

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

**Title: Thursday, August 15, 1996**

**1:30 p.m.**

Date: 96/08/15

[The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, as our members travel from the far corners of this province, may the vistas of fields turning from green to harvest gold renew and strengthen our pride in Alberta.

We give thanks for all Thy gifts and express our gratitude for the opportunity to serve You and all Albertans through our work in this Assembly.

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to submit a petition signed by 670 Calgarians indicating their concern about loss of the Calgary General hospital and urging the government to ensure the hospital continues to provide services, as it has for the last 100 years, to Calgarians and southern Albertans.

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

MR. COUTTS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present a petition today on behalf of the MLA for Cardston-Chief Mountain.

We the undersigned urge the Government of Alberta to amend the report of the 1995-96 Electoral Boundaries Commission to include the Village of Hill Spring, Glenwood and surrounding communities in the new Constituency of Cardston-Taber.

That petition is signed by 320 people from that area.

I'd also like to present a petition on my own behalf requesting the government of the province of Alberta

to amend the second report of the 1995-96 Electoral Boundaries Commission to include the Town of Stavely and the surrounding district of M.D. of Willow Creek south of TWP Road 150, into the proposed Livingstone-Macleod Constituency.

That particular petition is signed by 146 people of that area.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I'd present a petition from constituents in Edmonton-Mill Woods urging the government to maintain universal medicare and opposing user fees and extra billing.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition to the Assembly that reads as follows:

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta, petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to develop a drug approval process which reflects the rapid evolution of drug therapies in the battle against HIV/AIDS, and which reflects the

urgency of health management needs of those living with HIV/AIDS.

It specifically refers to protease inhibitors.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

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

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the petition I presented in the Legislature yesterday with respect to the transporting of liquor in a vehicle be now read and received.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to urge the Government to repeal the Section of Order in Council 319/96 which allows for the transportation of open liquor bottles in a vehicle, as we feel that this regulation makes it too easy for individuals to drink while driving and will unduly increase the incidence of accidents causing death and injury to Albertans.

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

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask that the petition I introduced yesterday relative to the Bow Valley centre, ensuring that that facility stays open, might now be read and received, please.

THE CLERK:

We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to urge the government to maintain operation of the Bow Valley centre with a 24-hour emergency service.\*

head: **Introduction of Bills**

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

### Bill 49

#### Gas Utilities Amendment Act, 1996

MR. MAGNUS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 49, the Gas Utilities Amendment Act, 1996.

This Bill provides for the amendment of the Gas Utilities Act, and its aim is to allow for the use of incentive tolling approaches and other potential innovative tolling schemes in the regulation of gas utilities where they are supported by the utility and its customers.

[Leave granted; Bill 49 read a first time]

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 49, the Gas Utilities Amendment Act, as just introduced, be moved onto the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm tabling four copies of a document entitled Tory Deficits Leading to Healthcare Crisis, outlining six consecutive deficits that have been supported by this Conservative government since the Premier has been in the Legislative Assembly. They amount to \$14 billion. [interjections]. We didn't vote for it. [interjections]

\*See page 2193, right col., para. 4

**Speaker's Ruling  
Tabling Documents**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. All hon. members perhaps need to be reminded: in tabling, a brief, objective comment on the tabling and an itemization of to whom it was written, particulars relating to the document, not editorializing and not making any other extraneous comments. If we could remember that in future tablings, that would be most helpful.

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

MR. MITCHELL: The six deficits, \$14.2 billion, are exactly the facts, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm tabling four copies of a letter from Dr. Elleker, the chair of the Medical Staff Advisory Board of the University of Alberta hospital, to Mr. Brian Lemon, the president of the Capital health authority, on April 16, 1996, in which he says, among other things, that the medical staff advisory board "can no longer meet its obligation to ensure that the quality of care . . ."

**Speaker's Ruling  
Tabling Documents**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. We went through this yesterday, hon. leader, and all hon. members are reminded of it: quoting from the document is not required and is not permitted. A reminder has again been given. So, hon. member, if you would please take those under advisement and govern yourself accordingly when you carry on with your tablings.

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

MRS. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table with the Assembly six copies of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission financial statements as of March 31, 1996.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, as required by section 2.43(b) of the Treasury Branches Act, I am tabling with the Assembly today copies of an Alberta Treasury Branches board of directors' bylaw relating to conflicts of interest and loans to directors and officers of Alberta Treasury Branches. The bylaw was approved by the board on June 14, 1996, and by the minister on July 17.

As well, I'm tabling the Alberta Treasury Branches annual report for the year ended March 31, 1996, copies having been provided to members before today.

As well, I'm providing to all members a report of the audit committee from June 1996. It's a report required under the Deficit Elimination Act.

As well, in accordance with section 9(1)(a) of the Government Accountability Act, I am tabling the first quarter budget report for the three months ended June 30, 1996.

Additionally, section 8(1) of the Government Accountability Act requires an amendment to the consolidated fiscal plan to be tabled if there is a second set of estimates in the fiscal year. Because I am presenting you with messages from His Honour later on this afternoon regarding supplementary estimates, accordingly I am tabling this government's first quarter budget report as the amendment to the consolidated fiscal plan for '96-97.

As well, the government of Alberta annual report for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1996, is also tabled today. As required by section 10 of the Government Accountability Act, the report was

released on June 24, 1996, within 90 days of the fiscal year-end.

Also, I'm providing Measuring Up, the second annual report on the performance of the government of Alberta, released on June 24, and finally the Alberta Government Telephones Commission consolidated financial statements for the year ended March 31, 1995.

1:40

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I'd like to table a letter from the president of the Alberta Medical Association to the members of that association in which the president makes the point that the concerns being faced . . . [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. The hon. member is quite capable of following the guidelines without help from the other ranks.

Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

. . . that the concerns being faced by the medical staff of the Capital health authority are similar to the problems and concerns being faced by medical staffs in regions across the province.

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

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table four copies of a letter to the Premier in which I urge the Premier to take direct intervention into the northeast community health project. It's a project which has been under way for 15 years. It has demonstrable need, and it affects 180,000 northeast Edmonton residents.

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

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table four copies of the first annual report for the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer for the year April 1, 1995, to March 31, 1996.

Mr. Speaker, I also have four letters that have been forwarded to me, one from the municipal district of Cardston No. 6, which is calling on the government of Alberta to leave all of MD No. 6 in the proposed new constituency of Cardston-Taber; a letter also from the superintendent of schools from the Westwind regional division No. 9 asking that the communities of Hill Spring and Glenwood and surrounding areas be included in that constituency as well, because they are the only two communities not included in that school district. I have motions from the village of Glenwood and the village of Hill Spring calling on the same thing, which would amount to about 1,000 people that they're referring to.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table four copies of a public statement by the Premier on January 22, 1995, commenting on the death of Dalton Halfe-Arcand, in which he says: people fall through the cracks.

I'd also like to say, Mr. Speaker, that I'd like to table four copies of a public statement by the Premier dated March 4, 1995,

in which the Premier dismisses painful waits and delays for surgery and says: things will happen from time to time.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table four copies of some information for the attention of the Premier. The former Health minister is quoted as saying that there are absolutely no problems in the health care system. For the attention of the Premier I'd like to table four copies of an article dated July 19, 1995, titled: "Klein defends talk of two-tiered" health care.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I don't have four copies. I just happen to have this in my hand here - I'd like to table it today - headlined: "Grant Mitchell says there is still room for health cuts. Too many hospitals - Grits. Alberta has too many high-tech hospitals and may have more sickbeds than it needs."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert. [interjections] Hon. members, the rules that the Chair read out a little while ago apply to all members. If we could all keep that in mind.

Right now we'll ask the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table four copies of an article in which the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul states his concern for the state of health care in Alberta and that health care cuts have gone way too fast.

Also a second tabling, an article dated March 12, 1995. The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat questions the cuts to health care and calls for an audit on how these cuts have impacted Albertans.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MRS. BALSILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table four copies of an article dated May 30, 1993, in which the Premier suggested hospitals could deal with the effect of cuts by holding bingos.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table four copies of a transcript from CHED Radio in Edmonton, dated August 14, 1996, in which the Member for Bow Valley said: "I think the health care system is running smoothly."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order.

MRS. BALSILLIE: Oh, I'm just about finished.

#### **Speaker's Ruling Tabling Documents**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I realize the hon. member is relatively new in the House, but we've been making the correction on a number of occasions. Tabling is exactly that: tabling. It is not a time for provoking debate, quoting at length. The hon. member was reminded of this before, as all hon. members were reminded of it. So if you would just again give a succinct comment, an objective comment about what the contents are.

Redwater.

#### **head: Tabling Returns and Reports (continued)**

MRS. BALSILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The CHED Radio interview dated August 14: "I think the health care system is running smoothly," and there are no problems in the system.

Thank you.

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

MS LEBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two documents to table as well. The first is copies of an article in which the Member for Calgary-Mountain View expressed his very serious concern with the lack of information available on health care restructuring.

The second is copies of an article dated September 21, 1995, in which this Premier promised to fix health care in 90 days, a promise that's only 330 days old.

Thank you.

MR. KLEIN: Now that we're into it, Mr. Speaker, I guess we can go back over the weekend and take every single newspaper article, every broadcast. Here's the tabling. This comes from a radio broadcast dated August 16, 1995, where the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition said: Well, David, we're being told time and time again, and "I think one of the reasons business comes to Alberta is probably the tax regime," but they also . . . [interjections]

#### **Speaker's Ruling Tabling Documents**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Premier is reminded, as I reminded the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition: a brief, objective comment on the tablings is really all that's required. Now, one can only imagine what happens when we get prolonged editorializing with a series of tablings to make political points when it is supposed to be a tabling and not debating time. It only provokes countermeasures. So the rules are there for both sides, and we'd better adhere to them. Those people who are pointing with their fingers need to realize that it should be reflected on them.

The hon. Government House Leader, point of order.

#### **Point of Order Tabling Documents**

MR. DAY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As this is not question period, points of order can be raised when order is not being followed, and what we have witnessed here: the Premier's past experience in teaching has just taught this Assembly a lesson, and that is . . . [interjections] What we witnessed yesterday was actually and could be argued to be, in fact, a breach of privilege. [interjections]

1:50

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members, it is not . . . [interjections] Order. The Chair will begin exercising the naming procedure if people are unable to exercise the normal parliamentary courtesy that we should extend to one another. This is not the heat of question period; it is tabling. Normally tabling is a rather calm process, although one wouldn't want to make that assertion given yesterday's or today's proceedings.

The hon. Government House Leader has risen on a point of

order, and it is not yet question period, and he is entitled, as all hon. members are if they have a point of order, to state the point of order and speak to it, and a reply maybe at hand. So let us give the parliamentary courtesy to each other to state our case.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, citing the section on points of order and more specifically on tablings that is in our Standing Orders, there's a number of references which can easily be found and referred to. Also, references can be found under "returns and reports, tabling of." If anybody has ever read this book called Standing Orders, they'll see it's there.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of tabling is so that duly elected individuals can do just that: table a document for reference by the public, anybody who would like to access it, to some particular issue or situation. Decades of parliamentary process and precedence – decades – have shown that that particular portion of the Routine of the day is for that particular purpose. When any process that is in place to be used responsibly is abused, everything begins to crumble around it, and what happened yesterday . . . [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark. Once.  
Hon. Government House Leader.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, those who were here yesterday would have seen very clearly that absolutely beyond all precedent, tablings continued in this particular Assembly for an extraordinary amount and period of time. During that process – and I will be brief even though they're not – there was no hindrance from this side. There was the occasional comment. Today when the Premier stood up simply to do the very same thing that members opposite did, the shrieks and the howls reached decibel levels that probably would offend the Safety Codes Act. They went completely ballistic and did not want that to happen.

The precedent must be upheld that this is to table, not to give speeches.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In responding to the alleged point of order from the Government House Leader, using his own citation, it says that indeed there is *Tabling Returns and Reports*. That's all that his citation of 7(1) says, and in fact, our own Order Paper says that as a regular routine – and it's printed on the daily Order Paper – there is indeed *Tabling Returns and Reports*.

Mr. Speaker, what we are doing here is being responsive to our constituents and to Albertans who are asking us to table those issues. What we are attempting to do in tabling our reports is to give the source from which the document is taken; if it's appropriate, a date, if it is a dated document – and most of them are – and also a one-line sentence that says the reason for the tabling, which was the guideline that was provided to us by the Chair yesterday. We are attempting to follow that procedure again today. Therefore, the hon. Government House Leader does not have a point of order.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader has risen on a point of order. The point of order was one that had been made in part yesterday by the Chair and more emphatically again today. I think we have had evidence of both forms of

tabling of documents; that is to say, a statement of some relevance to the document and a brief, objective comment as to what it is about.

We also have had from both sides, alas, examples of definite editorializing and even, one might say, emotional speaking. Of course, emotions are a legitimate part of speaking when you speak from your heart or you speak for your constituents, but tabling is not such a debate time. It is a matter of tabling the item and a succinct, objective comment on it, as opposed to editorializing or drawing conclusions or adding it as a stack that proves a case that may be more appropriate to a law case. We are just having tablings.

So I would indicate that the hon. Government House Leader has re-emphasized the point, and the hon. House leader for the opposition has reaffirmed the way it ought to be. Perhaps we could continue now from this day forward with that in mind, and let debate ring when debate is appropriate or the questions and the answers more properly reflect the give and thrust of parliamentary procedure.

The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you. I would like to table a document. This is dated May 1, 1994, from the *Calgary Sun*. I'd like to remind the Premier of the statement: anyone who doesn't come to work and still expects to get paid should be fired.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bonnyville.

MR. VASSEUR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table four copies of a statement . . . [interjection]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pincher Creek-Macleod.  
Bonnyville, you're on.

MR. VASSEUR: I'd like to table four copies of a statement made by the minister of economic development regarding people with a broken foot driving themselves to hospital, in which he said: "What's wrong with that? We're not a taxi service."

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

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Two tablings, and I'd make the objective observation that on August 9, 1996, there was an article in the *Edmonton Journal* in which the Minister of Health speculated about the wisdom of the speed of health cuts initiated by his Premier.

The second tabling, Mr. Speaker, is a newspaper article that appeared September 16, 1994, in which the Premier discussed the responsibility that health care workers should bear for problems in the health care system, for which he is responsible.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Labour.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table four copies of an article of the *Edmonton Sun*, dated August 15. It says that Edmonton Liberal MLAs

no longer bother concealing their dislike of the man and their disappointment in his leadership . . . They're disappointed with Mitchell's handling of the one issue that can save them from oblivion . . .

**Speaker's Ruling  
Tabling Documents**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. minister . . . [interjections] Order.

Order. Hon. Premier and hon. Leader of the Opposition, if you can carry your debate at a more appropriate time. The hon. minister is reminded of what we were saying just moments ago, that you want to give a brief, objective comment of what was said: brief, a few words. You've now lost the occasion, I would surmise. Could you complete your tablings?

