our children, our greatest resource: how they're taken care of, how we meet their needs. No system is perfect, and we want to improve the system, make the system a much better one. Small things can make . . .

THE SPEAKER: The time has now come for the sponsor of the Bill to close debate. The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud of my colleagues. They have seen the need to improve maintenance in this province, and they've spoken eloquently to it and from the heart. I'm very appreciative of their support for this Bill. I would urge all members to support the Bill. There's not one member in this House who does not realize - well, maybe there is one - that this is a problem in Alberta that we as legislators must address.

You know, I find it interesting that the Minister of Justice can wax eloquent on gun control and on capital punishment, two

things he can do absolutely nothing about, yet here is something that he can and should be dealing with, and he sidesteps it. I would say that it's time we must address this issue of maintenance enforcement, which is plaguing thousands of Albertans and thousands of Alberta children. The Bill that I have put forward is based on the Ontario model, that works well, a basic few principles of deducting support payments at source, having reporting requirements for the director to make annual reports to the minister, and that considerations must be taken into account prior to a director terminating a continuing attachment.

I'd like to just end by urging all members to support this Bill and, if I may, quote the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar when she says:

This is a painful sort of a discussion that we have to have from time to time. But who is it that gets hurt? Who gets hurt when this business of court orders and divorce and custody orders don't work? Clearly it's the children. It's the children who suffer. I think it's incumbent on this House to do whatever we possibly can to make the system work more smoothly, to make it work to protect the children and whatever spouse has the custody, to make it work for those children who have had to withstand the trauma of a broken home.

So with those words, Mr. Speaker, I urge all members to support this Bill. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: All those in favour of second reading of Bill 207, Maintenance Enforcement Amendment Act, 1995, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:25 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Beniuk	Leibovici	Soetaert
Bracko	Massey	Taylor, N.
Collingwood	Nicol	White
Hanson	Percy	Wickman
Hewes	Sapers	Zwozdesky
Kirkland	Sekulic	

Against the motion:

Ady	Fritz	McFarland
Amery	Haley	Paszkowski
Black	Havelock	Pham
Burgener	Herard	Severtson
Calahasen	Hierath	Smith
Day	Hlady	Tannas
Dinning	Jacques	Taylor, L.
Doerksen	Jonson	Thurber
Dunford	Kowalski	Trynchy
Evans	Lund	Woloshyn
Forsyth	Magnus	Yankowsky
Friedel		

Totals:	For - 17	Against - 34
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[Motion lost]

Bill 208
Emblems of Alberta Amendment Act, 1995

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Speaker, I'm so honoured to present this Bill and doubly so when I hear my colleagues behind me wanting to call the question so quickly. [An hon. member presented Mr. Woloshyn with a T-shirt] The other side will stay anonymous. Whoever is the sponsor of the T-shirt, thank you very much. That will set off my tie, that was also a present. I will tell you now that I had nothing to do with that. [interjection] This tie was made in Taiwan and was considerably less than \$200, hon. member, and it was not paid for with public funds.

MR. CHADI: Is there a bull trout on it?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Yes.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also honoured to have, as I introduced earlier, both Tony Blake and his son Adam, who have stayed behind to listen to the debate on this particular, very important I might add, Bill.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill has been a very long time in the making. Three of my colleagues in this Legislature have at some point sponsored the Bill. Two, the hon. Minister of Labour and the hon. minister of the environment, lost sponsorship when they got promoted to the front bench. The other member was the hon. Member for Little Bow, who briefly carried the Bill when the minister of the environment was moved up to cabinet, and I hope that the Member for Little Bow will be supporting this Bill today.

3:40

This Bill would make the bull trout the official fish of Alberta, Mr. Speaker. I think we should give credit where credit is due. In addition to the work being done in promoting the Bill in this Assembly and in the government by the members, there's also been a very, very significant amount of work done by members of the Bull Trout Task Force. The Bull Trout Task Force is a public advisory committee consisting of representatives from sport fishing organizations, conservation groups, university academics, consulting biologists, and government agencies. The task force has received support from Trout Unlimited Canada, Alberta Fish and Game, and the environmental protection advisory committee. Special thanks go in particular to Terry Brewin of Calgary and, as you know, Tony Blake, who's here from Red Deer, and Lew Ramstead, one of my constituents, all of whom have assisted me and previous sponsors a great deal on this particular, very important initiative.

The task force has been the primary thrust behind promoting this fish species as an Alberta emblem. They have carefully solicited the support of a very large number of individuals and organizations. Agents from the Department of Environmental Protection as well as Members of the Leg. Assembly, from all three main political parties both in the past and the present, have supported. The former New Democrat environment critic, John McInnis, provided written support for recognizing the bull trout as an official fish species, as did the current Leader of the Opposition. I'm sure the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung will continue to support this particular initiative. [interjection] Never worry, hon. Treasurer.

The Bull Trout Task Force has worked very hard in making the case for protecting the bull trout by increasing awareness of the fish and its plight, Mr. Speaker. I feel the efforts to get the bull

trout recognized as our official fish in Alberta are very relevant. In Alberta the bull trout is the native species that is considered by many outdoorsmen to be the most homegrown of any fish in the province. At present bull trout populations are found in mountain river systems and most of the drainage on the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains. In fact, in some drainages the bull trout is the only native species.

The bull trout prefers maximum water temperatures below 18 degrees Celsius, which basically occur only in mountain lakes, rivers, and streams. Before the turn of the century bull trout were most widely distributed in Alberta, extending into parkland and even prairie areas. As I said, they like cold, clean water, and as such – and this is extremely significant, Mr. Speaker – the presence of bull trout in any given waterway is a natural indicator of good water quality and a healthy environment. That is not to say that because this species is in jeopardy, the Alberta government has been negligent in its stewardship of our environment, for that is generally not the case.

We have had an impressive run of environmental ministers in the province, including the hon. Premier, who have balanced development with preservation quite admirably. Our current environment minister is doing a very good job of monitoring the waterways to ensure that we will have good habitat for the bull trout in the future. The Natural Resources Conservation Board and other officials in Environmental Protection have also done a fine job of protecting Alberta's lakes, rivers, and streams, but in spite of all of this, the species is threatened in our province.

Mr. Speaker, there are essentially three factors that have contributed to the reduction of the bull trout: heavy fishing, changes in habitat, and competition from other nonnative or exotic species of trout that have been introduced. I'm very pleased to note that our government has been taking steps to alleviate the pressures from these three threatening factors.

The Department of Environmental Protection, through fish and wildlife and the fisheries management division, has begun implementation of Alberta's bull trout management recovery plan. The objectives of the plan are obvious in the self-explanatory title. One of the pillars of this plan is the protection of bull trout habitat. As I stated earlier, Mr. Speaker, the government is being careful with regards to ensuring sustainable development in the future in the province so that the bull trout and other wildlife habitat are not adversely affected. The management recovery plan may also incorporate a stocking strategy for bull trout, but this will only happen if populations drop dangerously low.

There is concern that hatchery-bred bull trout may lose their genetic integrity due to gradual dilution of their gene pool. This is something that has occurred in stocking for cutthroat trout, and fish and wildlife officials are going to be careful not to repeat the mistakes of the past. There's going to be a very careful monitoring of the management recovery plan to ensure that we are on the right track and that we continue to be diligent and make sure that we are not losing any of the species of wildlife in this province.

Mr. Speaker, another part of the strategy deals with recreation fishing of the trout. Part of the remedy here can and hopefully will come from individual Albertans and other anglers touring the province. First of all, I'd like to relate what the government has been doing within the context of the bull trout management recovery plan to prevent overfishing. I'm very pleased to say that as of April 1 the bull trout is protected by full catch and release regulations in an effort to restore populations. There had previously been a take-home limit of two in addition to a minimum size of 40 centimetres. There were also other seasonal

policies going along with it, but this is all irrelevant because the new policy is zero.

In order to facilitate the zero tolerance limit, the Bull Trout Task Force has had a large sum of informational posters printed, and they're putting them up across the province where the bull trout is. This is an example of the poster. If you see one of these, it's to remind you of the characteristics of the fish and the fact that you shouldn't keep it if you catch it. This, I think, fishermen are going to find very, very helpful. I may add that the most distinguishable characteristic of the bull trout is that it's the only stream-grown trout without black spots anywhere on its body or on its fins. So, hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, if you fish like I do, if it ain't got black, put it back. Special attention is given to the dorsal fin of the bull trout, which should have no spots on it, as opposed to other species of trout that do have black markings on the dorsal fin. The slogan *No Black, Put it Back* I hope will catch on so that all people in the province who fish, whether on a casual basis or very regularly, will be fully aware that they should send this fish back to the river to maintain the species at as high a level as possible. Mr. Speaker, this is what is being done by the government to prevent overfishing.

The other key to the replenishment of the native species of the fish is the very reason this bull trout is before us today. Gaining status as a provincial emblem is much more important than the status for its own sake. It is all well and good to have bull trout lapel pins or the bull trout gracing the cover of various Alberta tourist brochures, but the most important thing that would come from passing this Bill into law would be the awareness that would come from such recognition.

Mr. Speaker, people will hear on the news and read in the papers that the bull trout has become the official fish of Alberta. They will also learn the reasons why the bull trout was the best candidate, the most important of which is the threat that the species is fading away. I believe that the vast majority of Albertans are very decent people and they would do all they could to co-operate with conservation efforts if they were aware of the problem. The awareness that status as an official emblem of the province provides would help a great deal in the recovery of strong, healthy populations of this fish. That's why it's so important that we pass this Bill unanimously.

Similar awareness has helped population recovery of the last Alberta species that was added to our provincial emblems. In 1989 the bighorn sheep became the official mammal of our province, and since that time, bighorns have prospered as a great natural resource for the benefit of hunters, tourists, and perhaps most importantly for the benefit of those majestic mammals themselves. Perhaps the minister of the environment can comment on the benefits that the bighorn sheep have received since gaining emblem status.

My hope is that adding bull trout to our provincial emblems, which currently are lacking a representative of the piscine species, will prompt the resurgence of this hardy fish. I realize that we cannot make every species of plant and animal that becomes threatened or endangered a provincial emblem, but that is just one of the reasons why we ought to consider the bull trout.

3:50

The bull trout is a native species to Alberta that used to flourish throughout the province. Many have said that bull trout are an angler's delight because of their catchability and the fierce struggle they provide for sportsmen. As I have said, we are currently lacking a fish representative, while mammals and birds

– the great horned owl to be specific, Mr. Speaker – are existing emblems of Alberta.

In summation, Mr. Speaker, because of all these criteria I feel that the bull trout is the leading candidate and one that stands to benefit the most from the awareness of such recognition. There is a great deal of consensus on this initiative from our caucus, from opposition caucuses of past and present, from the Bull Trout Task Force, a large number of outdoor organizations, and many individual Albertans. For these reasons, I would hope all members of this Assembly will see fit to vote in favour of Bill 208.

Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to rise and join the debate on Bill 208, which will pass into law the recognition of the bull trout as the emblematic fish for the province of Alberta. In my opening comments I would also like to welcome Tony and Adam on behalf of my colleagues on this side of the House and thank them for the work they are doing with respect to the recovery plans for the bull trout species, for the work of the Bull Trout Task Force, and certainly those involved in the bull trout recovery plan.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's in fact fitting that the bull trout would be brought forward and be sponsored by the hon. Member for Stony Plain as the emblematic fish of Alberta because of what an emblem for the province of Alberta is intended to do, and that is to use, as an example, an animal or a species that reflects the fact that they are indeed a fighter. They are indeed able to withstand incredible odds in maintaining their population as a thriving population in the province of Alberta in the face of adversity, in the face of all of the challenges that that species has to meet to maintain itself as a thriving population in the province.

You know, we hear a lot of comments in this Assembly about a lot of bull trout. A lot of bull trout. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that in Alberta there aren't a lot of bull trout, and that's a fact. That's the reason why it's important, as the hon. Member for Stony Plain has indicated . . .

MR. CHADI: The Provincial Treasurer consumed a lot of bull trout.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: The Provincial Treasurer has indeed consumed a lot of bull trout, Mr. Speaker.

It's important that this particular species be recognized because of its status in the province of Alberta at this point in time. Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Stony Plain did make some reference specifically to the species itself. It's important to note, as has been stated in the Trout Unlimited brochure that I have, that bull trout is not directly a trout. It is in fact a char, and it is the only native species of trout that occurs in Alberta's Eastern Slopes. We've had a number of species of trout introduced into those waters, and again as the Member for Stony Plain, the sponsor of the Bill, indicated, competition from those other species has been one of the factors that has played into the decline in the population of the bull trout in Alberta.

You know, it is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that we now, at this point in time, come to recognize a species like the bull trout and the significance that it has for the province of Alberta in the form of this legislation, when we have participated in or at least sat back and allowed this species to have diminished over the last – well, many, many years, certainly in the last 10 or 20 years. It

was apparent in the 1980s that this particular species and its population was in trouble, and we are only now – last year – working on a bull trout recovery plan to bring the levels of population back up. It is a case consistent with many things the government does: the problems are created first, they are ignored along the way, and then at some point in time – and I suppose better late than never is appropriate – some action is taken to try and recover and learn from the mistakes that we've made in the past. I only hope that we are not too late to bring this particular species back from the list of Alberta's threatened wildlife so that it is once again a thriving species in the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I had made reference to a brochure that I have, published by Trout Unlimited, which is one of a series of information brochures on Alberta's management of threatened wildlife. It's really kind of unfortunate that the front of this particular brochure is entitled Alberta's Threatened Wildlife, and on this particular issue it's the bull trout that is in fact one of Alberta's threatened wildlife.

Mr. Speaker, I think one of the greatest concerns we have in recognizing this species as the emblematic fish of the province of Alberta is that we have to recognize, through the management and recovery plan, that loss of habitat is probably the single most important problem that faces us in the recovery of this species. The bull trout spawns in gravel and lives, as the Member for Stony Plain indicated, in very cold waters, in streams and rivers on the Eastern Slopes of Alberta. When those spawning sites are disrupted – and they are easily disrupted through siltation and soil erosion – you seriously put in jeopardy any potential improvement in the population of the species.

Of course, we have had many discussions in this Legislative Assembly and outside of this Legislative Assembly about the impact that the extent of logging that's going on in the province of Alberta could potentially have to the habitat of species such as the bull trout. Mr. Speaker, I daresay that the bull trout really couldn't care whether or not it was federal land or provincial land or private land or Crown land. They probably couldn't care less. What should be of concern to us is that regardless of where that activity takes place, that activity has serious potential for disrupting the natural spawning habitat of the bull trout. We can invest in and undertake all kinds of recovery programs, but they will not be successful if we're not prepared to recognize that habitat stabilization and habitat enhancement and improvement are the only way we are going to bring this species back from the threatened list.

We have, Mr. Speaker, many times talked about individual species, as we are now, and recovery plans and how we can improve the status of those species in the province, but we have also, I think, come to recognize that wildlife management in this province and wildlife management everywhere on this continent is more than just directing your attention to a particular species and putting your effort and your energy into just that particular species. There is now a clear recognition and understanding that those kinds of programs must be done on an ecosystem management basis. We have to recognize the ecological significance of the entire aspect of that particular species' habitat. You can't do one if you don't do the other, and it is incumbent upon this government, if it is serious – and I believe all members in this Assembly are – about elevating the bull trout to an emblematic species for the province of Alberta, to recognize that it must undertake an ecosystem management plan to protect the species from further decline. You can't simply put your efforts into the fish management itself. It has to be in terms of managing the ecosystem of that species and ensuring that the habitat is stable and is enhanced for the future.

4:00

We know that there are many components that go along with the decline of species in the province. I just wanted to make mention in my comments that in the Alberta's Threatened Wildlife brochure with respect to the bull trout I noticed an old photograph on the back of this brochure that shows a good pile of fish on the riverbank, and it says:

A catch of Bull Trout from the turn of the century. These Bull Trout were taken within the city limits of Edmonton when this species could be found in Alberta's prairie and parkland regions.

Well, that was a century ago, Mr. Speaker. We know that for the bull trout and we know that for many native species their range has been cut back significantly for a number of reasons. Certainly human development, human encroachment, industrial activity, logging, land clearing, and all of those human activities have impacted on the habitat of those species. Certainly another one, as mentioned by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Roper, is pulp and paper mills. That activity has also had an impact on the habitat of not only the bull trout species but on many species of fish in the province of Alberta.