**head:                    Tabling Returns and Reports**  
**2:00                       (continued)**

MR. SMITH: I'm simply depositing the tabling now, Mr. Speaker, that says he's more concerned about himself than his party.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Edmonton-Glenora and Minister of Labour and Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, St. Albert has the floor; the rest of you don't.

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table four copies of an article dated September 26, 1995: "Kowalski slams province for poor health planning."

I'd like to table another four copies of an article dated September 19, 1995, in which the Premier said he would use all his skills and talents to solve the health care crisis by Christmas 1995, the results of which are very clear today.

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

MR. WHITE: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table four copies of an article that is a letter, in fact, from the former Minister of Health in which she describes the health system - and I'm sorry, sir; to be succinct, I must quote because her words are better than mine: as good as it ever was.

MR. KLEIN: I'll be back when the nonsense is over.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, will you be able to tell the Premier when question period's starting so we can have him back in here for questions? I'd like to know when he comes back for questions.

I rise to table four copies . . .

MR. DAY: A point of order.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, he announced he was leaving. He named himself in that respect.

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

**Point of Order  
Referring to the Absence of a Member**

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, again, Standing Orders are very clear

as is *Beauchesne* on referencing the absence of a member. The Premier made a brief statement in leaving that when the nonsense of this tabling time is over, he'll be back for question period, and he will be back. You can't mention the absence of a member. So we look forward to the silliness ending so the Premier will be back to address the questions for this province.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: On the point of order, Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: On the point of order, I guess. Since the member is referring to the presence or absence of a member, if he's calling someone to a point of order, he should be calling the Premier to the point of order for announcing the absence of the member himself who called the discussion on health care nonsense.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair would observe that there really is not a point of order other than it is parliamentary . . . [interjection] Thank you, hon. minister. It's parliamentary practice to not mention the names of people who are absent from the House. We don't need to then have people referring to it back and forth, so both are out of order. That is where there is no point of order.

Let us continue to try and finish the tablings as succinctly and as quickly as we possibly can.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to table four copies of a document which I'm going to describe with one sentence. It outlines the case of a rural resident who was diagnosed with prostate cancer three months ago and still hasn't been admitted to a hospital because they haven't been able to find an operating room in which to operate upon him.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. VAN BINSBERGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table four copies of a letter to the Minister of Health describing the case of a constituent of mine from Grande Cache. Mrs. Nelson is quadriplegic, needs eight hours of home care and can only receive two from the Mistahia region because of lack of funds, so she has to pay the rest, which she can ill afford.

Thank you.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table four copies of documents which describe the case of a constituent of mine who was scheduled for surgery on a partially collapsed vertebra but was told her surgery was postponed due to a shortage of acute care beds.

I also have four copies of a document that I would like to table describing the case of a Red Deer resident who was sent to Calgary for double bypass heart surgery and was told to go home because the hospital was covering emergency duties for two other hospitals.

I have four copies of a document which describes the case of an Edmonton resident who was discharged from the Royal Alex seven days after cardiovascular bypass surgery so weak and ill that she could not dress herself, and she went home in her hospital

gown with no home care information. [interjection] That's one sentence. It seems like a big one.

MS CARLSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table four copies of a letter to the Premier on behalf of my constituents. They have a question for the Premier, and the question is that they want to know "when our health care system became a system for who you know or who you are and stopped caring about normal Albertans."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Edmonton-Rutherford.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table four copies of two case studies, the first involving a constituent who brought me pictures of his mother, who had fallen out of bed in a long-term care facility and lay there for hours due to the shortage of staff; secondly, a case study of a young lady confined to a wheelchair who is being threatened with reinstitutionalization because of budget cuts.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table this afternoon copies of a letter to the Premier, the copies I'd received only last month from a constituent, Mr. Sam Schock. After a fall, Mr. Schock attended at the Foothills emergency, where he was examined in cursory fashion, discharged. Two more emergency visits and 29 days later a fractured hip was diagnosed.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table four copies of a letter entitled "Treatment of local pioneer appalls family." It describes the difficulties that a resident of Stony Plain had accessing Capital health authority health care and being restricted by being in the WestView region.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table with the Assembly four copies of a letter to the Premier of the province from Mrs. Bonnie Cessford detailing over six pages the lack of care that her mother, Mrs. Hazel Campbell, received.

Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Leduc.

MR. KIRKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings this afternoon, both succinct and objective, dealing with Leduc constituents. The first is a letter signed by Arlene Tough and directed to one of the administrators of the Leduc health centre. It is documenting a serious health treatment error that was administered in the Leduc health centre. Fortunately, Mrs. Tough is with us today.

The second tabling is a letter addressed to myself and signed by Bonnie Horton and Barb Schofield. It is a document that outlines the sisters' grave concern with the care their father received while in the Leduc health centre, but they are very quick to point out that they do not point blame or associate blame with the medical

professionals. Unfortunately, he is not with us here today.

2:10

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I have two documents to table as well. The first is a letter from the hon. Leader of the Opposition to Mr. Campbell Miller, former chairperson of the Capital health authority. It's with regards to a Mrs. Fox-Hames, who was released early from the Royal Alexandra hospital in her hospital gown.

The second is four copies of a list of events chronicled by Mrs. Palichuk,\* which outlines the events that led to the death of her mother in our health care system in Alberta.

Thank you.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today and privileged to have an opportunity to introduce to you and to other members of the Assembly three good friends of seniors in our province: Mr. and Mrs. Helen and Des Achilles and Ms Phylis Matousek. These people are members of the SALT organization. They have been great advocates for seniors in Alberta, and we are all indebted to them. They're in the public gallery. I'd ask them to stand so that the House can welcome them.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly a very special guest. Her name is Rachel Scott. Rachel Scott is an exchange student from New Zealand and I understand is enjoying her stay in Alberta immensely. She is accompanied today by her host, Anne Trotter, and Mrs. Chris Jones from McLennan. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to introduce to you and Members of the Legislative Assembly a community leader in the city of St. Albert, Renee Gaudet, and her children, Jennifer, Scott, Eric, and a friend, Jovan Young. A special welcome to Takako Ohno from the city of Kitamachi in northern Japan in the province of Hokkaido. We're proud to have her visiting our province. I'd ask that they'd rise and receive the warm welcome of the Legislative Assembly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Labour.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to other members of the Assembly three people, one from Kitchener, Ontario, and two from Calgary. Both are tireless workers in the Calgary-Varsity constituency. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask Stephanie Arnau, Barbara Arnau, and Teresa Ronzio, to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

\*This spelling could not be verified at the time of publication.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, in particular to the Premier, two courageous constituents from Sherwood Park who are prepared to fully participate in the democratic process. I'd like to introduce Bonnie and Bob Cessford from Sherwood Park. They are in the public gallery, and I'd ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**

MR. MITCHELL: I'd just like to wait until the Premier takes his seat, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: That's not necessary, hon. leader.

### Health Care

MR. MITCHELL: People are dying and suffering needlessly because health care in this province is underfunded. There is one person in this province who can fix the problem with a stroke of the pen, and that's the Premier. My first question is to the Premier. When the Premier said last year . . . [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members of the front bench, I wonder if we could let the Leader of the Opposition make his question.

MR. MITCHELL: When the Premier said last year on national news that people would die, did he have a particular number in mind that would be too many or just enough before he'd step in and fix the problem?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I don't have the power – and the leader of the Liberal opposition knows it – to fix everything with a stroke of a pen.

MR. MITCHELL: You had the power to break it.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition said that we know how to break it. No; it wasn't a matter of breaking anything. It was a matter of challenging the system to find new and better and more effective and more efficient ways of doing things. It was a matter of establishing a program to evaluate and to monitor.

Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, particularly the past few months, we have been doing precisely that, and I'd like to review with this Legislative Assembly exactly what we have done. We canceled \$53 million in budget reductions that were planned for 1996-1997. We provided \$40 million to RHAs to support a shift to community services. That was announced in November of 1995. We allocated \$11.4 million to relieve pressure points on health services. That was announced on January 30 of 1996. Of that, \$4.4 million went for cardiac surgery, \$4.6 million for joint replacement surgery, a million dollars for MRI services, \$1.4 million for innovative home nutritional therapy programs.

Mr. Speaker, an additional \$25 million was provided to address pressures on health services in those regions due to growing populations, one-time funding for 1996-1997. That was announced on April 30 of 1996. Twelve and a quarter million dollars went to the Capital health authority, 12 and a quarter million dollars to the Calgary health authority, and half a million dollars to the WestView regional health authority.

Mr. Speaker, \$14 million was provided to the CHA to ensure continued access to quality care and assist the authority in addressing pressure points in the system, to Edmonton in particular. That was April and July of this year.

On June 24 of this year, Mr. Speaker, we announced reinvestment funding, reinvestment funding that will come from real dollars, not the kind of borrowed dollars they're talking about but real dollars: \$245 million over the next two years to enhance regional authorities' resources and, of course, to allow them to cope with providing Albertans with health care they need when they need it.

Mr. Speaker, that is the true story of what this government has done.

MR. MITCHELL: How can the Premier acknowledge on June 24, 1996, that the health care system is underfunded and then watch the devastation that is being created in people's lives because they are dying and suffering needlessly because it is underfunded and then not move to fix it until 1997 or until 1998, Mr. Speaker?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, that is a sad comment. You know, when we talk about sickness and we talk about people in pain and suffering, believe me, we have compassion on this side of the House. We don't treat this as some political toy like the Liberals. This is not a political toy; it is absolutely real.

We have said as a government – and I am sure the Liberals will agree – that we simply can't throw money at it. We have to have some measure of performance. We have to see a healthier Canadian. We have to see an emphasis on wellness. We have to see the medical community commit themselves to eliminating overlap and duplication. We have to see the medical community work with the government to cut down on the tremendous overuse and waste of drugs in our society. That's what it's all about.

Yes, if we find pressure points – and I've already gone through those pressure points – we will deal with them, but we will deal with them honestly and not politically like the Liberals.

2:20

MR. MITCHELL: If he finds pressure points, he'll deal with them in 1997 and 1998, Mr. Speaker.

When the Premier reads *Hansard* of yesterday and tablings today and sees case after case of people who have suffered and have died needlessly in this health care system, why doesn't he see that as a human being and as Premier of this province he has a responsibility to fix it now, not 1997, not 1998, but right now?

MR. KLEIN: What we are seeing, Mr. Speaker, in this Legislative Assembly today are the irresponsible tactics by an increasingly desperate Leader of the Liberal Opposition. In many of the cases listed, the health system has already been cleared by investigations. Every matter of complaint is investigated. If those that were referred to today haven't been investigated already, they are now under investigation. To say that those deaths were caused by this Premier and this government is so wrong, so sinful, and so dishonest. What is this man saying? Is he saying that everyone lived forever prior to my election? Is that what he's saying?

Mr. Speaker, this man knows that we have already cut, as I said, \$53 million, that we have pumped some \$90 million into the system, that we have committed another \$235 million to health care. But we have always said that we want to see outcomes. An outcome to me is a healthier Albertan, hopefully for all time to reduce the pressure on the health care system.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, Alberta now has the lowest per capita funding for health care of any province in the entire country. This is behind New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, and they have all balanced their budgets already. The Treasurer will say . . .

MR. DINNING: By raising taxes, and that's what you'd do. [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Hon. Provincial Treasurer, you'll have your opportunity should a question be asked of you.

In the meantime we have presumably completed the preamble, and we're now ready for the second main question.

MR. MITCHELL: I've done two sentences, Mr. Speaker.

The Treasurer will say that these other provinces had to raise taxes in order to do that. Well, they don't raise \$600 million of health care premiums a year. They don't have a one-and-a-half-billion-dollar surplus, and they don't have \$180 million in unallocated funds in this year's budget. [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. I think that's more than a succinct series of preamble. Could we have the question, hon. leader?

MR. MITCHELL: To the Premier: with this kind of money available, Mr. Speaker, what kind of callousness motivates the Premier to allow needless suffering and dying in our health care system because he will not fund it properly?

MR. KLEIN: We are funding it properly. We are funding it properly. Had we continued to fund the health care system as it was being funded some years ago without challenging the health care system to reduce administration, taking some 200 health jurisdictions and reforming and restructuring those authorities into 17, had we not taken that step, had we not challenged the medical profession to put in proper clinical practice guidelines, had we not challenged the system to end the overlapping and duplication, had we not challenged the system to cut down on drug abuse and overuse, had we not challenged the system to really concentrate on high priority areas, acute care areas, Mr. Speaker, had we not done that, I would venture to guess that we would have had a totally unsustainable and almost bankrupt health care system in four or five years.

MR. MITCHELL: What does the Premier say to the families of people like Yasmine Fayad and Hazel Campbell to convince them that their loved ones didn't die as a result of his government's policies? He doesn't know who they are, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't even know.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we grieve for all families who die. Death is, I guess, a fact of living. We all die at some time. But to suggest that this was directly and absolutely attributable to so-called health care cuts or the challenge to restructure and find better and more effective and more efficient ways of doing things, to suggest that, for that person to suggest that, sir, is dishonest.

#### **Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. minister is rising to supplement and will be granted such an opportunity in a moment.

I think the Chair has to try and bring a couple of things to order. It has been ruled that you can't deal on the personality of an individual and try and lay blame on either side. That's getting a little beyond the terms of parliamentary conduct. So trying to personally attribute deaths to the Premier is really inappropriate.

Indicating that someone is dishonest is probably as well beyond the parliamentary courtesies that we normally extend to one another.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'll withdraw the term "dishonest." The hon. member is not being entirely honest.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hesitate to quibble with the Premier. Perhaps his remarks are at variance with the facts. I think the honesty or a little bit honest or whatever is really the quibble.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, again, I'll withdraw the remark, but I would ask you and plead with you to ask the Leader of the Liberal Opposition to quit implying – quit implying – that people in this caucus, wonderful men and women, are directly responsible for people's deaths. That is totally and absolutely unfair, and if I can't use "dishonest," then it is at least sinful.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Perhaps in anticipation of the Premier's suggestion, the Chair has indicated that it is unparliamentary to try and hold these people personally responsible, and I wonder if we could refrain from that.

The hon. Minister of Health was wanting to supplement the Premier's answer to the second or the first supplemental of the second question. Hon. minister.

#### **Health Care (continued)**

MR. JONSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to supplement the hon. Premier's answer. I would just like to report something which is public knowledge and was done with respect to the case the hon. Leader of the Opposition just referred to with respect to one Yasmine Fayad. I will read the statement from the independent review board that was in charge of reviewing that particular case. The review board recommended no fatality inquiry into this case.

The Fatality Review Board concluded that no recommendations could be reached on the prevention of further deaths in the future, given the extreme rarity of appendicitis in infants.

That, Mr. Speaker, was an independent review. It is a structure that is set up in this province. That review has been concluded.

The Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues bring this particular type of case forward, as tragic as it is, with the inference that it has not been investigated and that the health care system was totally to blame for it. That, I think, we can all judge in this Assembly and outside of this Assembly as indicative of the tactics of the leader.

#### **2:30**

MR. MITCHELL: The Premier said that death is a fact of life, Mr. Speaker. What have they brought us to when the Premier of this province accepts as a fact of life the death of a two-week-old baby from appendicitis because she can't get proper health care in an underfunded health care system?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, in a very clear and in a very, very factual matter-of-fact way the hon. Minister of Health responded



to that question, sir, and I will ask him to reiterate his reply.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to supplement the hon. Premier's response, and I hope the Premier would not mind if I was to refer by way of support to another case raised yesterday and named yesterday by the members of the opposition. This was on the list that was mentioned, and this is the case of Dalton Halfe-Arcand, again an independent review. The inference yesterday was that this had not been investigated and not been followed up on.

I'd like to just mention the finding of the judge. After review, Judge Mustard stated:

Having determined conclusively that there was nothing to alert anyone to the existence of P.T. (cause of death) at the time of discharge, and that once it struck Dalton's death was virtually inevitable, I have nothing to recommend which might prevent similar deaths in the future.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, on April 16, 1996, Dr. George Elleker, the chair of the Medical Staff Advisory Board at the University of Alberta hospital, wrote a letter to the Capital health authority.

The MSAB can no longer meet its obligation to ensure that the quality of care at the site is maintained, that patient safety is not compromised, and that accepted standards of access to care are applied.

Shortly afterwards the Premier was given a copy of this letter by the president of the Capital region medical staff. To the Premier: how many people have died or suffered needlessly because the Premier failed to release that letter so that people could make an informed choice about where they would pursue health care in this province?

#### **Speaker's Ruling Allegations against Members**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition has unfortunately been unable to understand what the Chair is trying to communicate. The phraseology of your last question carries with it the exact thing that I have mentioned we should not be doing: personally ascribing blame. Would you please rephrase that question or withdraw it?

#### **Health Care (continued)**

MR. MITCHELL: Can the Premier tell us - this is my first question - how many people have died or suffered needlessly because a letter which the Premier had was not released to people so that they could make choices about where to pursue health care in this city?

#### **Speaker's Ruling Allegations against Members**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I don't really think that's the rephrasing that I was asking for. Perhaps in your next questions you could rephrase it better. If the Premier wishes to respond to that, he may. If not, then we'll go to the first supplemental.

#### **Health Care (continued)**

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, if we can't hold the Premier responsible, what's parliamentary responsibility? I mean, it's people who do it, and he's one of them.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, being the Government House Leader, I would suggest that parliamentary responsibility and government responsibility is exactly what you see demonstrated by this government. That is the answer to that question just posed.

#### **Speaker's Ruling Answers to Questions**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We can review in our mind what has just occurred. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition was asked to rephrase his question. The Chair indicated dissatisfaction with that, and the Premier was at liberty to either attempt to answer that or to wait for the supplemental. The supplemental question was responded to by the Government House Leader.

Final supplemental on this question.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I didn't ask a supplemental question. I did ask one question, and then I made a statement about parliamentary responsibility. I've got two more questions, and I want to ask them.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition asked a question on a supplemental. That's all he's entitled to do. Certainly the Chair interpreted it as a question, and I presume the Government House Leader interpreted it as a question. So we now have the final supplemental on the third main question.

#### **Health Care (continued)**

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, are things so out of control, so out of whack on that side of the House that the Premier of this province has to cover up and deceive Albertans about the true state of affairs in this health care system?

#### **Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition has been in this House for some years, and you're to be congratulated on that. However, the choice of words there is clearly unparliamentary and inflammatory. I wonder if you could withdraw that remark.

MR. MITCHELL: I withdraw the remark deceit or deceptive, and instead I would insert "sinful."

#### **Health Care (continued)**

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, there has been no deceit. There has been no sin, absolutely no sin whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, there is an answer to this particular question. Not the answer: how many deaths occurred? You know, it is unfortunate. As I say, people go to the hospital. They go with terminal cancer. They go to hospitals because they've been badly injured in car accidents and they're beyond recovery. The question was . . . [interjections] Mr. Speaker, please. I don't mind answering, because it was such a dumb question. It was such an irresponsible question. The question was: how many people die? What an awful, awful question. It really is a terrible question. Absolutely, totally irresponsible.

2:40

Relative to the letter, the one that I received anyway from Dr. Greenwood, I believe it was, Mr. Speaker, it was that letter that

instituted, first of all, the establishment of a fifth standing policy committee on health care restructuring. It was the letter that prompted the hon. Member for Bow Valley to set up a well-structured and very talented task force to go into the Capital regional health authority and try to identify some of the problems, and with respect to that exercise, I will have the hon. Member for Bow Valley supplement.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Bow Valley to supplement on the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the months of May and June we had an extensive investigation into the Capital health authority, into their request for further funds, into their request to look at whether or not patient care was being deprived in Edmonton. What we found was a system that was running. We found a system that was stressed, but we found a system that was providing excellent patient care. We talked to patients. We talked to providers. We got to the bottom of a lot of the issues that were being brought forward.

Mr. Speaker, in our recommendations we looked at funding issues, we looked at management issues, we looked at issues of the health care system as a whole. Probably the best quote that I can give you was by one of the prominent medical staff, who is in the newspapers quite often these days, who said that the absolute worst thing we can do is give them \$21 million.

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

#### Provincial Fiscal Policies

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important for us to remind ourselves every once in a while that on June 15 of 1993 the people of Alberta sent us to the Alberta Legislature to correct the financial position of this province, every member, including the members of the government and the members of the opposition. Through the leadership of our Premier, good management, and good economics we have delivered on that. As a result of interest savings from debt reduction, this gives Alberta the unique position of having the flexibility to reinvest without returning to deficit financing. Since I can't answer my own question, Mr. Speaker, I would address this question to the Provincial Treasurer. Mr. Treasurer, you tabled the first-quarter report today, and I would ask you to explain what the good news is for the people of Alberta.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I did have the honour and the responsibility to file with the Assembly today the first-quarter update that shows that because of increased revenues and because of having a good control on expenditures the government would now forecast for the year ending March 31, 1997, a surplus of some \$324 million. But, as I'm often reminded by my colleagues, it isn't merely a surplus; it's an investment in the future in that it is a direct pay-down of our debt.

I think about the opportunities that debt pay-down brings with it. After the last two years some \$2 billion of debt pay-down have resulted in a \$160 million decrease in our debt servicing costs, Mr. Speaker. That isn't just a \$160 million onetime saving. That's a saving that goes on forever and ever, and as we pay down debt even more, that saving grows. Those dollars then no longer go to bankers. They are then able to go to Alberta's priority programs of health, education, and our seniors' programs

to give those programs the security that our students, that our seniors expect to have in those programs, to know that they are going to be there and that they can be relied upon for the future.

So this announcement today, Mr. Speaker, is good news in that it gives security to all Albertans that those programs are going to be there for many years to come.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First supplemental, Red Deer-South.

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While some members are calling for an expenditure of the entire amount of the budget surplus, I wonder if the Treasurer would explain to us . . . [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Do you have a question?

MR. DOERKSEN: I wonder if the Provincial Treasurer would remind us of the amount of money we're talking about for reinvestment and maybe some of the decisions that were made or announced earlier with respect to that reinvestment.

MR. DINNING: Clearly, the member makes an important point that perhaps the Liberals do sometimes forget. When we introduced the Deficit Elimination Act and, more importantly, the Balanced Budget and Debt Retirement Act, all members of the Assembly – and it's on the record, Mr. Speaker – voted in favour of that Bill, which became law, that said that every single surplus dollar at the end of the year must go to pay down debt. Now, I know that they're wiggling out of that position and trying to strike political points in another debate, but clearly they voted in favour of this, and they should be watched as they speak out of both sides of their mouths. What we announced on the 24th of June was the opportunity with the surpluses that have been run, the debt pay-down that now occurs, that we now have dollars that are available to be reinvested not only in further debt pay-down but reinvestment of some \$235 million into health care, some hundreds of millions of dollars going into education as well as seniors' programs and infrastructure that's necessary in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the point the hon. member makes is that debt pay-down brings about dividends that last forever and ever and provides dollars that go to Albertans' priority programs rather than being paid to the bankers.

MR. DOERKSEN: My final question would be to the Minister of Health. While we've talked about this at length today, I would ask the minister to comment on the adequacy of funding within the health system and the need for additional funds. [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. We seem to have a number of cross-bench conversations and perhaps even shouting matches. We have a question, and we have a minister who's prepared to answer the question. Please let us listen to the Minister of Health.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, certainly in terms of restructuring and organizing a system to provide better care and provide it more efficiently, the spending of additional money is not always the solution. There are decisions to be made within the health care system with respect to allocation between high-needs programs and those where there is money to be utilized. There are decisions to be made with respect to very high maintenance and costs to replace physical facilities and those locations where those

services could be offered much, much more efficiently.

Mr. Speaker, over the last number of months, as the Premier has very well outlined, the government has listened, has responded where dollars could be supported as having a positive effect upon the health care system and were in fact needed. But we need to look at both the changes and the adjustments which do not require additional funding but require better management. We also of course need to listen very carefully where in those cases money can be targeted to high-needs areas, and that has been done by the government over the last number of months. There is a balance here, and this is something that we have been approaching as our strategy in this particular area.

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

**Health Care**  
(continued)

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mrs. Hazel Campbell was admitted to the University of Alberta hospital on December 20, 1995, and then released on Christmas Eve primarily because of a staff shortage at that hospital. She was readmitted on January 7, 1996, discharged on January 24, and subsequently rushed to the Grey Nuns hospital in Edmonton by ambulance on January 29, 1996. She remained in that hospital until her death on May 2. Mrs. Campbell's experience paints a sad picture of a broken health care system that has been deprived by this government of the resources that it needs to provide proper and safe patient care. Now, Mrs. Campbell's daughter, Bonnie Cessford, who is with us in the public gallery today, would like the Premier to answer a few questions. Mr. Premier, is it part of your health care plan that hospitals be so poorly staffed that patients must lie in their own diarrhea for several hours?

2:50

MR. KLEIN: The answer, Mr. Speaker, is no. Absolutely no.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First supplemental, Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, is it part of your government's health care plan that residents of one health care region will not be able to access subacute care beds in another region even if it means that they are sent home on antibiotics, on oxygen, in a wheelchair, and bloated with over 30 pounds of excess body fluid?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, if that is a specific case that has been referred to the Minister of Health, I will most appropriately have the Minister of Health supplement. Just for clarification, I get literally hundreds and hundreds of letters and many of them in support of our government. If there is a specific complaint, I have the resources of the Department of Health to deal with those complaints, and I do instruct the department.

Minister of Health, will you please supplement.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, in the case of . . . [interjections]

**Speaker's Ruling**  
**Decorum**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I wonder if all hon. members, including new ones, would remember that the idea of question period is for an hon. member to bring the government to some

account by question, and the government members then respond to it. We don't need calls like blabbermouth and other kinds of calls while someone attempts to make the answer. So if we could remind ourselves of our parliamentary courtesies and allow the Minister of Health to supplement the answer to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora's question.

**Health Care**  
(continued)

MR. JONSON: With respect to the case of Hazel Campbell, the Capital health authority has undertaken an investigation of this particular case. I have indicated that I want a report of the results of that review so that I can examine the thoroughness of the review, the procedures that were followed, and of course the findings. I have spoken by phone with Mrs. Campbell's daughter and advised her of further avenues of appeal. I think that the case should be investigated, yes, and we should respect an investigation process and the fact that we are looking into this particular case, Mr. Speaker. I will not prejudge the finding of the particular case, although I am certainly concerned by what has been reported.

I won't go on at great length, Mr. Speaker, but I do think that we must keep things in balance in terms of the approach being taken from across the way. Dealing, for instance, with one of the names that was listed in the opposition leader's statement at the end of his questions yesterday, a case of one Mr. George Clark, the Fatality Review Board – again, it was investigated – has decided not to hold a review into his death. Good Samaritan and Capital health, however, conducted reviews and have asked for an independent review by a Vancouver rehabilitation consultant with extensive experience working with ventilator-dependent people living in the community. The results of that particular investigation will be provided. These cases are being followed up on.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I can go on with some other examples that have been followed up on actually before yesterday, but it was a matter of taking the name and being able to follow up on the activity that had taken place to investigate these cases. The picture that is being painted here is not, in my view, accurate or being very responsible.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, would the Premier please commit to this Assembly and to Bonnie Cessford and the other survivors, the members of Hazel Campbell's family, that he will undertake a public review, that he will commit to a public review of the crisis in health care, stop living in denial, stop denying there's a crisis in health care, and stop depending on behind-closed-doors, secret reviews and come clean with the people of Alberta?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the specific cases mentioned by the Member for Edmonton-Glenora, the hon. minister has responded to those questions in a very straightforward, very factual way. These cases are a matter of public record. They are investigated publicly by public review bodies, by judges. Does this member feel there is something wrong with the review process, that judges and panels of independent people are incapable? Is that what he's saying, that judges are incapable of making these decisions and examining the facts? If that's what he's saying, let him go outside the House and say what he's saying here: that judges are incapable of doing these kinds of adjudications. Let him say that. [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, Edmonton Glenora. Order,

Minister of Economic Development and Tourism.

We now have a question from the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

### **Surgery Waiting Lists**

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A number of concerns have been raised about the health care system in our province, but I would like to get to the background and the facts about one of the issues, not just the victims that we are referring to today, but issues, and that issue is waiting lists. Recently the Fraser Institute published a document dealing specifically with that issue among others, and I'd like to quote that the College of Physicians and Surgeons has identified that waiting times include seeing a specialist, hospital waiting lists, waits for diagnostic tests and are inquiring as to reasons why those waiting lists continue to increase. My question this afternoon is to the Minister of Health. This report indicates that Albertans are waiting longer than many other Canadians for cardiac surgery. Could you please tell us what is being done to address this problem?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, as was indicated yesterday, the report of the Fraser Institute was a report that was conducted and concluded in 1995. As the Premier indicated earlier today, one of the areas in which there has been a very major response from the government is in the area of cardiovascular and orthopedic surgery funding, some \$10 million which has been provided to primarily the two major health care authorities and which, it is estimated, will fund some additional 1,000 procedures.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First supplemental, Calgary-Currie.

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: when can Albertans expect these waiting lists to be brought down?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, it is my information and it has been confirmed by comments that have been published from the doctors in Edmonton. At least, I think Dr. Greenwood has mentioned this, but I should say that perhaps that's not the individual. Nevertheless, the documentation is there that the waiting list has been reduced in Edmonton, and it's anticipated that it will be reduced further. In the case of Calgary, they are tooling up. Perhaps that's not the proper term. They are preparing their teams, and we fully expect that waiting lists will be reduced in Calgary as well.