[The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

The hon. Member for Stony Plain also mentioned that we can't use the emblems of Alberta as a way of bringing recognition to every species that is having difficulty in thriving in the province of Alberta, but I notice, Mr. Speaker, that we're now concerned about the population of walleye in the province of Alberta, that it, too, is now in trouble, and that we have to now back up and put in place some programs to try and increase awareness of the problem, educate people about the problem, and try and deal with it from that aspect. So we know, of course, that it's not just the bull trout, and we're just speaking about that because of the interest of hon. members to designate the bull trout as an emblem of Alberta. There should be, I think, a statement made in recognition that other species are also in trouble and, I would suspect, some species that we never expected would ever be in trouble. We now find that there are difficulties and there are problems out there.

Mr. Speaker, again I want to say that I am hopeful that the management recovery plan is successful. I reiterate that it must be done on an ecosystem management basis. I must say again that it is incumbent upon the government to enhance and restore habitat. It is incumbent on the government to protect habitat. The whole program of Special Places 2000 was put in place to protect certain representative ecosystems in the province of Alberta from intrusion, to protect them from industrial activity, to protect the natural and pristine habitat to allow all of the species in that ecosystem, not just one but all species in that ecosystem, to survive in their own homeland, if you would, where it survives.

Mr. Speaker, I think members on this side of the House are indeed in favour of designating the bull trout as an emblematic fish for the province of Alberta. We're prepared, as the hon. Member for Stony Plain indicated, to support this. We have supported it in the past. We're prepared to support it today. But I would hope that the government undertakes a serious response and gives this particular species the respect that it deserves as an emblem of the province of Alberta by educating Albertans, not just anglers but children in our schools, those who are potential anglers, recreationists. Everyone who is involved or potentially involved should be educated about the difficulties that this particular species is facing right now and undertake that commit-

ment as well, undertake the commitment to protect the species in the habitat through Special Places 2000, and undertake to make this whole program of recovery meaningful so that we indeed do give meaning to having this particular species an emblematic species in the province of Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, no bull trout has ever been stocked in Alberta. This fish is completely wild. It's a product of its natural habitat. As the member opposite said, this fish is a survivor. When you really look at the history and at the struggles and at the fact that it has survived, you kind of have an affinity for this creature. I say that with all sincerity. The fact that it has and continues to compete against other predators, not the least of which is the human species – you do feel good about the fact that there is a catch and release program in effect now. It is important that this particular species be raised to that level of emblem, recognizing its heritage, recognizing everything that this particular fish stands for.

It's important to hear from the experts, but it's also important to hear from one's constituents. When I hear, as I have over the years, from people like Tony Blake, who is with us this afternoon, when I hear from people like Doug Wood at Just Fishin' in Red Deer – if any of you are ever driving through or by Red Deer and you need to stop to replenish your supply of camping or hunting or other goods, you'll want to stop in to Just Fishin', and if you want to hear from one of the experts, a person like Doug Wood is to be listened to – when you hear from people like Michael O'Brien, an award-winning naturalist with the Red Deer River Naturalists, and Rod Trentham, also with that illustrious group, when you hear from people like Morris Flewelling and Kevin Majeau, who represent and have had a long-standing affiliation with the Normandeau cultural and historical society, you realize that you are talking to people who are in touch with their environment, with nature. They indeed, in promoting and supporting something like this, do not see this as something that is trivial but in fact something that is going to truly enhance not just this species. When you raise a particular species to an emblematic level, that's raising the awareness in all of us of the importance of our surroundings and the importance of the environment.

Over the last 20, 25 years, since environmental issues became a prominent and noteworthy focus, yes, on a broad scale there have been improvements in our environment. When you look at the North American statistics, air quality – for instance, particulate in the air, which was always a concern, in 1972 measurements, looking at North American standards, was an extreme, extreme challenge to our environment, and you realize that that has been reduced some 50 percent in North America. When you realize the air quality with lead-free gaolines, with the removal of lead from the environment, you see that yes, if you focus on certain elements of the environment, there can be improvements. When you look at water quality improvements over the last 20 years right across North America, something just over 40 percent of all municipalities in 1972 had water treatment capabilities that would meet standards today, only some 40 percent. Today it's something like 73 percent of all municipalities in North America that now have water treatment facilities that in fact deal with types of environmental concerns. Why has that happened? The issue was raised, public awareness, things got done, and things happened, and so it is with raising to an emblematic status the bull trout. Yes, for the sake of the bull trout but also for the sake of us being more aware of what's happening around us and more in tune to that and more sensitive to that.

In clearly supporting this too, I want to thank Tony Blake and others for bringing this to my attention a number of years ago and at one point having this particular Bill on the Order Paper as a private member and then losing the ability to do that because of my demotion to the front bench. But I am so encouraged to see other members picking up the torch, as it were, and running with it on this particular issue.

Somebody said – and the Member for Sherwood Park even referenced – is this going to make any difference to the fish themselves? Are they ever going to know? You know, Mr. Speaker, I've already said and talked about what happens when you raise the awareness of a particular issue: you do get improvement in that particular area. We've seen it with Ducks Unlimited in terms of incredible proliferation in the waterfowl species. You see it in California, where the focus on the protection of the sea lion population – actually it has resulted in problems now that they have proliferated so vociferously. You see it in Australia with alligators and crocodiles, where again they focused on those species in terms of preservation and now, if anything, they may have a control problem. We do not have a problem at this point with too many bull trout. As a matter of fact, though they are not at the point of extinction, they are at some risk. Therefore, this needs to be addressed.

4:10

Will it make any difference to the bull trout, the fact that we want to do what we can to see their population increase? Let me close with an anecdote. On the beaches in southern California after a particularly high and unseasonal tide, which was also whipped up by a considerable storm during the night, in the morning you could see along this particular strip of beach tens of thousands of starfish that had been washed up by the strength of this tide and this very unseasonal storm. Anybody who knows anything about starfish knows that as the tide subsides and the sand dries and the sun hits the starfish, it's really only a matter of minutes until this particular starfish dries up and in fact expires.

On the beach early that morning was an elderly gentleman walking slowly along, stooping down, and one at a time picking up a starfish and flinging it into the receding tidewater. Two people out for an early morning walk – two younger people not maybe quite as in tune with natural surroundings – as they watched this for a few minutes, stopped by the elderly gentleman and said, "What are doing?" He said: "Well, when you pick one of these starfish out of the sand as the tide's going out and you throw it into the water, it actually won't die. It'll be in the water and it in fact will survive." The two people looked incredulously at the thousands of starfish along this stretch of beach and just one elderly gentleman, and they said, "What difference will that make?" As he threw another one into the tidewater, he said, "It'll make a difference for that one."

So, Mr. Speaker, this will make a difference for this species, and in fact it will make a difference for all species and raise our awareness of our natural habitat. I look forward to voting in support of this Bill, and I also look forward to the support of members from the opposition.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't realize the bull trout would provoke such oratory in here, but I guess like any political House, if the word "bull" is in it, all the politicians are

going to get in on it, so I couldn't let it go by without getting some in on it too.

I remember fishing for bull trout, and maybe that's one of the reasons they're missing, Mr. Speaker. In the '50s you used to be able to catch bull trout nearly anywhere, up the slopes in the mountains and all along. One of the reasons it's missing is that it may not be the brightest fish in the water out there. That's one of the problems, I think, although I don't know if anybody is measuring IQ in fish. It's a lot like politicians. There, too, as long as we don't get measured for that, we can survive. But the bull trout grows like the dickens and eats nearly anything that's thrown towards him, so it's a very easy fish to catch. Consequently, it makes it a great sport fish. It puts up a fair fight. It's really a char, as somebody mentioned – I forget who it was – rather than a trout, and therefore it's quite adaptive.

I certainly support the idea of making it our Alberta fish. We have not been very kind to the bull trout through the years, and maybe by giving it star status or giving it a headline, you might say, we can talk to people like our environment minister and our forestry minister and get them to start doing the things that are necessary to try to preserve bull trout. As somebody else mentioned – I guess it was the hon. Member for Sherwood Park – they need gravel to lay their eggs. Fish eggs are a little bit different from chicken eggs in that they have to breathe, and if the eggs are laid in a stream where there's much silt, the silt seals around them and the little fish die, or if they get out, they haven't got the strength to get through the silt. Yet we have an environment minister that has the nerve to put out the idea that we should be preserving bull trout, and there are no regulations on private logging. I mean, they can log right up over the top of a streambed. They can log within inches. Even on Crown land you can log within a hundred feet.

Uh-oh. I've awakened a shark.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection is rising on a point of order. Would you care to share that with us?

**Point of Order
Questioning a Member**

MR. LUND: Would the hon. member entertain a question?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: *Beauchesne* 482. You only have to give a yes or a no answer, hon. member. [interjections]

MR. LUND: Was it yes?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

Debate Continued

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member could give one location, just one location, where on private land someone has logged up to and into the stream that he just indicated, and he doesn't even have to have bull trout in it.

MR. N. TAYLOR: I could give at least two, and I suppose if I want to take all day, I could give them all. I have two from memory. One is the stream northwest of Pincher Creek that your fish biologist, Mr. Sawyer, an independent fish biologist or ichthyologist, says is okay. I don't want to say ichthyologist too fast, because you have to make sure you haven't had anything to drink. Mr. Speaker, that stream is silted up so that the eggs can't

lay. The second is in the Tawatinaw River. That is up in the hon. Member for Barrhead-Westlock's constituency in the northeast corner. I used to represent it at one time, and it's had logging over the streambed there too. That's just two that I see, and I could go on and on.

I would challenge the minister to have the nerve to write Trout Unlimited and ask them if they know of any streams that logging has bothered, because I think you will get inundated. I have a list of questions to ask the hon. member that may be that long. Now, I'm just mentioning silt in the streams.

MR. LUND: I haven't found one yet.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Oh, yes.

Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about a bull trout. He might have thought I said shark, but it's a bull trout. You know, the ones that have fins, that swim along and drink.

Anyhow, the next thing, too, is the other area where we lose a lot of bull trout. The hon. Member for Red Deer mentioned that 70 percent of our towns now treat their sewage. That's fine, Mr. Speaker. That's fine. But nearly 70 percent of that 70 percent do let their ponds overflow. They've got the right to overflow them two or three times a year and empty them out. That doesn't just mean you empty a whole bunch of sewage, but it does mean that a couple of times a year at the least, and sometimes four times a year, sewage is dumped down our streams. Now, they argue, "Well, we're treating 70 percent," but that's sort of like, you know, stopping at 70 percent of the stop signs. The 30 percent of the stop signs that you don't stop at are the ones that get you, and that's exactly the same with the trout. The 30 percent of the time that the sewage overflows the ponds is when you wreck your fish.

4:20

All I'm trying to get across, Mr. Speaker, is that they have sort of a false love. There's a lot more to preserving a bull trout than people getting up in this Legislature and making it our symbol, making it our emblem. What I'd like to see is a little action over there. To the extent that the Bill will devote some attention to the bull trout, I support this Bill, but unless we get a metamorphosis or a whole change in the attitude of the environment minister over there and in public works, which handles sewage treatment, we're just going to be going in circles. You've got to do a lot more than pay lip service to bull trout.

As a matter of fact, I don't even think our hatcheries – now, there again our minister may be able to jack me up a bit on that. But from what I saw in the last few years, the percentage of bull trout fingerlings that are being turned out has not been increasing. It's been staying at the same percentage or even less. So I'd be intrigued, if the minister gets a chance to speak on this – and I'd invite him to speak on the Bill – as to what he is doing for bull trout fingerlings, what he is doing for logging on private land, and why private land loggers are allowed to go across streams and across intermittent streams, Mr. Speaker.

In Idaho, for instance, where they're maybe much more interested in preserving bull trout than we are, you are not allowed to log on either private or public land across an intermittent stream. Intermittent, to a lot of the people coming from the prairies – maybe you've never seen a stream, let alone an intermittent one – is one that runs in the spring when there's enough snow or after a big rain. In Idaho you're not even allowed to log closer than 100 feet from an intermittent stream or a stream, private or public, yet in Alberta we're allowed to log across an intermittent stream . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yes, believe it or not.

. . . on public land. Can you imagine that? It's almost blasphemy. If you were a trout fisherman, you would draw and quarter a politician that would allow that. Obviously, there are no trout fishermen over there, a bunch of sharks maybe but no trout fishermen. I'm just saying how phony this is. I will support the Bill, but all the sanctimonious, song-singing hypocrites over there that talk about trying to preserve fisheries when they're doing what they are to our streams and our trout streams is really hard to take.

All I can do is ask, as the old biblical saying, Mr. Speaker, that God be merciful to them, a sinner, and hope like hell they have learned and that they will, after making it a national symbol, go about trying to protect the hatching places for the bull trout and their flora and fauna and not just put it on their banner or on a tee shirt and go waving off to home Saturday and forget about it. I can tell you, hon. members over there, if you leave trout fishing in the hands of the capable Member for Rocky Mountain House, you're going to have a barren looking landscape indeed.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Little Bow.

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased also to be able to take about 12 minutes today to offer my support for establishing the bull trout as the official fish emblem of Alberta. I would welcome Mr. Blake and his son from Red Deer as well.

I would have been more than happy to have carried the Emblems of Alberta Amendment Act forward myself, but I did not do it this particular session for two reasons. The first of those reasons was the fact that the hon. Member for Stony Plain had expressed a great deal of interest in this Bill, given his concern for wildlife and the environment. With his interest in the bull trout project being at least as strong as mine, plus the fact that I had an alternate private member's Bill proposal of my own, we agreed that he would sponsor this Bill and I would second the motion, and I'm proud to do so. In retrospect, Mr. Speaker, maybe I should have carried the Bill forward. I could have said, as I would anticipate, that I would have won a Bill, and now all I can think about is the fish that aren't 19 that are going to be able to drink. Anyway, I suppose the fact that he's also much bigger than me may have had a little bearing on his wrestling this away from me. I would hope that when the members see him wearing the tee shirt with 208 - and Mr. Blake, if you see 208, that'll represent the number of the Bill. But I don't envy the person that asks him if that's a kilogram equivalent. You're in for a whomping if you do.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, the bull trout is native to this province, and it's also native to my constituency. A good portion of the west side of my constituency is prime habitat for the bull trout. Bull trout swim freely in the Bow River on the northern boundary of the Little Bow constituency and also in the Oldman River on the southern boundary. Bull trout have been caught as well in the Little Bow River, which of course is the namesake of our constituency. I can recall catching my very first bull trout at Livingstone Falls on a fishing expedition, the very first one, with an aunt and an uncle and some neighbours. It was quite a thrill for an eight year old, at that time, as I can recall, catching a larger fish than the uncle and having them tell me about this bull trout. I didn't know quite what to expect, if this fish would have horns or what it was, but he was a stocky looking fish as I recall,

and he tasted every bit as good on those mornings of great sunshine and lots of butter in a hot skillet.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Cannibal. Cannibal.

MR. McFARLAND: Mr. Speaker, I was taught by people the hon. member's age to have respect, so I'm not going to answer.

This is not to say that one must have bull trout in his constituency to appreciate the importance of this Bill, but I believe the fact that this affects my backyard and many other members' backyards, so to speak, makes my concern for this species all the more genuine.

As has been indicated, this Bill is about more than just the maintenance of this particular fish, although that's very important in itself. The challenge of managing and recovery of bull trout populations and what that poses to us comes within a larger context that challenges our ability to take care of our natural habitat. Our ability to nurture the resurgence of the bull trout in Alberta lakes, rivers, and streams will give us an indication of our capability and our capacity to achieve sustainable development.

The struggles of the bull trout in Alberta are due in part to development in the Eastern Slopes, as some of the members have talked about, competition from other species of trout, and overfishing by anglers from Alberta and abroad. Going back to my example of a youngster, Mr. Speaker, I can recall some of the older aunts and uncles and those that used to fish making fun of the bull trout. They were, as the Member for Redwater talked about, easier to catch maybe, and some of them even went to the extreme of throwing them into the trees because they thought there were other species that were better eating. Perhaps we can't lay all the blame on environmental issues but some of the blame on overfishing, plain and simple.

Mr. Speaker, the sponsor of this Bill has made a very good case for passing this Bill. The awareness it will bring will be extremely helpful to the other initiatives that have already been implemented for the preservation of this fish species. We have already learned of the basic aspects of the Alberta bull trout management and recovery plan. This plan also states the need for area-specific efforts on the part of fish management areas. Fish and wildlife officers and other biologists need to monitor the site-specific population status of bull trout.