**3:00**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplemental, Calgary-Currie.

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: can the minister please advise Albertans what is being done to monitor the waiting lists and their effect on the health of Albertans?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the regional health authorities, particularly in this case the regional health authorities of Edmonton and Calgary, are monitoring the number of people on waiting lists in key areas. We are through Alberta Health keeping ourselves apprised of those particular waiting lists, and as I indicated earlier, we are looking at pressure points, hearing recommendations with respect to pressure points in the system in this particular area. But I would like to repeat to the hon.

member that there has been significant additional funding. The health authorities are taking action in these key areas where we were high in terms of waiting lists in the Fraser report. I'd also just like to add that in a number of other areas of surgical procedures Alberta ranked very well as far as waiting lists.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

### **Government Aircraft**

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recent revelations have shown that hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars are being wasted with empty government airplanes flying around the province of Alberta as a taxi service for the Premier and cabinet ministers. To remedy this situation we now have Air Ralph scheduled air service between Calgary and downtown Edmonton. My question to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services: would it not be a better use of taxpayers' dollars to convert these government aircraft to air ambulances rather than private air taxis for two Calgary MLAs?

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

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly appreciate the question. The question, as I understand it: would it be more economical to convert these aircraft to air ambulances? I would have to say unequivocally no. We have an unbelievably good air ambulance service being operated by the private sector throughout Alberta, covering all of the areas. The other part that I'd have a lot of difficulty with if we made the conversion as suggested here is what we would do when we had to ferry firefighters around, which is a primary use of these aircraft and the first-up use. So in answer to your question I would say absolutely not. That's a very, very poor idea.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, that was his first answer as a minister, so I'm sure they'll get better soon.

Why doesn't the government follow the lead of the province of Manitoba, which has in total one eight-seater aircraft used by the Premier and cabinet, not MLAs, provided that it is free from its primary role as an air ambulance? Why don't you follow that lead?

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Mr. Speaker, this is Alberta, and in Alberta we have people in communities all the way from the Northwest Territories border – Fort Chip, to be specific, and High Level – down to places like Milk River. The majority of Manitoba – if they'd look at it, they would find that they've got one or two communities and most of the people are then concentrated in the southern area. The rest of Manitoba's makeup is not our problem.

We use the aircraft primarily for fire-fighting services; secondly, for emergency; and thirdly, to transport members of the government around primarily and also staff to deliver to the people of Alberta one of the most efficient, effective services known anywhere, not only in Canada but in North America. That is what we use the aircraft for.

MR. BRUSEKER: My final question is to the same minister, Mr. Speaker. What would the minister say to the people of Alberta who would benefit greatly from improved air ambulance service but will receive no benefit from this private air service, Air Ralph?

MR. WOLOSZYN: The statement, as usual, is erroneous. The people do benefit from the aircraft in Alberta. What the hon. member forgets to point out also – in addition to the ones that he is referring to, the Alberta government also operates and has for years four water bombers, which are loaned out to other areas of need. We also accommodate on our airstrips fire-fighting aircraft from British Columbia. So this is much broader than two or three aircraft.

The air ambulance service also, as I last checked, which was very, very recently, is operating very well. We haven't received any complaints. Also, I would like to point out that in his city of Calgary, STARS is very well known and very effectively used. There is no room to improve the air ambulance service, hon. member. It's as simple as that.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The time for question period has elapsed.

#### head: **Members' Statements**

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

#### **Alberta's Olympic Athletes**

MR. HLADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured today to rise and salute Alberta's Olympic athletes who represented this province and all of Canada with such distinction in Atlanta. I want to echo the sentiments expressed in this Assembly yesterday by the hon. Treasurer. Further, however, as an elected representative from Calgary I am especially proud to note that all six of Alberta's medal winners – Heather McDermid, Tosha Tsang, Karen Clark, Karen Fonteyne, Cari Read, and Curtis Myden – call Calgary their hometown. It's a great achievement for Calgary's sport community and a source of great pride for all Calgarians.

Not only can each of Alberta's Olympic athletes count themselves among the best in the world, but they can consider themselves among the classiest. At all times these elite athletes exhibited incredible sportsmanship, a quality that is becoming rare in today's sport world.

An athlete's rise to the top is never accomplished alone. Behind each competitor is a supportive network of parents, coaches, teachers, volunteers, teammates, and sport agencies that have helped him or her reach their full potential, and I would like to acknowledge their contributions as well.

Our Olympic athletes should be an inspiration to all of us. While we might not all make it to the Olympics, we can strive for excellence in all we do and maintain active, healthy lifestyles. While we might not set out to break world records, each of us can work toward achieving our personal best in whatever field of endeavour we choose.

In the Olympic spirit Calgary is setting its sights on winning another kind of competition, the one that will determine which city will host the 2005 World's Fair. As Alberta's Olympic athletes have proved, with hard work, dedication, enthusiasm, and preparation we can come out on top no matter what our objectives.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Health Care**

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you. On April 28, 1996, Eveline Huff, a constituent of Edmonton-Meadowlark, lost her twin sister, Marjorie Darby. Mrs. Huff believes that the death of her twin was directly related to the cutbacks in health care, and to date the answers from the Capital health authority, the Premier, and the Minister of Health have been unsatisfactory. Mrs. Huff wants Albertans to know what happened to her sister.

On Thursday, April 11, Marjorie Darby, who was 82 years old, had to leave her home at 4:30 in the morning for hip replacement surgery which was scheduled for 7 a.m. at the University hospital. Her surgery was successful. However, after the surgery she was not provided with any food despite numerous requests until Saturday, two days later, when she finally received a frozen bun. The reason given by the Capital health authority for the lack of food was that Marjorie was not entered in to the computer.

On April 16, Marjorie Darby was discharged and sent by ambulance to the Grandview continuing care in a great deal of pain and discomfort. Her pain continued, and on April 18 at 10:30 p.m. she was sent to the Misericordia by ambulance. She remained there in emergency from Thursday at 11:50 p.m. until 9 p.m. on Saturday, when she was finally sent to the University hospital and admitted. I ask the members of this Assembly to imagine themselves after major surgery being stuck in an emergency ward on a hard gurney for three days. On April 23 Marjorie was moved to the intensive care unit only one hour before she passed away. During this entire ordeal, Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Huff was unable to receive any information as to the well-being of her twin sister.

Mr. Speaker, people are dying in our province due to the massive cuts to the health care system that can no longer attend to its patients' needs. This government has gone too far too fast and has put dollars before sense.

Thank you.

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

#### **Senior Citizens Advisory Council**

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As recently as last Monday the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta was visiting in Grande Prairie as part of its regular scheduled meetings, and we took time during our course of business to meet with some of the seniors groups in Grande Prairie. I want to just share with the members of the Legislature today some of that experience in light of how we are putting seniors' issues at the front of our agenda.

#### **3:10**

On June 24, when we dealt with the reinvestment announcements, one of the major issues that the minister spoke to was the issue of co-ordination and communication. The right information in the hands of seniors is a very, very powerful tool and relieves a lot of anxiety when it comes to change. I found that in the Mistahia health care region, where we were guests – and in fact they shared their facilities with us for our meetings – there was incredible co-ordination between the outreach programs that exist within that community, the Grande Spirit Foundation, which handles a lot of the housing and lodge issues in that community, and the seniors' organizations and members at large who were invited to attend our meeting. I found also, Mr. Speaker, that with the presence of the community development officer from our government that is located in Grande Prairie there was an additional resource in that community to address and answer issues with respect to seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to commend them because some of the approaches that they are using are consistent with what we have found throughout the province. Seniors' issues are very broad and very varied. In fact, the solutions to those problems do not all rest with the government. They rest within communities; they rest within families and a lot of the social supports that are there. I was very pleased to see that the co-ordination of information and services provided in the Grande Prairie region was a good example and a good model for other communities to look at.

The issue of waiting lists and housing opportunities will continue to be a serious one. I was very pleased with the co-ordination of information and the way it was presented to us in order to feed back to the minister as we do cumulative impact.

Thank you.

head: **Projected Government Business**

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Government House Leader what his plans are for the order of business in the House next week.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, as you know, there's business to conduct this afternoon, and depending on how that goes, I anticipate that Monday afternoon we'll find ourselves in Committee of the Whole with Bill 46 and Bill 41 and, depending on how expeditiously we move through those, the possibility of second reading on Bill 49. In the evening we'll be in Committee of Supply, the supplementary supply estimates, day 1. Again, the rest of the Order Paper will determine where we are in Committee of the Whole on the other Bills and second reading. That will be the process throughout the week.

On the evening of Tuesday, of course, we'll be in Committee of Supply with supplementary estimates, day 2. At 11:45 on Tuesday evening we'll revert to Introduction of Bills, Bill 48.

Second reading of Bill 48 on Wednesday evening. Again then Committee of the Whole and third reading.

On Thursday Committee of the Whole on Bill 48. Third reading again as progress is made.

I would remind members that I would anticipate that the process will be rapid, especially given a motion yesterday by the Liberals that the House in fact adjourn since the feeling was that there was not a lot of business to do. So we'll look forward to a good week of work next week.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Point of order, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

**Point of Order  
Allegations against Members**

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under Standing Orders 23(h), (i), and (j). It's with regards to the Premier's comments that the Official Opposition was acting in a sinful manner. I'd like to put forward that there was nothing sinful about the opposition's points which bring out the shortcomings of this government. In fact, that is the role of the opposition, to do just that. What is sinful, however, is the Premier's and his caucus's perpetuation of the mendacity that health care costs are not out of control, that in fact . . .

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: A point of order is to straighten out procedure of the House, not to carry on a debate. There's ample opportunity to carry on the debate. The Chair appreciates the sincerity with which you're making your case for the debate; however, this is not the time for doing that.

If you're talking about the word "sinful," the Chair did take it under advisement and did note that both sides of the House used it. Further, the Chair admonished both sides of the House not to make personal allegations. We've covered that, and I thank the hon. member for bringing the point of order. I really don't think there's any further point of order, unless the Government House Leader would like to follow up on that.

MR. DAY: Once again you have ruled wisely, Mr. Speaker.

head: **Orders of the Day**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I have received certain messages from His Honour the Honourable the Administrator, which I now transmit to you.

THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Administrator transmits supplementary estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 1997, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

Please be seated.

head: **Government Motions**

20. Mr. Dinning moved:

Be it resolved that the messages of His Honour the Honourable the Administrator, the 1996-97 supplementary supply estimates, and all matters connected therewith be referred to Committee of Supply.

[Motion carried]

21. Mr. Dinning moved:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 58(6) the number of days that the Committee of Supply will be called to consider the 1996-97 supplementary supply estimates shall be two days.

[Motion carried]

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

**Bill 46  
Electoral Divisions Act**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Whenever the electoral boundaries of the province of Alberta are amended, it evokes strong feelings. This time is no exception. There have been a number of comments made by Albertans about these proposed electoral divisions. The MLAs who are here representing their constituents have heard those strong feelings.

Without further ado I think it's appropriate for me to move second reading of Bill 46, the Electoral Divisions Act, and allow hon. members in the House to express their views and the views of their constituents.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Bill before us today, Bill 46, Electoral Divisions Act, contains a list of descriptions of the 83 constituencies around the province of Alberta. We have some name changes, of course, as compared to the current list of 83 constituencies, and of course, more important are the changes in the boundaries and the distribution of some of those constituencies across the province.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

As you are aware, I'm sure, Bill 46 describes the 83 constituencies as a result of a piece of legislation passed earlier in this Legislative Assembly entitled the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, which led to the formation of the Electoral Boundaries Commission and, amongst other things, gave them direction for the purposes of creating new electoral divisions within the province of Alberta, that there would be 83 constituencies.

3:20

Mr. Speaker, I happen to have the privilege and the honour of representing an urban constituency, and therefore many of my comments will be tailored in a fashion which, I'm sure, is bound to be provocative to some of our rural members. However, I am going to make my comments with that background, I guess, so that people understand that I am speaking on behalf of my constituents within the city of Calgary and other constituents within the city of Calgary. I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that because my constituency is one where growth is a rapidly and steadily occurring event, I am going to speak even on behalf of those individuals who are not yet constituents of mine but who continue to move in on a regular basis.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill before us today, Bill 46, the Electoral Divisions Act, I'm sure you are aware, comes about and in fact the Bill is taken verbatim from the final report to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly from the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission dated June of 1996. That was presented to the Speaker and made public earlier this year and of course is part of the reason, in fact the primary reason, why we are assembled today in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, that resulted in the formation of the commission, gave the commission some direction with respect to how it is they would propose and what they would use as background material to propose new electoral divisions. One of the basic tenets they had to follow was that the figures used in determining the populations that would be represented in each of those constituencies are based on the 1991 census data. Of course, that census data is used in the creation of the boundaries that we see before us today in Bill 46.

Mr. Speaker, the concern I have with that is that here we are in 1996, and in fact the report itself of the Electoral Boundaries Commission acknowledges that between 1991 and 1996 there has been substantial growth in the population of the province of Alberta, both in urban and, in fact, rural centres. The analysis the commission has done suggests that the growth is occurring a little more rapidly in the urban areas, but growth has occurred.

Mr. Speaker, part of the reason why we are debating the Electoral Divisions Act once again of course is because of a recent court decision, the Alberta Court of Appeal, that gave some direction and suggestion to the province that changes needed to be made. One of the things that was pointed out in the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission was that the Alberta Court of Appeal said:

We affirm again that there is no permissible variation if there is no justification and the onus to establish justification lies with those who suggest the variation.

That is on page 5 of the Electoral Boundaries Commission report.

So what we have: the commission produced something they refer to as a matrix. The matrix takes a variety of factors into consideration that guided the commission in the creation of the boundaries that we have before us today in Bill 46. The Electoral Boundaries Commission went through a total of six different points that they felt were of primary significance in terms of, as they refer to it on page 29 of the report, "a matrix to measure the degree of difficulty which, in our view, is a function of effective representation."

Now, I want to applaud the work of the commission in attempting to come up with some kind of objective measurement and some objective standard. That was probably the right path to attempt to follow in coming forward with the boundaries in a relatively objective rather than a less objective kind of fashion.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, in reviewing the matrix that was created by the Electoral Boundaries Commission, one can't help but look at the kinds of things they followed. These are outlined on page 9 of the report. They talk about

- A) municipal and community league boundaries
- B) school district/division boundaries;
- C) geographical boundaries . . .
- D) trade and travel routes/patterns;
- E) health region boundaries.

All of which are reasonable sorts of things to follow along with.

When one then follows further development of the matrix, the commission looked at the area of a constituency, both current and proposed, population, population density, number of households, number of appointed or elected bodies, Indian reserves and Métis settlements, as they applied to particular constituencies, and distance from the Legislature.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I started my comments by mentioning the fact that the commission used data from the 1991 census, and the argument they made was that that was the most recent census data available on a uniform basis across the entire province. However, the commission does note themselves that there has been significant growth across the province, as I mentioned earlier, both in urban and rural settings. They mention a growth of approximately 10 percent in the urban settings and approximately 7 and a half percent in the rural settings on average, and for the province as a whole they mention growth of about 7.5 percent. This is on page 57 of their report.

Mr. Speaker, the concern I have using 1991 census data – and in fact the conclusions that the commission comes up with, that can be found starting on page 58 of the Electoral Boundaries Commission report and going through to pages 59 and 60, mention a number of concerns they themselves have. One of the concerns that I want to raise with using 1991 census data is that if one looks at point 1 of the conclusions of the Electoral Boundaries Commission report, that can be found on page 58 of that report, it says that Edmonton currently has 18 electoral divisions using 1995 census data. In fact, it suggests, using their own information from the report, that the population warrants 20

constituencies in the city of Edmonton. It says, notwithstanding that, that the proposal for Edmonton is 19 constituencies.

Point 2 talks about Calgary. Calgary currently has 20 constituencies, Mr. Speaker. The numbers they use, if they look at the 1991 data, suggest that there should be 23 electoral divisions. If they use 1995 data obtained from the city of Calgary, in fact this suggests 24 electoral divisions. Yet Bill 46, that we have before us today, as outlined in the report, proposes that there be 21 divisions. The argument they use further down that page is that the parity of vote has not been unduly diluted.

I take exception to that. I respect that the five members of the Electoral Boundaries Commission have proposed a set of boundaries that they feel is appropriate. My concern with the proposal that we have before us today is that the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission itself acknowledges that if we put these boundaries into place, the boundaries that are proposed in Bill 46, in fact we will be behind the eight ball as of today, the middle of August in 1996, and that in fact we will be using data that is five years behind time. They acknowledge themselves that if we were to be absolutely accurate, based on today's data, today's figures populationwise, indeed we should see greater numbers of constituencies in both Edmonton and Calgary. Now, that's a concern because today we are five years behind time.

If we refer, then, also to the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, which of course created the commission, it says in section 5(3) of that Act:

Notwithstanding subsection (2), if less than 8 years has elapsed since the appointment of the last Commission, the Commission is to be appointed

(a) no sooner than 8 years.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we are here in 1996. If we add eight years to that, that brings us to the year 2004. Conceivably between today and the year 2004 we will have two elections, at least, in that time frame which are already behind in terms of the accuracy of the information being used to create those electoral boundaries. In other words, from 1991 we could be 13 years down the road and have an election based on information in an Electoral Divisions Act that is 13 years out of date. Quite frankly, I find that unacceptable. I accept that the current Electoral Boundaries Commission Act says that there will be "no sooner than 8 years," but quite frankly I think the commission that was struck, that led to the report and ultimately to Bill 46, should have taken at least the current growth into consideration, not only the projected growth down the road.

3:30

Let me point out why I have that concern, Mr. Speaker. I want to put some hard numbers before you that make it, I think, a little more accurate and a little more precise. Now, I won't claim to be an expert on any constituency other than my own, so I will use my own constituency as an example. [interjection] I'm an expert on the tourism in your constituency, hon. member, but not the entire constituency.

Page 43 of the Electoral Boundaries Commission report has on it Table 3: Measurement of Variables Matrix – Proposed Provincial Electoral Divisions. As I said, they are using 1991 census data. Well, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I recently did, following our spring session, was send out a newsletter to my constituents telling what had occurred in the legislative session during that spring session we just, it seems, only recently adjourned to come back here again in the summertime. In order to do that, I had to know how many flyers I would be sending out to how many households. So I called up Canada Post, and I asked them for their most accurate number based on the material

they distribute on a regular basis. The number that I got from Canada Post was 14,224 households in my constituency. Yet when I look back at the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, the number that they have is 10,012, a difference of 4,212 households.

Now, I'm using my own constituency as an example, but I know that there are other constituencies in the city of Calgary that are experiencing a similar kind of growth as my constituency is in the northwest. I'm certain that in the southeast part of the city that growth is occurring on a rapid basis, in Calgary-Shaw, in Calgary-Lougheed. I'm not sure about Calgary-Fish Creek, whether there is still sufficient growth going on there, but there is a lot of growth going on, and I would say also in Calgary-McCall.

[Mr. Herard in the Chair]

Let me put that into perspective for you. If we look at a difference of 4,212 households and if we use an average population, let's say, of 2.4 persons per household – this is the number I've picked because this is the number I hear statisticians using – multiply that by the 4,200 that I referred to, and I get a population of 10,000 persons more than what the Electoral Boundaries Commission report refers to. Mr. Speaker, that would put the population of my constituency today at 42,561 persons, which exceeds the plus 25 percent variation allowed under the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. That's one example, using my own constituency of Calgary-North West. I would suggest that there would be other members in the city of Calgary and probably in the city of Edmonton who could come up with similar kinds of errors, if you will, within the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

So indeed when I look at that figure – and that's only to today, Mr. Speaker. I want to emphasize again: that's based on today, 1996. These flyers that I sent out to my constituents reporting on the legislative session occurred in June of 1996. What happens in June of 1999? In June of 2003? Remember, this isn't supposed to be changed until sometime in the year 2004.

I took that question to the planners in the city of Calgary and said to them: based on the growth we've had in the last little while, what do you project down the road for the city of Calgary and in particular for my own constituency? Now, I think certainly the planners in the city of Calgary have to have reasonable projections based on current trends and where we're going as to what's likely to happen to the population within the entire city of Calgary. Certainly when I pinpointed them, I asked, "What do you see happening in my constituency of Calgary-North West?" They said, "Well, we have 5-, 10-, and 20-year projections down the road." I said: "Okay. Give me the 20-year projection. Give me the average figure that you think is happening currently on an annual basis." They said, "Twenty years down the road we see, at a minimum," – now this is 20 years down the road – "growth of 50,000 more persons," entirely within my constituency of Calgary-North West.

Over the last few years the Calgary-North West constituency has grown between 3,000 and 4,000 persons on an annual basis. This report and this Bill 46 do not reflect that, Mr. Speaker, and therefore I disagree, respectfully, with the conclusion on page 58, point 5, of the Electoral Boundaries Commission that says, "We do not think the parity or equality of the vote has been unduly diluted."

Mr. Speaker, if we go for another eight years in the Calgary-North West constituency, even averaging 2,000 persons per year, which is half of what the trend has been in the last few years, by



the time we get around to renewing this again, my constituency will have in excess of 60,000 persons, almost double the upper limit of the range of variation. Quite frankly, I don't think that's fair to the constituents of Calgary-North West, either those who are there today or those who are going to be coming in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Electoral Boundaries Commission should use data, should use population statistics that are more contemporary and more accurate than what we have in the report which led to Bill 46, the Electoral Divisions Act. As I said, I like what the commission has attempted to do in creating a matrix, a matrix that is as close as possible, I guess, to an objective measure. In fact, the commission themselves refer to the fact, on page 46 of the report, that it is "a guide only and the Commission must use discretion in applying the matrix." I do not accept that sufficient discretion, in the case of the constituents of Calgary-North West, has been applied in the creation of the boundaries that we see proposed before us today in Bill 46. To that extent, I think the commission should be directed to use data that is as accurate as possible, recognizing what's happening today.

I think we would all say that the economy of the province of Alberta, if you look at any number of independent measures, is one of the stronger economies within the nation, and our population and our economy are likely to grow. Therefore we will continue to see certainly in the short term and hopefully in the long term the kinds of growth that we have seen in the past. If those trends that we've had over the last four, five, six years continue over the next four, five, six years, we will find ourselves shortly after the turn of the century with an imbalance that is at least as great as what we have today. Bill 46 does not address the imbalance, in my opinion, thoroughly enough today, and it does not address the imbalance that I foresee and project will occur in the future.

To suggest that this is slow and steady improvement, Mr. Speaker, as the report does refer to, is not improvement in a rapid enough and strong enough fashion. Therefore I would encourage members to direct the commission to plan for the future in a little stronger fashion and come up with a Bill that is more accurate and reflective of the province of Alberta than Bill 46 is today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. ADY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make a few comments pertaining to Bill 46. Having been here for 10-plus years and having been subject to now two boundary reviews, I see myself as being fairly well seasoned in what happens during boundary reviews. The hon. Member for Calgary-North West is quite correct. They are difficult. They do present challenges to all of us, and they're difficult for the people of the province of Alberta to accept. They don't ever seem to go down easy, and they've got more difficult.

When the judgment of the Court of Appeal in British Columbia – Justice Beverley McLachlin brought down a decision because some constituent in British Columbia lodged a complaint that they were underrepresented. It caused that Court of Appeal to come forward with a decision that there had to be some effort made to draw closer to the norm, closer to the average of the ridings. That judgment said that it was permissible to be plus or minus 25 percent and that up to 5 percent of the constituencies could vary as much as 50 percent. To my knowledge there has not been any judgment, any court decision, anything that has said that any commission had to go beyond that, that if they stayed within those parameters, they were on safe ground in drawing new boundaries.

I talk about that because I think it's important that that be part of the context.

**3:40**

Then I'd like to talk about the last commission that was put in place in this province. That was before the last election. There was a commission put in place and an Act passed. In the usual fashion there was opportunity for the government side of the House to have membership on it. It would be chaired by a judge, hopefully a judge that could be impartial, and the opposition members had an opportunity to participate. They did that, but when the report came in, Mr. Speaker, with five members on the commission there were five reports. No consensus whatsoever among the commission.

It was drawing nigh to an election. It was going to be necessary to have an election, and consequently the decision was made that there was not time to go through that process again. The decision was made that there would be a new committee set up that would be made up of elected people. The members from the opposition parties had an opportunity to participate but declined. One can only draw the conclusion that they declined for political reasons. They felt that there would not be acceptance by the people of Alberta for elected people to draw boundaries. By abstaining, they could avoid the backlash of that and the government side would have to carry that. Nevertheless, the government side did not have much alternative but to move forward and draw new boundaries, which they did.

Mr. Speaker, in my mind they acted as responsibly as they could. I think they gave opposition members the same opportunities and the same consideration that they gave government members as they worked through that very difficult and challenging task to draw new boundaries in this province that would fall within the plus or minus 25 percent and 5 percent to vary up to 50 percent. Well, that report was tabled and we went to the polls based on that.

Now I come to what really brings me to my feet today, because this is the beginning of what some of this report that we have tabled in the House presently reflects. In the wisdom of the commission of that time, made up of the elected people, the decision was made that the Cardston-Chief Mountain constituency, then known as just the Cardston constituency, would be one of the constituencies that would have a variance of up to 50 percent. Prior to that, that constituency was 14th from the smallest in the province, but after that it became one of the four exceptions. I guess that has proved to be a negative, as we now look back. It caused the new commission to look at that constituency in a separate light and say: that constituency is too small geographically; their numbers are small; that makes them ripe for a merger.

So first of all there was an interim report tabled, and it recommended that the Cardston-Chief Mountain constituency be merged with a part of Taber-Warner but leaving out, for conversation's sake, up to half of the county of Warner, which is a very large part of the Taber-Warner constituency. That caused a great deal of concern and unrest and dissatisfaction on the part of the constituents of Taber-Warner, and understandably so because they were being violated by all the rules that had ever been used to draw boundaries. They made strong representation that that be changed, that in fact the county be allowed to remain intact. Because the recommendation was that the constituencies would be put together and they would be known as Cardston-Taber, my constituency association put forward a brief to the commission that supported the move to include all of the county of Warner within the new constituency. Mr. Speaker, that brought the numbers to

within a few percentage points of the average.

I want to mention that the report, when it was tabled this time, was unanimous. All members of the commission agreed to it. Frankly, I'm surprised that they could. I'm surprised that anybody could agree to it. It didn't even follow the matrix that they had set out.

Now, I'm not here today to oppose the marriage or the merger, particularly, of the Cardston-Chief Mountain constituency and a large portion of the constituency of Taber-Warner. That's history. None of us liked it. The hon. Member for Taber-Warner opposed it vehemently during the hearings, as did we, but I guess we have to say that's lost. What I am here to say today is that there were some mistakes made. The commission violated their own matrix in the lines that they drew, and it has to do with the west end of that constituency.

To just back up a moment, let's walk through the events that took place that led us to that. First of all, there were public hearings by that commission. Then they did their work, and they came forward with an interim report. That interim report gave people an opportunity to appeal to them to rethink the interim report. That was done in some circumstances, and I outlined one of them just a few minutes ago. Then came the final report, and the commission said, "We're finished our work." They passed it to the Speaker of the House, and they supposedly were finished. But there is something still missing in this whole thing, and that is that the changes they made to respond to those who appealed to them to change the interim report had no opportunity for appeal. That's what happened in the west end of my present constituency.

There are a thousand people in the communities of Hill Spring and Glenwood and the surrounding area. They are bordered by the Belly River and the Waterton River, and ever since the Cardston constituency was founded, they have been members and part of that constituency. I have to wonder on what basis that commission would carve those people out of this constituency. It certainly wasn't because my constituency was going to have too many numbers. A thousand people would certainly not put me above the average. I would still be two or three percentage points below the average. That was not the issue. So one has to ask the question: why did they do it?

**3:50**

I look at their matrix that they used. The hon. Member for Calgary-North West talked about that; it's on page 9. Let me talk about that for a minute. It says here:

The Commission found it necessary to establish and apply a hierarchy or set of priorities in its deliberations concerning the various boundaries set out in the Act, as well as the road systems and trade and travel patterns recommended for consideration by the legislation or at the public hearings and in the submissions.

Here are some of the ones that they used or said they were going to use at any rate.

Municipal and community league boundaries. Clearly, this community is part of the MD of Cardston. They're now being carved out of that. The commission didn't follow that rule.

School district/division boundaries. Again, the same thing: didn't follow it, ignored it, and went on a federal boundary. What in the – whatever word I can use – were they thinking of? Not the people that lived there. Not the fact that anybody needed any numbers. Now we've got an MLA that's got to troop across the river and go and meet with a school district over a little pocket of people. That little pocket of people – Mr. Speaker, we talk about fair representation. These people will have a hard time gaining that because they have no community pattern.

They say: geographical boundaries, natural and man-made. Well, there's a river that's between them and the new constituency of Livingstone-Macleod. There is no particular geographical connection.

Trade and travel patterns. These people use the Cardston-Chief Mountain constituency today for virtually everything. They have no connection to the constituency of Livingstone-Macleod.

Health region boundaries. They access the health system in this constituency.

I could go on. There is absolutely no connection. They've violated everything they put in their own rule book and passed it to us as a report that we should accept. I have a great deal of difficulty when somebody makes some rules and then doesn't even abide by them themselves. These people in Hill Spring and Glenwood have no opportunity for appeal. The only appeal they have is this Assembly. That's the only one. And because we have a unanimous report, what's this Assembly to do? Obviously, the Commission aren't going to change their minds. They have passed in the report and they're finished.