As with many other things, changes in fish management are most readily accommodated at the grassroots level. A good example of area-specific efforts to replenish bull trout populations is the specific education and enforcement programs that were implemented by the Grande Cache fish and wildlife district two years ago, in the spring of 1993. Mr. Speaker, the town of Grande Cache is the only urban area in this district northwest of Jasper. The Muskeg River flows entirely through the district, and this river served as the primary drainage on which the preservation work was done. This particular district had a problem with illegal harvesting of bull trout, especially on the Muskeg River. Results of the 1993 education and enforcement campaign were very positive. The number of bull trout taken from the Muskeg declined by a whopping 88 percent, according to one fish and wildlife officer from the Grande Cache district. Detected violations declined by 39 percent. Fishermen reported releasing bull trout after the catch 71 percent of the time.

This is the kind of success story that we need to hear more of, and with the bull trout management and recovery plan in full swing, outdoorsmen are confident that similar gains can be achieved in other regions in the bull trout's habitat. Passage of

this Bill can only help these efforts to promote conservation by awareness.

4:30

Mr. Speaker, there are other fish that we could consider to fill the piscine void in our collection of provincial emblems. However, Dr. J.S. Nelson, a professor of zoology at the University of Alberta who wrote a letter to the Bull Trout Task Force in support of their quest to have the bull recognized as Alberta's official fish, analyzed criteria that he feels should be taken into consideration in deciding on a provincial fish. Dr. Nelson feels that such a fish should be native to Alberta as well as relatively exclusive to Alberta in comparison to the rest of Canada. This criterion eliminates such fish as lake sturgeon, northern pike, goldeye, mooneye, lake trout, arctic grayling, walleye, and yellow perch. In narrowing the search further, Dr. Nelson explains that game fish that exist in Alberta but are limited elsewhere in Canada include the bull trout, mountain whitefish, and cutthroat trout. Among these three, whitefish is not a threatened species that would benefit from this emblem status, and there are few genetically pure populations of cutthroat trout remaining. Dr. Nelson concludes that this leaves the bull trout as the obvious candidate to be the next official emblem of Alberta. I think his line of reasoning in narrowing the selection down to the bull trout is very valid.

This species of fish is quite a paradox when you really think about it. On the one hand, anglers praise this fish because of its potential to grow to a very large size relative to other trout. Some extreme reports have claimed of catches over a metre long. I converted that into English, the way I was brought up. That would be in excess of 40 inches and over 11 kilograms, which I gather would be in around the 24-pound weight. They are also voracious feeders, as the Member for Redwater indicated, that put up a heck of a good scrap when they're on the other end of the fishing line. Bull trout have large, powerful jaws, and they're known for their predation on the smaller species of fish. Bull trout have evolved in the harsh environment, as many of the previous speakers have indicated, along our cold mountain streams where food is not very plentiful.

All this lends to the characterization of a bull trout as a very rugged and hardy fish that is as strong and majestic as its name implies. However, there is another side to the bull trout. This fish is particularly sensitive and vulnerable compared to other species that share the bull's range and habitat. It does not fare well in competition for existing food sources with other smaller varieties of trout. Therefore, they are forced to seek out almost anything in their environment to use as food sources. Many anglers and biologists feel that is why the bull trout is so readily hooked and therefore prone to population reduction from overfishing. Mr. Speaker, when populations are diminished by overzealous anglers, it takes longer for the bull trout to repopulate compared to other types of Alberta fish. They have a slow growth rate, and they reach reproductive maturity later than most fish. These factors contribute to their sensitivity to overfishing and ability to recover.

I've painted the picture of a species that is very unique in that it is a very hardy fish on the one hand yet very sensitive and vulnerable on the other.

MR. BRACKO: Get that out of an encyclopedia?

MR. McFARLAND: An encyclopedia you could do with.

This fish is an Alberta original and a symbol of our great natural heritage. There is much that government and individual Albertans can do in co-operation that can reverse the population

decline of this most homegrown of sport fish. Trout Canada will help. The Bull Trout Task Force will help. Alberta fish and wildlife officers will help. Concerned Albertans and responsible anglers can help. However, we're very fortunate to be dealing with this Bill before the House today, because by voting in favour of this Bill, politicians will also be able to help.

I urge all of you to support unanimously Bill 208. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. CHADI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I of course feel, after listening to the debate in the Legislature today, compelled to speak to Bill 208. You know, I was born and raised in northern Alberta, and I have done my fair share of fishing. To be quite frank with you, I want to congratulate the member for bringing the Bill forward. First of all, I want to congratulate Mr. Tony Blake from the Bull Trout Task Force on the hard work that he has done in making the awareness of the bull trout what it is today, because quite honestly I'd never heard of bull trout until the Bill was presented in the Legislature. I thought it was a joke at first, but I now believe it.

I saw the brochure that the Member for Sherwood Park waved around, Alberta's Threatened Wildlife. It was put out by Environmental Protection. The bull trout is featured on the cover, and it's quite an attractive looking fish. I had no idea what it would look like. My first thought on whether or not I would support this Bill was going to depend on what the bull trout looked like, because I have a real problem with the emblems of different provinces, with some perhaps maybe in Alberta, and even our nation's emblem. The animal that we have is the beaver. South of the border, that great nation called the United States, you know, they've not got a rodent for their official emblem. What they've got is this magnificent creature, this magnificent bird, the bald eagle. It's a powerful creature. It soars. It's a handsome-looking creature, yet Canada's got a rodent, a beaver. No disrespect, mind you, for the beaver. I mean, it built the country. Those fur traders of a long time ago - if it weren't for the beaver, perhaps we couldn't have gone so far west in such a hurry.

So I thought we should have a good-looking fish, and a good looking fish, in my opinion, is something like a pickerel. Somebody's got to speak out for the pickerel because those fish are endangered or threatened as well, and I can tell you that there is a magnificent looking fish. I'm proud, very proud to be able to stand in the Assembly today, and even though I'm going to support the Bill because I think the bull trout is a handsome-looking fish, if one can describe it as handsome, the pickerel has something going for it that I think no other fish has.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Without making any illusions to trout, the hon. Minister of Justice is rising on a point of order.

Point of Order Questioning a Member

MR. EVANS: *Beauchesne* 482. I would ask the hon. member if he would entertain a question.

MR. CHADI: Absolutely, yes.

Debate Continued

MR. EVANS: I would ask the hon. member whether he believes that there is a distinction between a pickerel and a walleye.

MR. CHADI: You see, Mr. Speaker, where I grew up, in a little town called Lac La Biche on the shores of this huge lake, nobody ever called that fish walleye. Everybody knew it as pickerel. As far as I'm concerned, standing in this Legislature today, they are pickerel. Now, there are people that will say there is a difference. There are some that say there's no difference. To me, if you look at them, there is no difference. There may be some distinction there, hon. minister, but I've known it as pickerel.

Now, I'm grateful that the Member for Stony Plain didn't come along with Bill 208 demanding that we get the maria. You see, where I grew up, the maria is a very common fish. Maria, for the benefit of the members that are not avid fishermen, like the Member for Stony Plain, is a freshwater cod, but it's the ugliest fish you could ever see. I mean, you don't even want to look at this kind of a species. [interjections] Yes, it's a maria. Now, I'm grateful that we don't have a maria that will be the emblem of Alberta as our official fish.

4:40

I know that the Minister of Justice earlier during the debate, when the Minister of Labour was talking about natural predators of the bull trout, quickly remarked that they were Liberals. Well, I've never caught a bull trout before, but I can tell you that the Member for Stony Plain spoke highly of the great-tasting fish the bull trout was, and I suspect that he's got one heck of an appetite for bull trout. So there may be a natural predator amongst you, and you don't even know it.

Mr. Speaker, just to be serious now, there are problems with the bull trout, the species itself, the numbers that exist today in this province. When I looked at the brochure, I thought: why is it that I've never heard of the bull trout or even seen one? I fished most of my young life. But I looked at the Eastern Slopes . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Better put a worm on the end of your hook.