Mr. Speaker, my purpose in standing today is to make it very pointed that what they did to the people of those communities is wrong. It's not fair, it has no reason to it, and I stand opposed to the report for those reasons.

Thank you.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Hon. members, before we recognize the next speaker, could we have unanimous consent to revert to Introduction of Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed? Thank you.

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

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce people to you that have just come into the gallery recently to watch the proceedings and maybe some of the debate on electoral boundaries. John and Bernice McDonnell are from near Rivière Qui Barre, and they've been active people in the Rivière Qui Barre community and in Villeneuve. They almost qualify for farming with their family on the same quarter for one hundred years. That will happen in a few more years I believe. They are wonderful people in our communities, and we're very glad that they are part of them. They are here today with Christopher Malanthen and Sherry Tenpas. I would ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

[The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

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

**Bill 46**  
**Electoral Divisions Act**  
(*continued*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Little Bow I believe was standing, but when the Chair appeared, it seemed to me that the hon. minister of advanced education was up. Is that

not so? So in the back and forth we'll now go to Edmonton-Whitemud and then Little Bow.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In second reading you address the principle of a Bill. Again, I represent an urban riding – I represent an Edmonton riding – and as we debate this Bill and certainly in committee stage I'm going to listen very carefully to the issues, particularly if any amendments are brought forward.

I would just like to start out by saying that there are a number of principles that one has to deal with in this Bill, and they conflict. We have a report that is unanimous. It meets the criteria that many had set out, that they wanted an arm's-length process by which boundaries were set. That process is complete, we have the report, but legislatively there were certain constraints put on them, one of which was the number of MLAs, 83. I think there are too many MLAs in principle.

In terms of the electoral boundaries Act and the principle behind it, we're debating a Bill, then, that says that there are 83 MLAs, and we're then talking about the allocation of those 83 MLAs over the province. We had an opportunity when the initial Bill was passed, Mr. Speaker, to debate and discuss this issue. So in principle when I look at this, on one hand I say to myself: I wish we could have dealt with the issue of the number of MLAs so the Bill that ultimately came before us had dealt with that. Regrettably, we can't, but we should have because we, collectively, are part of the cost of government. If the whole structure of government is undergoing change, so too should perhaps the size of the Assembly, an issue that I wish we could address but we can't, given the constraints of this Bill, other than to flag it as an issue of principle. And, again, this is second reading.

Again, the issue of the independence of the committee. They were independent, given the constraints that we had imposed on them. The report is unanimous.

The boundaries commission came about because in fact in the courts of appeal they were quite clear in saying that for Alberta to call itself a democracy, one would have to look at these boundaries. I believe the point that was made by my colleague from Calgary-North West does bear again as an issue of principle. We're dealing here with boundaries drawn on the 1990 census. There is a lot of change, and to the extent that the boundaries that we pass, whenever we do so in this session, remain in place, some constituencies are growing far more rapidly than others. I, in fact, represent one of those constituencies that is growing very rapidly: Riverbend, the constituency of Edmonton-Whitemud. There are just a lot of new developments going up, and when I go out there and I door-knock and I look, it's like dragon's teeth, the new houses springing up. It's great, on the one hand, to represent those individuals, but on the other hand the imbalances that are going to emerge through time are going to be very large. These imbalances then, particularly in some of the urban centres where there is a lot of land that's available for use, are going to become increasingly larger, so the variances that currently exist are going to become even longer the longer these boundaries remain in place.

Again, we come up to another issue of principle; that is, the principle of what effective representation is as opposed to one person, one vote. I heard when we debated the initial Bill that in rural ridings there are quite a different set of obstacles to be faced compared to urban ridings in terms of distance to be traveled, in terms of diversity. I would note that urban ridings have their own set of issues as well; in many cases, a much greater load with

regards to workmen's compensation, social assistance, and the like. I mean, each MLA faces a different type of workload, and the issue is: how do you effectively represent them? Large urban ridings have their own unique set of problems related to the types of caseload that you deal with, and it's not all as easy as you might think, representing an urban riding as compared to a rural riding. There are just differences. The workload, I think, for any riding rises exponentially with the number of constituents you represent. Whether they're officially recognized or not, they're living there. They're there, and their concerns have to be dealt with. That's why we're paid the dollars. So those issues we have to deal with.

We have that principle of effective representation, and you know, you hear various criteria set out for what defines that. In one sense, the boundaries commission tried to talk about some of the factors that would influence the ability of an MLA to effectively represent their constituents and, on the basis of that matrix, came out with the allocation. I thought the hon. Member for Cardston-Chief Mountain was eloquent in noting that in fact even given that criteria, those eight indicators for their matrix analysis, there were real inconsistencies evident.

4:00

So you've got this notion of effective representation, which seems to be a – code is too strong a word – rationalization and a way of explaining why you might not want one person, one vote, because if you carried it to that extreme, then you would have ridings that were so large in some areas that it would be very, very difficult to represent them. You know, the issue that I hear then – I mean, it's been brought up in debate. I remember during debate on the electoral boundaries they said, “You know, you don't see very often a unicameral Legislature having one person, one vote because there are regional interests.” I listen to those arguments and I wonder: where does it end? I mean, we in the province of Alberta clearly feel that our regional interests are not effectively met by Ottawa, and we look hopefully to the Senate to possibly try to represent our interests in terms of some mechanism by which the province has a say that's consistent with its regional strength in our Confederation.

You hear the similar arguments used that the rural sector, if we went to simply one person, one vote, might be underrepresented in terms of their ability to convey their interests and the very distinct differences and challenges that that sector of our province faces.

So you've got this tension between the notion of effective representation, the ability to then bring forward regional interests, versus the principle of one person, one vote. I'm very sympathetic to this, that there are these differences, but I'm also very sympathetic to the notion of one person, one vote. Now, it's true I'd like to see if there are examples of a unicameral Legislature that is purely based on an individual one person, one vote.

MRS. SOETAERT: There isn't.

DR. PERCY: I've been told that there isn't. I'm still searching to see if there is one.

Again, in terms of the issue of representing sectoral interests or regional interests, that argument you can carry to the extreme as well. If you live in a community, why is your community league not then your effective representative? I mean, where do we stop balkanizing the province? Where is it the case that members elected from rural ridings can't represent and articulate urban views and vice versa? Are the cleavages that different?

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, when I look at the Bill, when I remember the nature of the debate over the electoral boundaries, I think there are a number of fundamental issues at stake here. These issues ought to be addressed and debated, and reasonable people can differ reasonably on the basis that there are a variety of distinct principles at stake here. We should debate, then, what we mean by representation, how we're going to do it effectively. Again, it's a unanimous report. I think the committee did try its darnedest to give some analytical structure to the notion of effective representation. Certainly supporting this Bill would not be seen as necessarily supporting the analytical structure that they used to come up with the boundaries. I was glad to see that that was not part of the Bill itself.

So as I say, Mr. Speaker, when I look at this legislation, I'm aware that there are a lot of competing interests at stake, all of which are motivated on the basis of principle. It's just that people are focusing on different criteria that they think are important but fundamentally important to them.

So I'm looking forward to the debate, and I have to say that I find that, for me, the variances I see are relatively large. I think I perhaps would have liked to have seen some greater convergence. Ultimately, how I'm going to vote will depend on what emerges, then, during committee discussions, what I hear in second reading, and what I hear on third reading. I think, as I say, that this Bill isn't as cut and dried as it looks.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Chair would wish to share with you the news I've received, that one of our members is celebrating a birthday. We could all join in in congratulating the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods in reaching yet another year.

The hon. Member for Little Bow.

**MR. McFARLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I might start my portion of the debate on Bill 46 today, it's with a bit of history about the riding which I represent, that being Little Bow, in an effort to try to explain not my concerns that I have with the Bill but the constituents in our riding and the future representation they can or cannot expect to look forward to.

In 1992, when I had the privilege of being elected to represent Little Bow, there was a substantial number of counties, MDs, towns, villages, and local municipalities that made up the geography. Just briefly, Mr. Speaker, there was a small portion of the MD of Foothills and a small portion of the county of Wheatland. There was Siksika Nation, the county of Vulcan, a portion of the county of Lethbridge, and a portion of the MD of Taber. At that time I had had the previous privilege of making a presentation on behalf of a county council to some of the people that are now colleagues today in this Assembly. The Minister of Energy, I can recall, was in the area, as was the Member for Calgary-North West.

I thought at that time, as basically a rural resident, how nice it was to see somebody from another part of the province down hearing the concerns of people in the area. Because let's not forget that no matter if we're from Sherwood Park or if we're from Athabasca or any other part of the province, for a good many of us, for a good many of the people that come here, those people have never had the experience of traveling all that much. At least they didn't 10 or 15 years ago, and to them, their world is rather small in terms of politics. They see the geographic barriers that they've lived in, and maybe, like I did at that point myself, they didn't appreciate the bigger picture.

Anyway, to move on, in 1993 prior to the general election our particular riding was to change again. We lost that small portion of the county of Wheatland and that small portion of the MD of Foothills, but in exchange we gained the balance of the county of Lethbridge which, for those of you interested in geography, was to the north of the Oldman River, and we covered everything up to the Bow River east of Calgary. We also were granted the privilege of representing the north half of the MD of Willow Creek and back into a portion of the newly created MD of Ranchland, which our colleague from Highwood had previously represented. That added a different dimension, a ranching dimension, but it also continued to allow the riding of Little Bow to be traditionally an agricultural riding. Along with that, we continued to represent the county of Vulcan and the MD of Taber. People thought, Mr. Speaker, that that was it, that after two years and significant change and a 30 percent growth in the geographic size of the riding, enough was enough already and things should be able to settle down and people get to know each other, at least on a riding basis, for the next few years without any further changes.

#### 4:10

Well, as you're well aware – and I'm not going to go into the details of the report – it's with a great deal of frustration that our constituents, anyway, attended both public hearings. When I heard previous comments about principles, about some of the concerns that our colleagues here in the House have, I think our constituents felt the very same thing. They made presentations. They didn't go to the Electoral Boundaries Commission and say, "Leave us alone; we can't change." They accepted the fact that there had to be or should be some change, and they made some proposals. But, interestingly enough, not one of the proposals was included in the first draft.

I think that created a bit of apathy in the people in the riding, because when they saw the results of the first draft, they said: "What's the point of going to the second round of hearings if this commission won't listen to us? Who knows the area better than we do? Who knows where our kids go to school better than we do? Who knows where we go for our educational needs better than we do? Who, above all else, knows where we go to do our business transactions and our natural trading area? And who knows the natural barriers that exist geographically, the number of bridges that we may or may not have to cross natural barriers?"

Consequently, when the second draft came out, the previous recommendations from the first draft were totally reversed in the case of the western portion of our riding. Where the commission had suggested that the communities of Nanton, Parkland, and Stavely should go to Pincher Creek-Macleod, in the second draft they turned around and suggested that those same communities should go into Highwood. Either way, Little Bow stood to lose those people in the riding. I guess that's the way it has to be, but truly, Mr. Speaker, I really do feel a sense of sadness, because those people will now face a third riding in four years.

It isn't bad enough that the electoral commission recommends moving them, but they appeared not to know which way they wanted to move them between one draft and another. What it has done, in my opinion and the opinion of the town council of Stavely in particular – they really did feel a closer affiliation with the town of Claresholm, which is in Pincher Creek-Macleod, than they did with Okotoks and High River and those areas that are in the Highwood riding. Nanton, on the other hand, felt a little closer proximity to Okotoks and High River. They didn't have,

in my mind, a problem in moving to Highwood, but the commission recommended that that entire portion of the MD of Willow Creek should go north.

[Mr. Herard in the Chair]

Now, the problem I see is that it's a short-term solution that's soon going to have to correct itself for the fourth time. As many of you know, our colleague from Highwood represents an area that probably has two of the faster growing communities in Alberta: Okotoks and High River. I don't have a huge amount of doubt that the growth in that area in one year would exceed the ability of that commission to have allowed Stavelly to stay in the Pincher Creek-Macleod area. That's just common sense. It's not political. I don't say that from the fact that I may or may not be representing them. It's what's best for that community today and for tomorrow.

The second issue that I had dealt with, the Siksika Nation. Historically this Indian nation southeast of Calgary has always been in Little Bow. In the first draft there was no recommendation, no mention made of the movement of Siksika out of Little Bow at all. Lo and behold, along came the second draft, and it recommended moving the historical siting of Siksika Nation out of Little Bow into Bow Valley. Again, I'm not blaming anyone on the commission, only pointing out that perhaps they didn't consider the educational needs and the service area already provided for the native children, who at this point in time are serviced by the Palliser school division, which is part of the county of Vulcan.

Mr. Speaker, the effective portion – I could go on at length. There are arguments that can be made for coterminous boundaries. I've seen it, and it makes sense in some of our ridings, but I also see that it's been conveniently sidestepped when it doesn't conform with the argument made for coterminous boundaries. Again I'll use our own riding as an example. It makes perfect sense to take the county of Lethbridge and the county of Vulcan and run the riding on coterminous boundaries. That sounds very good when you look at two-thirds of the context, but the people who would read that have forgotten that there's already and always has been one-half of the MD of Taber included in our riding of Little Bow, and that didn't change. So although they could argue that they made coterminous boundaries in adjusting one portion of the area, they tended to forget that they weren't addressing noncoterminous boundaries in the rest of it.

As I said before, I'm very proud to represent our riding, and I was quite surprised when I saw the matrix in the Electoral Boundaries Commission report, surprised to the extent that it indicated our riding was the second hardest riding to represent, with 29 elected councils. Perhaps the boundaries commission did try to address that problem, because somehow it did knock it down a number of rungs to the point of being 17th hardest to represent. I'm just going by memory here, but I actually don't think they did a correct calculation on the number of councils, because they may have subtracted, but they forgot to add back in the communities and the areas of interest that previously had been figured in the matrix.

Nonetheless, it is with a little bit of reservation that I raise the issue that rural representation is different than urban, and I acknowledge that urban representation is indeed different than rural. I believe the hon. member that spoke before me talked about the number of incidents that you as urban MLAs probably deal with on a far greater scale than a rural member might; for

instance, on workers' compensation claims. But don't forget that in a rural setting most of these people are self-employed, and workers' compensation, although it's still an issue in the small businesses of the small communities we represent, may not be of the magnitude that you find here in the city.

I'm straying a little bit from the principles, but I'm only trying to impress that although people may have a tendency to think of rural areas as these quaint, small little communities, I would ask all of you to remember that some of these quaint little small communities have elected councils, are part of regional health authorities, regional school boards, publicly elected irrigation councils, private school boards, separate school boards. Although they're small, the area that I have a real pleasure to represent – and I hope I can continue to represent those people in the proposals that would add to our riding, if that's the will of the Legislature. In a city such as Calgary or Edmonton – I may be off by a few square miles – I believe you would have a total area of 600 to 700 square miles, and that's pretty incredible. It's 25 miles across at any longest point, but that's represented by anywhere from 18 to 20 members.