MR. CHADI: There has been a suggestion that I should have used a hook, but, you see, where I come from, we use nets. [interjections] I wasn't talking about turbot here. We're talking about bull trout. . . . the Eastern Slopes of the province of Alberta and the streams and the rivers that carry on from there. I looked at the Peace River, for example, and the ones that would flow either north or east of the Rockies, and even in and around the Fort Chipewyan area and Lake Athabasca. I've never known that there would be bull trout in that area; I know that lake trout is quite prevalent. Even the Athabasca River. According to this graph, it would appear that the bull trout only make it to somewhere near Lesser Slave Lake, and that's where they seem to stop. I question whether or not perhaps maybe it was the effluent from the pulp mills and all the lumber mills that have caused this problem.

MS CALAHASEN: Or emission from a mink farm.

MR. CHADI: The Member for Lesser Slave Lake brings up a very interesting point, because Lac La Biche, for example, and Beaver Lake and all the lakes in the northeastern region of Alberta were fished out.

I can recall as a youngster being in a boat and watching commercial fishermen pulling the net into the boat, and when they lifted that net, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you - let's say it was a hundred yards long; it would be almost like a sidewalk - the whole net would float from the fish. The fish, of course, would die after a day or so underwater when that net would be placed in

the water, and on a hot day they would bloat and the whole net would rise. It's amazing, just absolutely amazing and remarkable, the amount of fish that were caught out of those lakes. It's mind boggling. Those memories will never leave me: the variety of fish that would come out of not only Slave Lake or the area that I'm familiar with, the Lac La Biche lake or Beaver Lake, but all over northeastern Alberta. The pickerel, for example, in those lakes have diminished now to threatening proportions. I believe they're endangered now. Certainly in Lac La Biche lake they are. You can't catch a pickerel today if you don't have a net, and I think even if you set a net for about 10 days, you might only catch one. It's a crime that we allowed it to get to the state where it's at today, considering all the fish that were in those lakes.

With the Member for Sherwood Park speaking about an ecosystem management plan, I think it makes eminent sense. I think that utilizing Special Places 2000 and trying to identify an area for the bull trout to leave it in its natural habitat, to ensure that we don't create any hybridization of the bull trout - because I believe that it could easily be mixed with other species of trout, and I'm convinced that these hybrids would then be sterile and of course wouldn't produce. So I urge the minister to take that into consideration when we're talking about Special Places 2000 and creating an ecosystem management plan for our new emblem, the bull trout. I know that there was talk about economic development in those areas of Special Places 2000, and that would be a component of the Special Places 2000 idea. But I would urge the minister to consider leaving an area natural and to encourage the species to increase in their numbers, perhaps, if at all possible, to where it was, in terms of population, at the turn of the century, as we've known it.

So with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I'd again encourage members to support this Bill. I'm pleased to have now been introduced to the bull trout. I think it's a fine-looking species of fish, and I will certainly let it go if I ever catch one on a hook.

Thank you.

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

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to participate in this discussion on this fishiest of topics. I, too, will be endorsing the bull trout as the emblem for this province. We have the bighorn sheep to represent the land, the great horned owl to represent the air, but as of yet we have no Alberta species to represent the water constituency, so to speak. I think it's high time we did, and I think the bull trout is the best candidate for such an honour.

Mr. Speaker, members who have tackled this topic before me have really highlighted the environmental issues that are implicit in this Bill. They have made the connection between the conservation and environmental issues that have combined to put the bull trout in the unfavourable condition that it finds itself in today. I acknowledge those as certainly valid arguments, and they have been skillfully pleaded. Therefore, I will approach this issue from some different perspective.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleagues are aware of the fact that the Emblems of Alberta Amendment Act falls under the jurisdiction of Community Development, but I feel that we need to bring this point out. Some people might be inclined to say that we are closing down hospitals, cutting funding for ECS, and reducing welfare payments, and at a time like this, how can members of the Legislative Assembly justify spending time and money on gaining emblem status for a fish?

MS LEIBOVICI: Exactly. Good question.

MR. AMERY: Just wait.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, making the bull trout the official fish of Alberta will not cost Alberta taxpayers a dime. The Minister of Community Development considered this Bill, and he informed the sponsor that he did not foresee any expenses being incurred by government if this Bill were to be passed into law. As for justifying the time, I believe that two hours in second reading, plus maybe one or two hours if passed into Committee of the Whole is a small expenditure of the time of this Assembly when you consider the benefits that will be realized from it.

As I have said, the fact that this is an issue with environmental ramifications has been well documented. I might add that we can take steps now to prevent even more severe bull trout population reductions like those that are occurring in the northwestern United States. This area is also native habitat of bull trout: Montana, Idaho, and even northern California. The United States has placed the bull trout on its sensitive species list. In terms of being classified on the more severe endangered species list, the bull trout has moved from a rating of nine to a rating of three on the priority scale that they use. A species can be listed from one to 12, with one being the most urgent for protection under the Endangered Species Act. The bull trout is widely believed to be extinct in the state of California. The bull trout is not extinct in Alberta yet, nor are populations so slim that endangered species classification is warranted. However, the bull trout is facing extirpation or extinction from specific drainages, in laymen's terms. I warn that this is the beginning of a very slippery slope, Mr. Speaker. Hon. members, we would do well to learn from the mistakes made by our neighbours to the south and take corrective actions here before it is too late.

4:50

Mr. Speaker, let us shift gears and look at this on a more pragmatic level. Most anglers know the value of the bull trout as a catchable species that is big enough and feisty enough to provide absolutely top-notch sport fishing, as any pseudo widow of a die-hard fisherman can attest. There are a great many anglers who take their trade very seriously. Many of them will travel for hundreds of miles for great sport fishing opportunities in a picturesque setting. While Alberta's Rocky Mountains and Eastern Slopes or foothills are certainly as picturesque a sight for fishing as you are going to find anywhere, our natural habitat offers the serenity and the bull trout offers the entertainment. So when these anglers pack up their sport utility vehicles and their wives and their kids and maybe a buddy or two, they are bringing people into our province. These people are also bringing their wallets and credit cards too, and that bodes very well for the tourism industry in this province.

Mr. Speaker, tourism is one of Alberta's top industries, accounting as it does for \$3.12 billion in revenue on a yearly basis. The industry employs over 100,000 people directly and indirectly, and it generates almost \$1 billion in taxes per year for all levels of government. So not only is the bull trout's status an environmental issue; it is also an economic development and tourism issue. If we can bring people in and let them enjoy our outdoor recreation, so long as they follow the rules, we will certainly be better off for that.

Mr. Speaker, there could not be a better time to pass this Bill into law. The Bull Trout Task Force has done such an efficient job in garnering such an immense body of support for bull trout emblem status. That support is not only large in numbers, but it

is equally broad in scope. They have recruited anglers, biologists, environmentalists, academics, columnists, and politicians of all three political parties.

Adoption of the bull trout as the official fish of Alberta is also timely in another way. We have learned that on the 1st of this month the administrator of the bull trout management and recovery plan implemented full catch-and-release regulations to help spur recovery of this species. If this Legislature were to pass this Bill a few short weeks after the instrument of the zero-catch limit, the two factors would work tremendously well together in achieving the awareness of the plight of this fish, which is so crucial to its recovery.

Mr. Speaker, this fish flourishes in clean and healthy environments, so it acts as a natural litmus test for our environmental stewardship efforts. The bull trout has significant recreational value for Albertans and for outsiders, who will bring their money with them into our province when they come in pursuit of the opportunity to catch and release these fish. We would be doing something right by simply protecting this fish's right to exist, if absolutely nothing else.

As I close my comments, Mr. Speaker, I would like to leave this Assembly with some glorious rhetoric on the bull trout. In a newspaper article back in March of 1993, Jim Butler, a professor of parks and wildlife at the University of Alberta, said that the bull trout is a species that deserves total protection; when you are in the presence of them, you feel like you're honoured.

Mr. Speaker, our former Minister of Environmental Protection, the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane, commented on the need to grant the bull trout this exalted status. He said: let us hope that the bull trout emblem gives the public a similar message that this beautiful fish is worth preserving and stands for wild places in our province where nature is king. I don't mind admitting that this statement swayed me, and I hope it will sway others in this Assembly to join me in passing Bill 208.

Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I rise and stand to support this Bill. I believe it's appropriate and has been well researched, and we need a Bill like this to promote the fish and also the other activities that revolve around fishing in our province.