In our area, in particular, we're about 155 miles long and about 110 miles across, and in that conglomerate of a huge land base, which has about 20,500 versus 650,000 in the city, I will spend, on average, 100,000 kilometres a year driving from here back home to the riding and in and around the riding to represent those 29 elected councils. I'm not giving you a sob story, because every one of you knows how hard it is to represent your own riding, but I look at the effective part.

One hundred thousand kilometres a year. Even if you could drive the legal speed limit, it is a thousand hours. Now, today we consider 2,080 hours a standard workweek year. I'll spend a thousand hours just driving an automobile either to get up here on behalf of constituents or to meet with the constituents back home in the riding. That's two months of the year lost not just to myself but to our constituents, to the Legislative Assembly, but most importantly, to me, to my family. I think those are the kinds of issues that the Electoral Boundaries Commission, as hard as they may have tried, haven't properly acknowledged.

4:20

I can get in a war of words about the number of rural MLAs and the number of urban MLAs, but we've forgotten that we were allowed plus or minus 25 percent variance in our populations in all our ridings. It seems to me the commission has come out of the clear blue with a plus or minus variance of only 15 percent, and I don't know that we gave them that mandate.

Now, we can talk about how expensive it is to have MLAs sit here, but I guess when I look at my previous experience as a county councillor, I prided myself on the fact that we accounted, our total administration and council, for less than half of 1 percent of the total county budget. I think you'd find pretty much the same thing in the Legislative Assembly.

If we're suddenly looking at condensing that flexibility that I as a rural member have from 25 percent to 15 percent, then might I suggest – and don't take this as an offence to Edmonton or to Calgary, and I'll give you the reasons why in a moment – that you could reduce eight MLAs in the cities alone if the city MLAs were willing to represent the maximum side of the factor allowed, the 25 percent from the provincial average.

I'll give you an example: 30,000 per constituency. That would mean a city of Edmonton or Calgary MLA would represent 37,500 people, and you could have – not saying you would have – in the sparsely populated areas 22,500 represented. You'd still

have the average of 30,000 if you want to save MLAs.

I told you I'd tell you the reason why. Well, we haven't really seen a justification. To start with, I don't believe that it was fair to make the recommendation where the Electoral Boundaries Commission was to go out and speak to the public about what they felt was effective and adequate representation, but before any of that were to happen, they sent a householder out indicating they were already going to reduce two rural ridings and add one each to Edmonton and Calgary. To me that told my constituents: why would I bother going to make a representation on behalf of my own thoughts – I'm speaking in terms of a constituent – if this independent commission has already made up their mind how the numbers will be structured?

So when I talk about the rural/urban thing, I also said I would give you a reason why the urban should represent more. We have two major cities in the province, and we have 12 other cities which are also growing. Each of those places is going to grow – it's a fact, as far as I can see it right now – at a much quicker rate than rural Alberta. But if you change all the ridings around the cities, whether it's Wetaskiwin or Medicine Hat or St. Albert or Grande Prairie or Fort McMurray, you're going to have a period of time in there where there aren't enough people to justify a growth from one to two MLAs or two to three. What you will do is force yourself into realigning boundaries continually for that area around the city, and those are going to become the same people that feel much like our people in Nanton and Stavely did. They'll be bounced into one riding and then taken out and put into another riding as the cities grow.

I'll be quite honest with you, colleagues. In our riding I've had zero calls in four years saying, "The riding's too small; there are too many MLAs." I've had none of that, but I have had lots of this: "How much did it cost that commission to go out there? Why are we wasting this money? Why can't we just define the boundaries and leave them alone? Do people really, really believe that there should be one vote for every person in the province when this province is so darn big, 1,200 miles long, with different pockets of concentrated population and such a diverse geographic and economic relationship compared to some of the other areas?"

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MRS. SOETAERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to speak to Bill 46, maybe because I have one of the unique ridings in this province. It is both urban and rural because I represent two cities: a small part of the city of St. Albert – though the Member for St. Albert always likes to call his greater St. Albert, I argue with him – the city of Spruce Grove, and part of the rural MD of Sturgeon.

In looking at this, months ago it was decided by a court that if we left the boundaries the way they were, we could hardly call Alberta a democracy. That was because politicians drew the lines before, and as much as we'd like to all say that we're not self-serving, it was pretty obvious in the last boundary drawing that there was some self-serving going on. So we decided in this House that we had to ask a commission, that we had to try to have an impartial commission. We had two representatives on that; so did the Conservative caucus. And we had Judge Wachowich. They went about the province and I think tried to do the very best they could with such a diverse province and so many different issues and so many trading lines and so many school boundaries and health boundaries.

At the time, you realize, health boundaries had just been

changed; school boundaries were in the middle of changing. I guess as an MLA representing an area, you'd better be ready to meet a few different school boards and a few different community leagues and a few different FCSS boards. Certainly in my case I'm very fortunate to have five or six small communities: Villeneuve, Calahoo, Mearns, and Alcomdale. We can talk about trading patterns, trading patterns with Calahoo possibly going to Spruce Grove more than Rivière Qui Barre going to St. Albert.

I know they looked at my riding of Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert and said: can we change this one to make it maybe more conducive to trading patterns? Well, if you are to look at Spruce Grove, it has always been closely associated with Stony Plain and Parkland, but Stony Plain and Parkland and Spruce Grove together are too big for one riding. St. Albert is too big for one riding, not quite big enough for two, and there's the dilemma. So in the case of my riding I know that they looked it over and decided to say that these three communities still have a great deal in common.

I am pleased that my riding stayed the same, because I'm very proud to represent it. I think I represent three very wonderful population bases that have many things in common yet many things diverse. I heard the Member for Little Bow talking about the diverse needs of rural Alberta and urban Alberta. Maybe someone who represents a downtown city riding doesn't understand highway transportation or the fact that gravel pits may be in your riding or the fact there may be other developments or how sod farms may use a great deal of river water. Those are issues that maybe somebody downtown wouldn't even think to have to deal with, but certainly people in rural Alberta do. By the same token, if you don't represent a city area – maybe my riding doesn't deal nearly as much with immigration as the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore. So I think we all have to respect that each riding is unique, and we each have to bring our skills to represent that area as best we can, as diverse as they all are within their own ridings.

We've asked for this independent commission because politicians should not set the boundaries, because we may end up self-serving – I would never imply that anybody would, but it certainly could happen – just as we shouldn't set our own salaries. We should ask for an independent commission for that, just as we asked for this one. They've done the best job they possibly could at this time. That's how I look at it. Maybe some of us will argue that it's not good enough. Well, there are many things in this world not perfect, and we should strive to make them the best we can, but I think this is a good step towards making our boundaries fairer in Alberta.

#### 4:30

I will support the Bill. I know there are some arguments that can be made about the matrix and how it will weigh out and that certainly by the year 2007 these boundaries will most definitely have to be looked at again, especially in areas like Sherwood Park, which is rapidly growing, St. Albert, Spruce Grove, rapidly growing. So we're going to have to look at boundaries again. Maybe that's part of living in Alberta, that we are flexible, and we're going to have to continue to look at making it fair.

People talk about less MLAs. Well, if we do that, you know, if we're going to look at talking about less MLAs, then we have to look at how our offices can help our constituents if we get more constituents. I certainly know that my office is extremely busy.

With regards to Bill 46 I still see some issues that people may be upset with. I don't think it's a perfect submission, but I

respect very much the work of the people on that commission and the work that they have done, and I think it's a step towards making boundaries and electoral divisions fairer in Alberta. So for those reasons I will be supporting this Bill.

They talked about name changes, and I was phoned to see if I would like to change the name of Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert. Mr. Speaker, at the same time, the MP from our area had suggested changing the name of the federal riding, and that created quite a stir. So I thought it best not to change it. Besides, I kind of like the length of that name. At times it frustrates different Speakers in the Chair, I realize, but I quite like the name Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert because it gives a pretty fair representation of the area I am very proud to represent.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I will say that I will be supporting Bill 46.

Thank you.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Hon. members, before introducing the Member for Taber-Warner, I wish to indicate that he is celebrating a birthday today as well. The hon. Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. HIERATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A good deal of what I was going to say has been said by previous members. I have one of the constituencies that has been affected the most by the electoral boundaries report. The commission is recommending that close to 40 percent of Taber-Warner be fractured off, that being the town of Coaldale and area, and be moved to Little Bow, with the rest of the constituency, as proposed, to be amalgamated with Cardston-Chief Mountain.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

This new constituency would be more than 130 miles from one end to the other. That would make this constituency one of the most difficult to represent. With the whole concept of fair and effective representation, certainly the new proposed riding of Cardston-Taber, if this report is passed, would not be able to be represented as effectively as it has in the past. So then the question: what is effective representation? I'm not sure that anyone is really able to define what effective representation means.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents are very upset with the Electoral Boundaries Commission report. Particularly, my constituents are upset at the process. Why did the commission ask for public input in November of 1995 and again in April of 1996? Everyone from my constituency that went before the commission in November and in April said to the commission: leave the boundaries alone. Why would the commission come around and listen to constituents and want to receive input if in fact they weren't listening?

I must also mention that many of my constituents feel that the matrix is not being used fairly across rural Alberta. In the proposal a constituency like Cardston-Taber would have 28,800 people. That puts a member representing that new proposed constituency about six hours, or 400 miles, from the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, while constituencies like Drayton Valley-Calmor or Barrhead-Westlock, representing people in numbers of 25,700 and being only an hour or so from the Legislature, are left intact. My constituents are very upset that it seems to be only impacting southern Alberta.

One of the aspects that I have a great deal of trouble with is

why one judge, that had no understanding at all of representing a rural constituency, has the power to initiate a redistribution of seats in the Legislature. Mr. Speaker, it seems that eroding rural representation is something that the rural people understand very clearly. They know that the MLA who represents a rural constituency does a lot of traveling and that they are not able to have access to that MLA because of the distance traveled. The Member for Little Bow made those points very accurately.

In conclusion, who is it, Mr. Speaker, that makes laws, and who is it that enforces laws? I think that in this case the judge that made the finding in the Lac La Biche court case should run for MLA and come in here and make laws. I think the judges are really overstepping their general bounds by doing this.

I thank you for the opportunity of speaking on this case.

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

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak to Bill 46, the Electoral Divisions Act, in its second reading. I was a little bit disturbed when I earlier heard one of my colleagues referred to as a fascist, and the accusation came from the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat. The reason he made his accusation was because the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods said that he believed in the principle of one person, one vote.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to start my comments, then, along those lines, because I for one believe that there has to be some parity in the power of each and every vote in Alberta. I'm very sympathetic to the claims and the comments and the concerns that I've heard from rural members, and I think many are valid. But are there other ways to address it?

When I look to the comments of Madam Justice McLachlin, who states that elected representatives function in two roles, legislative and what has been termed the ombudsman role, I believe that's an accurate depiction of what we as elected officials do on behalf of our constituents. So there is this legislative role that we undertake here during session, regardless of whether it's called on short notice for the summer, in this case to pass this piece of legislation, or whether it's in our constituencies to listen to constituents who may have been wronged or didn't receive due or fair process in their dealings with the provincial government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I believe the first component, that legislative component, speaks to the value of a vote that each and every citizen in Alberta carries, whereas the second component of our responsibilities or of our representative function, the ombudsman role, speaks more to the time that's required to meet and act on behalf of our constituents. So clearly there is a differentiation between the two roles that we have. It's that first component or that first responsibility we have that I say should be the basis on which we draw electoral boundaries. It's difficult for me to go to my constituency and explain to some of my constituents that they require two votes to perhaps a single vote in another part of Alberta.

4:40

MR. DUNFORD: A red herring just went floating by.

MR. SEKULIC: Mr. Speaker, I heard a comment, that a red herring just went floating by, from the Member for . . .

MR. DUNFORD: Lethbridge-West. I want to be on the record.

MR. SEKULIC: I'm not sure what he meant by that, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: It was a blue herring.

MR. SEKULIC: It might as well be.

Mr. Speaker, I'll go on to state a few more of the comments from Madam Justice McLachlin. She has differentiated the role of elected representatives' functions into two roles: the legislative and the ombudsman role. She goes on to state:

What are the conditions of effective representation? The first is relative parity of voting power. A system which dilutes one citizen's vote unduly as compared with another citizen's vote runs the risk of providing inadequate representation to the citizen whose vote is diluted. The legislative power of the citizen whose vote is diluted will be reduced, as may be access to and assistance from his or her representative. The result will be uneven and unfair representation.

First of all, regarding the area that I have concern with – and that's of course the legislative responsibility that we all have – she goes on to say that “absolute parity is impossible.” I agree; it isn't possible. There's no way that we can have one person, one vote, and for a variety of reasons. Then she goes on to explain why parity is impossible. She states that

factors like geography, community history, community interests and minority representation may need to be taken into account to ensure that our legislative assemblies effectively represent the diversity of our social mosaic.

She goes on to say that

these are but examples of considerations which may justify departure from absolute voter parity in the pursuit of more effective representation.

She goes on to say right after that, “The list is not closed.”

That's where I really want to open up my comments from my perspective on the report on which this Bill 46 is based. I want to preface by saying that my constituency is of course an urban one, but at the same time it does have gravel pits in it. At the same time, it also produces some of the top potato seed in Alberta. So I have a different complexion. There is a rural component but not extensive. I believe that at 120 square kilometres it is the largest urban riding in Alberta. Approximately 80 percent of that is rural, but the population is concentrated in that remaining 20 percent.

I do have some understanding, though far from the level of understanding that's required on the rural side to make too many comments, but I do want to make comments about those 80 percent or 90 percent of the constituents that reside in 20 percent of the geographical area. Mr. Speaker, those are the factors that Madam Justice McLachlin referred to when she said that the list is not closed. The components of the list that I'd like opened, perhaps, and considered are when we act as ombudsmen for our constituents: what records does this Assembly have of the frequency, the difficulty of cases, of the overall magnitude of the numbers of citizens which call our constituency offices requesting our assistance or the assistance of our offices?

Well, Mr. Speaker, since I've arrived in this Assembly, my constituency, having a population of roughly 33,000 according to this report, has logged 9,000 telephone calls from constituents. Now, the majority of those are cases which we could quickly and easily handle. The majority, as I'm sure we all would agree, didn't require direct MLA intervention. If they did, I'd never have time to be here. The difficult cases did require my intervention, and there was a large number of those difficult cases. In terms of hours of work, which once again reflects on the ombuds-

man role, I had a significant quantity of work.