I do have a question on the cost of it. They said it's to be used to educate the public about fishing – the value of fishing, wise methods used in fishing – and protection of our fish so we can keep them for future generations. We know some lakes have been overfished in the past, and we don't want to see that happening. We know that many streams have been shut down because of overfishing, especially in the Rocky Mountain slopes. For years some of them haven't been able to be fished or they have been limited in the number of fish. So what is the cost going to be for the education of our public? Are there no funds being set aside for that? I mean, you have to do it in some way. Nothing is free today in the world or in our province. So what is the actual cost going to be?

Another thing I'd like to mention is that you can't just talk the talk; you have to walk the walk. In what you do, you have to not only protect the bull trout but other fish in the province. That means you have to come through, minister of the environment, with some strategies, ways to deal with what's happening, the extinction movement of this fish at this time. What is going to take place? Solid concrete things. Walking the walk, instead of

just talking the talk by saying that we're making it the fish of Alberta and automatically everything's going to be okay. We know that doesn't happen. You have to plan. You have to move ahead with the plan, implement it, evaluate it as you go, to make sure that this happens.

So I would like these questions answered. What exactly is the minister going to do to make sure this does take place? Also, the education part that I've heard about before. As mentioned by many members, it is a valuable tourist industry, and we want to make sure that happens. As in the story in the New Testament, the lad with five loaves and two fish fed the multitude. We want this to continue to happen in the future and to protect it so this fish will be caught and used to attract fishermen and tourists to our province.

With that, I'll conclude, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It certainly does give me a great deal of pleasure to rise this afternoon and speak to second reading of this Bill. I had the good fortune of sponsoring it twice in the Legislature, but I was not successful in getting a position in the draw in order to carry it forward. So it is a great honour and a great pleasure today to see it moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, the idea of making the bull trout the official fish emblem of the province of Alberta is an extremely important move. This will heighten the awareness of the bull trout immensely. A lot of the education the hon. member just ahead of me spoke of that is necessary will be accomplished just through the fact that it becomes the emblem. People will notice it. When they see anything dealing with the bull trout, they'll recognize its importance to the province. They will get on side as far as the conservation of the specie is concerned. Certainly as it relates to the habitat and the importance of protecting that habitat, that will be accomplished as well.

5:00

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Bull Trout Task Force for the tremendous work they've done and Tony Blake. Welcome, and welcome to your son as well. They have been very instrumental through Trout Unlimited and the work that they have been doing to further the education and the importance of this specie.

There has been a lot said this afternoon about what the government is going to do and what they have done. I just want to indicate a number of things that we are doing this year that I think are extremely important. We are going to a catch-and-release. In other words, it's not legal in most areas of the province this year to keep bull trout, the fact is, because of the declining numbers and the ability to catch a bull trout. As a young fellow I caught a lot of bull trout. They're very vicious. Particularly back in those days it was legal to use bait, and when you got back up in the high country where it hadn't been overfished, it was just amazing. They were so plentiful, you almost had to hide your hook to bait it. And so vicious. [interjections] Well, Mr. Speaker, I have never been one to exaggerate a fishing trip, but I can assure you I have caught one that was about that long, and it was quite an experience.

MR. FRIEDEL: How does that get into *Hansard*?

MR. LUND: Well, Mr. Speaker, hon. members have questioned: how does a description like I have just gone through get into

Hansard? Well, I would say that it was probably in excess of five and a half pounds and about 18 inches long and growing.

Mr. Speaker, getting back to some of the things besides the catch-and-release that we're doing, we're also going to be closing some areas to fishing entirely, where there are critical spawning areas. That has been mentioned earlier this afternoon by the hon. Member for Redwater in his long explanation about how the spawning worked. I'm glad he read up on that, but he did fail miserably on the question that I asked him. In fact, I talked to the biologist personally. It was Gold Creek that the hon. member was referring to, and it was Kootenay Wood Preservers that did the logging down there, hon. member. I talked to the biologist, and he assured me that the fish population was not disturbed. It's really interesting that a member sitting in this Chamber knows more than an expert, a fish biologist. But I guess that's not unusual for political points. We will be following up on the other stream that he mentioned.

Then as he spoke about the intermittent waterways, I was going to ask him if he knew of one of those where there was bull trout, but I'm sure he would have passed that test, so I didn't bother with it.

MR. N. TAYLOR: A point of order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater is rising on a point of order.

Point of Order Questioning a Member

MR. N. TAYLOR: I'm just asking if he would entertain a question.

MR. LUND: Of course. It would be my pleasure to do that.

Debate Continued

MR. N. TAYLOR: I was just going to ask the hon. minister: on an intermittent stream where does he think the water flows?

MR. LUND: Well, Mr. Speaker, does the answer cut into my time?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No.

MR. LUND: Okay. Well, Mr. Speaker, an intermittent stream is one where there's a depression in the land. In fact, during the spring runoff, as the hon. member probably realizes, the water runs into this depression and then runs on down and will eventually run into a permanent stream.

If the hon. member has another question, I would be happy to entertain that.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yes. I was just wondering if he would elaborate. The water goes downhill, gets into the stream where the trout is. Would he say that silt could be carried from the intermittent stream to the main stream?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, if the natural ground cover is not disturbed, if the slope is not too steep, then, no, there would not be silt. The fact is that we make sure that the logging does not occur on slopes that are too steep. You can cut a tree in that

depressed area and not cause erosion. The fact is that under the Soil Conservation Act we will prosecute people that do in fact cause erosion. Under the Fisheries Act, if in fact that has an effect on a fishery, we will pursue that Act, and we're doing that. So the logging on private land, that the hon. member tried to drag into this debate, is really a nonissue as it relates to bull trout.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. minister wishes to continue?

MR. LUND: Yes, I do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be working even closer with industry and land users to try to make sure that we are not damaging the habitat. There's no question that the habitat of the bull trout is very fragile. They depend on very cool, clean water, so it's important that that be there. We're going to be working with various clubs and organizations so that if there are blockages in streams, for example, we will be able to remove those and make better habitat for bull trout. Wherever practical we will be making sure that there's an abundant food source for the bull trout. Their main diet, what they prefer, is the Rocky Mountain whitefish, so we may very well in certain areas be restricting or limiting the catch of that specie in order to make sure that the bull trout survives and that in fact there's an enhancement.

We're going to do a number of things in some other areas. For example, on the Oldman River, just below the dam there's an area where the bull trout congregate. There are a lot of very large ones there, and we're going to restrict fishing there to make sure that they're not killed. Of course, there will be no bait used for a 2.5 kilometre stretch below the dam. If the hon. Member for Redwater wants a little lesson, we can give it to him as it relates to the damage that is caused. What happens if you bait a hook, being that the bull trout are a specie that is very aggressive, is they will in fact take the bait and the hook well into their gullet. It's impossible to get that out without doing damage to the fish, and in fact they will often die afterwards even if they are still alive when you get the hook out.

For example, the Cardinal River: we're going to be closing this one completely to fishing to try to make sure that the bull trout are enhanced. Those are just a couple of examples of areas where we're doing very specific things.

5:10

Mr. Speaker, getting back to the Bull Trout Task Force, I once again want to congratulate them. They this year won the minister's award, the bighorn award, for the work that they've been doing in this whole area. That's only about the fifth time that that award has been awarded to a group. I thought it was just exemplary, the work that those folks have been doing in the support of this specie. They were extremely deserving of that award.

Mr. Speaker, another area, when we're talking about the whole idea of how we're going to get the message out. Well, on the back of the anglers' guide this year we're going to be putting a very large diagram showing that there will be no harvest allowed of the bull trout and giving some history of the bull trout and its range and how important it is that we keep this specie. The hon. member that sponsored the Bill mentioned the slogan: no black, put it back. That's one of the ways that we're going to do that.

The hon. member is so worried about the cost of this. I think that by putting this specie in as the official emblem, we're going to have all the sports groups out there telling folks about the importance of the bull trout. They're going to be telling them how important it is that we protect this specie. We don't want to get in a situation like in some parts of the United States where it's

on the endangered species list. We're going to in fact improve the environment for this specie, enhance the environment, Mr. Speaker. That's our objective, and that's what we're going to do.

Mr. Speaker, I would be only too proud to move second reading of Bill 208, the Emblems of Alberta Amendment Act.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Meadowlark. You should know that by now, and after I've finished, you will remember for sure.

I've sat here and listened to this discussion for close to the last two hours, and I've been amazed at the number of government members that have popped up and have had the opportunity to read from different pieces of literature in terms of the support for the bull trout. I've sat in this Legislative Assembly for close to two years, and I've had the opportunity to . . .

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader is rising on a point of order. You'd care to share?

Point of Order Relevance

MR. DAY: Yes. Out of *Beauchesne*, citing specifically relevance. We are talking about one particular Bill here today, and I trust that is where her attention is going to be directed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark would like to speak on the point of order.

MS LEIBOVICI: Definitely. I'm talking to the Bill. I'm talking to the comments that the members have made for the last hour and a half. So what could be more relevant than that?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair would remind all hon. members that we are spending the afternoon debating private members' Bills, not opposition Bills, not government Bills. We're all here, then, as private members discussing them. So characterizing in debate that this is government or opposition is inappropriate. If that is the nature of your comments, then okay.

The hon. member.

Debate Continued

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you. I will continue because that is not the nature of what I am saying. What I am saying is that I've sat in this Assembly this afternoon and listened to all the members from that side of the Legislative Assembly get up and talk to this particular Bill. Yet we've sat in this Assembly, and when we've talked about kindergarten, when we've talked about cuts to medicare, when we've talked about privatization, there has been silence from that side of the Legislative Assembly.

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

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

Point of Order Relevance

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, there is sufficient precedent in *Beauchesne* and the rulings in this House to actually take away a

member's right to speak on a particular Bill when they show contempt for the House. As I anticipated the direction the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark was going, I rose on the point of order. You have ruled. She continues in that direction in contempt of this House and in utter disrespect for the particular Bill before us. Certainly it is for you to rule, but there has been . . . [interjections] I am not criticizing the Speaker one bit. I am saying that he has already ruled, and she continues . . . [interjection] I have the floor right now, Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

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

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that this is offensive to members of this House. On a Bill that is important, she is trying to draw in other political considerations, and you have already quite wisely indicated that this is a private member's Bill. Let's not smear it and taint it with cheap political action. [An hon. member rose]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, there isn't a point of order on a point of order. No, hon. member, there isn't a point of order on a point of order.

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, would you like to reply to the Government House Leader's point of order?

MS LEIBOVICI: The Government House Leader is, as always, eloquent but in this case is very wrong. The point of the fact is that I am talking directly to the Bill. I'm talking directly to the point. When we talk about the future of Alberta's bull trout, which I sat here and listened to for the last hour and a half, in effect the document put out by the government of Alberta states that the future of Alberta's bull trout is no longer uncertain, that its populations will recover. That's exactly what this document says. What I've heard over and over again is how the bull trout is an endangered species. Well, in actual fact the government document says that it is not an endangered species, and what we are doing is standing here wasting time.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Chair has some difficulty at any time with whether government members or opposition members are trying to characterize private member's Bills or motions as a waste of time. If we believe it's a waste of time, then we ought to as members impress our House leaders to discontinue private member's motions and Bills. We have time set aside for those.

So the Chair would remind all hon. members that these are private member's Bills and motions, in this case Bills, and that characterizing the time spent on that as somehow a waste of our time is an inappropriate comment. We should change the rules.

I can only endeavour to enforce the time. However, we'd invite the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark to participate, because according to our Standing Orders, we are here for up to 120 minutes of debate on this private member's Bill.

MS LEIBOVICI: The Member for Redwater had a point of order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, there isn't a point of order on a point of order. Are you wishing to speak to this point of order?

Point of Order Speaker's Role in the Debate

MR. N. TAYLOR: No. I was raising a new point of order. It was under 174, administrative duties. It's a new point of order, 174.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair . . .

MR. N. TAYLOR: I'm sorry. I thought you'd ruled. I have a new one.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I had ruled and was inviting Edmonton-Meadowlark to continue in her talk, but you have a new point of order.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yeah. Mine is 174(1) on page 51 of *Beauchesne*. It is the administrative duties of the Speaker. "The Speaker has the control of the accommodation and services in that part of the Parliament Buildings" and the Speaker is responsible for controlling debate. I'm saying that the Member for Red Deer-North is trying to push you around, Mr. Speaker. He is trying to usurp your duties and trying to take advantage of you, and I would think that if the Member for Red Deer-North would shut his mouth and open his ears and listen to the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark speak, he would learn a lot more than leaping up and trying to stop the debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for your point of order, hon. member. However, your point of order, in fact, reflected on the point of order of the hon. Government House Leader, and we cannot have a point of order on a point of order. The Chair is attempting to facilitate debate and wishes to do that. We seem to be rising to different baits as we go on. I wonder if we could just have the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark continue her debate on the topic that we have this afternoon.

5:20

Debate Continued

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've heard many lofty words this afternoon with regards to the bull trout and the fact that the bull trout is a species that is threatened. The Member for Calgary-Varsity was very quick to point out that it was Social Credit's fault that the bull trout is an endangered species. The fact of the matter is that we've had a government in power for more than 20 years, which happens to have been the Conservative government, and if there's anyone to blame for that, that is the government.

MR. SMITH: Point of order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. minister of Economic Development and Tourism, otherwise known as Calgary-Varsity, is rising on a point of order.

Point of Order False Allegations

MR. SMITH: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Under Standing Order 23(i), unavowed motives. I did not enter the debate, and in fact the hon. member talked about government members jumping up and down and speaking. My name is not on the record.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no imputing of false motives presumably but a misnaming of a member.

MS LEIBOVICI: It's in *Hansard*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark wishes to speak on the point of order.

MS LEIBOVICI: No, not really. Other than I know what I heard.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: All right then. Hon. members, we have a difference of opinion.

Edmonton-Meadowlark in continuance of her speech on Bill 208, that is before us.

Debate Continued

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My point is that we would not be having this particular Bill or perhaps even this particular fish be the emblem of Alberta if it were not for the mismanagement that has occurred in terms of environmental practices within this province for the last 20-odd years. Therefore I have great difficulty at this point in time supporting this Bill. I think that when we look at the effects that we have seen in education, health care, social services, the effects within government itself and the policies, those are issues that should be debated.

With those remarks, I conclude. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader has stood on a point of order. Would you care to cite?

MR. DAY: With what has just transpired, the sorry state of affairs, I withdraw the point of order. Peace and rational logic will now reign, I think.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Stony Plain to conclude.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, it's on the point of order. [interjection] A point of order cannot be withdrawn.

MR. DAY: I didn't even make one.

MR. N. TAYLOR: He got up there, and he said he had one.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members, the Chair assumed that there was no point of order since there was no citation. In addition to that, while the hon. Government House Leader was rising to his feet, the hon. member speaking concluded her speech and sat down. So there seemed little point, hon. Member for Redwater, to continue when there had been no citation and for all intents and purposes a withdrawal. The hon. member speaking had concluded her speech, and we have the hon. member moving second reading of Bill 208 standing. I thought there was no need to press the point of order further, but thank you for bringing it to our attention. That's the ruling.

The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to . . .

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, hon. Member for Stony Plain. We have another point of order.

MR. BENIUK: No. I'd like to say a few words on this fishy Bill.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood, I apologize because I did not see you standing. I waited, and then recognized the hon. Member for Stony Plain and indicated to him that he was now hopefully to conclude debate on Bill 208.

MR. BENIUK: On the point of order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Chair has made a ruling. There's no additional point of order.

MR. BENIUK: Even though I was standing?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: That's right.
The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

AN HON. MEMBER: Don't lie.

MR. BENIUK: Sorry. On a point of order. A member just shouted: don't lie. On a point of order. I was standing, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. I'm sorry that the Chair is unable to rule on shouts that the Chair is unable to hear and, not being yet omnipotent, is unable to hear all of the comments that go on. In fact that's a blessing I'm sure. The hon. Member for Redwater will back me up in that. The Chair had ruled that there was time and, since no one appeared to stand, invited Stony Plain to conclude the debate.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the people who participated in the debate. I'd like to call the question in view of the fact that two people have come a long way and spent their whole afternoon to listen to this very interesting debate. On that, I call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 208 read a second time]

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, on that joyous note and given the time and the temperature, I would move we adjourn until 8 o'clock this evening.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:28 p.m.]