Now, the nature of those telephone calls is in areas such as the Workers' Compensation Board, because I for the most part represent working, blue-collar Albertans who aren't self-employed and do require on occasion, when they're injured, services from the WCB. I also have a large number of mental health issues, Mr. Speaker, and the obvious reason for that is that Alberta Hospital Edmonton, one of the finest institutions in Canada for psychiatric services, is located inside of my constituency. The infrastructure around that psychiatric hospital has been developed over the last 50 years in northeast Edmonton. Consequently – and I know the members for Edmonton-Norwood and Edmonton-Beverly-Belmont also realize this – we have a greater number of individuals who because they are also part of our community setting come into our offices requiring services. Once again it's a population component that requires more intensive work.

Mr. Speaker, the next category of concerns that I hear in a large number are Family and Social Services concerns, of course the largest and most dominant component being AISH, assured income for the severely handicapped. These individuals are a very large component, and I know that every member who's ever dealt with that program in their constituency knows it to be one that requires a large number of hours and very detailed attention. The nature of the concerns, of the work that comes through my constituency office and in fact the large number that come through my constituency office require significant resources from both myself and from my office staff. Once again, that does not speak to the issue of legislative representation on behalf of my constituents, which I really do think is the most important role. The Ombudsman's role, if we were to expand the office of the Ombudsman in Alberta, could undertake a large number of those cases and, I would suggest, could resolve them in a similar manner.

I would argue with Madam Justice McLachlin's comments that the primary role of an elected representative is the legislative function, and the ombudsman role, although very important, would have to be considered secondary because it could be carried on by an extension of the Ombudsman's office. In fact, if we really wanted to reform the manner in which we serve our constituents, I would suggest that we should each have a representative of the Ombudsman's office as our constituency staff, and we would then be an extension of that, providing representation in this Assembly on a political level for our constituents with concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that if we look at this Bill, we have to look at the other types of decisions that we've made in this Assembly over the past three years. One of the arguments, I know, even on the most recent Oberg report on the Capital health authority in Edmonton, was that based on technological developments in the last number of years, we've been able to reduce the number of resources going into health because we're getting increased returns for those dollars.

Well, similar technological developments have occurred in communications. More of us are using our computers and our modems and receiving information from our constituents in different ways. The same expectations that we're imposing upon the health care structure should also be imposed upon us. Everyone in this Assembly will note now that under their desks here they have a modem hookup and plug-ins for computers. So we are changing, Mr. Speaker; we are changing. In fact, there will come a day when constituents will be able to modem us right in this Assembly. I know that if the minister of technology were



to rise, she would say that this is the direction Alberta must go if we are to compete internationally. Yet the Legislature, quite rightly, seems to be the last to absorb and be affected by such technological advancements, but they are coming.

4:50

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to be a part of drawing my own electoral boundaries. I think that should be done independently, just as I believe that we should not set our own salaries. That must be done independently at arm's length from us. I would say that we must pay some caution and some respect to the manner in which some of these decisions are made and in particular how we address the issue of voter parity. This Bill in the end speaks to voter parity and that single component, that first component, outlined by Madam Justice McLachlin, which is that each elected representative has two functions. I would suggest, as I've stated earlier, that the legislative function is the key one being debated within Bill 46.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not convinced that this independent report is the final answer and represents the issue of voter parity the way I'd like to see it. However, I will concede it is an independent report. In the end I must say that I would be forced to submit to the independent report. However, we've also previously unanimously agreed in the Assembly on issues such as a balanced budget, yet we disagreed with the way in which it's being achieved. I have to say that I was part of the consensus, the unanimous vote of this Assembly that agreed upon the directives given to the Electoral Boundaries Commission, but I'm not entirely satisfied, because I don't believe my needs on behalf of my constituents, specifically with regards to voter parity, have been addressed sufficiently.

I will concede the floor to other colleagues from either side of the floor who I'm sure will be responding to some of the comments that I've made.

Thank you very much.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Energy.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is, I'd have to say, with grave sympathy that I am once again standing to debate the issue of electoral boundaries in this Legislature. I don't mean that facetiously, because I can't think of a topic that is more heart wrenching to every member in this Assembly than changes in electoral boundaries. There isn't any MLA that is immune to the difficulty of having new boundaries and looking to represent new people as the boundaries change. Clearly, as one boundary changes, they all tend to change; it's a domino effect.

Mr. Speaker, I am probably one of the few that went through the grave difficulty of the last review. I ended up through default on a commission that was charged with the responsibility of drawing the boundaries. When I was first elected, I was put on a commission to review what the framework for boundaries should be. We worked along with all parties for about 14 months to come forward with recommendations that would be framed to go to a commission to come forward with boundaries. Those recommendations were based on a number of factors, cases that had been fought in other jurisdictions: the Dixon case, the McLachlin decision on the Dixon case, the Saskatchewan case, the Constitution of this country, et cetera. Based on the subsequent Supreme Court rulings, we drafted a framework that we handed to an independent commission that failed.

A second commission was struck to carry on, and it failed as well. It was made up of five people that were not elected, and

five reports came forward, all of them different, and there was no consensus. As a result, the responsibility rested with this Assembly to go back in at the last minute and make some sense out of boundaries, and on the government side we ultimately had to carry that responsibility. The opposition parties chose not to participate, even though they were asked to participate in the process.

I guess I can say that I will never forget the summer of 1992 because it was one of the worst summers I have experienced: having to sit down and go through riding after riding and submission after submission as to how those lines should be drawn. I will say, Mr. Speaker, in all fairness that after 31 public hearings and the reports from both commissions and the *Hansards* – all of the submissions were in *Hansard* – and the presentations that came not only from members of the then Legislature but also from their communities, I do believe that in all honesty we drew lines that fit the criteria we had accepted in this Legislature.

One of the things I found most difficult is that the people who we are accountable to had not necessarily been listened to, and that's what we tried to draw upon with those submissions, to listen to the people, because I believe that we are here because of the people we represent. It was important to put those comments, whether you agreed with them or not, into place, to have their constituents' views listed here in this Assembly.

I can remember that in August of 1992 I drew the maps for Calgary and Edmonton in my home. They were all over the walls of my dining room. One of the things that was very, very important to both the city of Calgary and the city of Edmonton that had been, I believe, a flaw in the past was that community associations had been split. They had in some cases two or three MLAs representing the same community association, and it caused difficulty for the people within the community to have two or three MLAs. That was the one thing that we heard loud and clear in those representations for Calgary and Edmonton.

We were fortunate enough to have the co-operation of both those cities' administrations to provide us with the community league maps and the populations in all of those community leagues so that we could take those maps and overlay boundaries and actually draw ridings where we didn't have to split one community league. Now, some of them looked a little funny when we drew them, but some of those community leagues had funny boundaries. I can honestly say that in my own case it was very difficult because a good part of my first riding was moved, and I did not have my original riding at all. In fact, basically my riding had been carved up between three other ridings, but it was the right thing to do because that's what the people had said. That is what the people had said: don't split us up; keep our community leagues whole.

Also, one of the things that was very important was for us to look at the growth patterns for those cities. They were growing rapidly, in particular Calgary. I remember the nights of driving around the perimeters of those cities and looking at the new communities that weren't even on the community league maps, where they had determined there would be 200 houses and all of a sudden there were a thousand houses. Driving around the city, I counted houses. So we determined that it would be better to have a higher variance in the low growth potential in the centre of the city and leave the perimeters, where there was growth potential, with the low variances to accommodate the future growth. All of these things went through our minds as we were drawing those maps, and it was not an easy task.

When we were looking at the rural areas – and I can tell you as

a city MLA that I drove 95,000 kilometres through this province. Most of the time when I visited rural areas I flew. Some of my rural colleagues that were on that committee did a lot more driving than I did. I certainly had my eyes opened as to what the differences were between representing the very large geographical areas in the rural area as opposed to the differences in the city. One is not easier than the other. I don't want anyone to think that representing a city riding is easier than a rural riding. The way you do it is different.

#### 5:00

One of the things I noticed in going into some of the smaller rural communities which I was very envious of is that the local MLA knew everybody in town. They knew everybody in the town on a first-name basis. In a large city riding you don't have that opportunity. You maybe know on a first-name basis, if you're lucky, 10 percent of your constituents. I was very envious of that relationship that our rural colleagues had in their communities, because as city MLAs we certainly didn't have that.

There was a substantial difference, Mr. Speaker, but I can honestly say that as we drove through those areas and listened to the people, everybody in this province deserved to be represented. Everybody asked us the question about representation by population. That's an American term. It is not in our Constitution. It is not there at all. In fact, if you look at the sections within the Constitution – I believe it's sections 3 and 15 – they talk about the right of equality in the eyes of the law, but they do not talk about voter parity or about representation by population. They talk about something that has never been defined, and that's called "effective representation."

All of the court cases have referred to effective representation. That has never been defined. If you look back at the last report that our commission filed with this Assembly, the first recommendation that we laid out was that it was very, very important for us as Canadians to define what effective representation really meant. It should not be left to question. It should not be something that someone assumes means one thing or another.

When you look at the makeup of this country and the small population and the massive geographical size, you can clearly see why there is disparity, why a place like Prince Edward Island on the federal scene has four Members of Parliament enshrined in the Constitution of Canada with the same population base as the Calgary North federal riding. It's done for a particular reason: because there has to be effective representation for the people within those jurisdictions. It's sad for me to see another commission come forward without clearly having defined effective representation, because I think the question will come up time and time again as to what that is.

Representation by population is not a Canadian tradition. It is not how we have developed the democratic Houses within this country. If you look at the Supreme Court rulings that have come down, there's a reason why variances have been allowed between ridings, and they have clearly recognized that there is a difference. There are differences that must be recognized on the basis of the size of the ridings, the common interests of the ridings, the sparsity of populations within those ridings. To kind of buy into the thought that with waves of new technologies you can overcome those, I think, is really quite foolish. You may have the ability to have the new high-tech communications linkups with your constituents, but if your constituents don't have the thing at the other end to receive that, there's no communication.

Every person deserves the right to see their MLA. Just drive some of those northern ridings. Just drive some of the large

southern ridings. Drive in an area out in the Chinook riding, where I think the largest population is something around 2,600 people and there's one road; there's only one route. Drive through it sometime, and see how difficult it is for an MLA to service those areas. Then drive into a city riding and see how fast you can go from point A to point B in your riding. You'd say: well, that should be easier to do. It is to move around, but the communication link isn't as great because we have more people. They have more sparse areas. There's a big difference between a city riding and a rural riding. You can't compare them. I don't think we should fool ourselves in this Legislature that you can.

In many of the areas that I drove through in rural Alberta I felt quite upset with the lack of services and amenities that I was fortunate enough to have in the city of Calgary that were not there. They were not there, and they weren't there because they didn't have the base to support the development of a lot of those amenities. We have taken for granted in a lot of our cities that they should be there all over, and they're not.

So it's very difficult for a rural person to represent that riding because they've got one person representing a huge geographical area. In the city of Calgary now we'll have 20 MLAs representing a population or an area that really hasn't expanded that much from the last go around, and one MLA representing larger geographical areas up in the north country. It doesn't make sense to me. It doesn't make sense to me at all. That to me is not effective, and until you define what effective representation truly is, I don't believe you're ever going to satisfy the people of this province that they are being heard within this Legislature, and I think it's sad. I think it's very sad that that has not come forward, Mr. Speaker.

You look at areas up in the northwest. At one point you had to travel into British Columbia to service the riding. You had to actually go out of the province of Alberta and go into the province of British Columbia to service the constituents of Dunvegan because that's where the road went. That to me is outrageous. It's unbelievable that the lines would be drawn in that fashion.

When you look at it, I think it's very sad. I guess when you go down and you look at the road system in some of these towns and communities – you know, we complain in the cities about a lot of things, but you drive into some of those communities, and you meet with the people, and you realize that they don't have a paved road. They don't have gravel on the road. They've got dirt on the road. When you look at some of those communities, you realize that if it's raining, the school bus doesn't go down the road. That's a way of life. If it snows, it slides. It doesn't go down the road. Then you return to the city, and you look at some of our ridings in the cities, and we have paved alleys so the garbage truck doesn't get dusty. You know there's something wrong. And all of a sudden we're putting more MLAs into the two major urban centres. Is that effective representation for the people of this province?

When we get into this Legislature, we're supposed to be representing all of Alberta in making those decisions. When I traveled those 95,000 kilometres, some nights when I would get back into the city of Calgary, I would feel very embarrassed about how we had complained, from what I had seen, how people were managing with so much less and you never heard a complaint. It was a fact of life, a way of life that they had adjusted to. But now to move and put additional MLAs into the two major urban centres to me is very, very difficult to accept because the report and the legislation still do not deal with the basic fundamentals of effective representation.

So I hope as we go forward with this legislation we will ask all of the justice departments across this country to join together and finally, once and for all, come up with a definition of effective representation. It's not here. It's not in the report. We didn't have it the last time. It was the number one recommendation that we came forward with.

I believe that every Albertan, no matter where they live, deserves to have representation in this House, not by me representing just my riding but me representing Albertans as a whole. When we come in here, we are charged with representing all Albertans. So we should have representation throughout this province. We shouldn't count that there are going to be 19 MLAs in Edmonton, that there are going to be 21 in Calgary. We should forget that. We should forget that nonsense. We should be dealing with the facts of life, that this province needs to have effective representation in this House. We should be doing that collectively. We should not be looking at representation by population, because that's a fallacy.

I will give you one other thing that I think is critically important. When you deal with representation by population in the American system, always remember that they have a bicameral system. We do not have that in Canada. We do not have a bicameral system. Remember that no matter what happens or the size of the state, they have the same number of elected Senators that go to Washington to represent those states in Washington. There's no representation by population on senatorial election. There's a bicameral system in the United States. So if you want to move to representation by population, then you'd better add an upper House in the province of Alberta, because that's the only way you will get an effective representation that will come through by rep by pop. Otherwise, you'd better look at a system that deals with it on the merits of recognizing the differences within the community: the sparsities, the distances, the common interests, all of those things that were identified by Albertans, not by members of the Legislature but by Albertans.

**5:10**

Mr. Speaker, I could probably go on about this Bill, and I'll probably get into discussion further in committee. I do think it's unfortunate that a situation that was politically driven has made us get to this point, where we're having to look at boundaries all over again and upset ridings throughout this province and the people throughout this province without the fundamental question being answered.

At this point, because of the hour, I've been given the nod. I think people want to go home, so I would move to adjourn debate on the Bill right now.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Energy has made a motion to adjourn debate on Bill 46. Before I accept that motion, I just have some clarification.

Earlier today under Reading and Receiving Petitions the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo requested that a petition he tabled yesterday be read and received. The petition that was presented yesterday by the Member for St. Albert was read instead. The petition presented by the Member for Calgary-Buffalo concerning the Calgary General was not in order to be read and received. The Chair apologizes for any inconvenience caused by this error. \*

The hon. Minister of Energy has moved that we adjourn debate on Bill 46. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed, if any?

HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Carried.

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

