

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: Thursday, August 22, 1996 1:30 p.m.
Date: 96/08/22
 [The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

head: Prayers

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The prayer today is one that is said in the British Columbia Legislative Assembly.

Let us pray.

As we commence proceedings today in this Assembly we ask for divine guidance so that our words and deeds may bring to all people of this great province hope, prosperity, and a vision for the future.

May the deliberations in this Chamber be characterized by temperance, understanding, and reason, to the end that we may better serve those who have made the members of this House guardians of and trustees for all the citizens of Alberta.

Amen.

MR. BRUSEKER: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West is rising on a point of order.

Point of Order Disposition of Bill 214

MR. BRUSEKER: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising on the point of order that I see an error on today's Order Paper, sir. There is an omission that I believe should be corrected. Under Standing Order 8(5)(a) – and I'd like to read that to you – it says:

- A public Bill other than a Government Bill shall retain its place on the Order Paper until such time as the Bill has been given . . .
- (ii) 120 minutes of debate in Committee of the Whole.

Yesterday we found ourselves in Committee of the Whole, and a motion came forward under Standing Order 64, which says:

- A motion that the Chairman leave the Chair
- (a) is always in order,
 - (b) takes precedence over any other motion, and
 - (c) is not debatable.

Indeed, that motion passed, but the motion did not include any mention of removing said Bill from our Order Paper as Standing Order 8(5)(a)(ii) directs.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 41 lists acceptable motions that may be accepted in the course of debate.

When a motion is under debate, no motion may be received except

- (a) to amend it;
- (b) to refer it;
- (c) to postpone it to a certain day;
- (d) for the previous question;
- (e) to read the Orders of the Day;
- (f) to proceed to another order;
- (g) to adjourn the debate; or
- (h) to adjourn the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, there was no motion to remove Bill 214 from the Order Paper, nor was there unanimous consent given to waive Standing Order 8(5)(a). Now, I'm sure that the Government House Leader or the Deputy Government House Leader will come forward with an obscure reference from another citation.

However, sir, I'd like to also point out Standing Order 2.

In all contingencies unprovided for, the question shall be decided by the Speaker and, in making a ruling, the Speaker shall base any decision on the usages and precedents of the Assembly and on parliamentary tradition.

Note that the Assembly comes first.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you are aware of Standing Order 114(2). That lists that the Standing Orders of this Assembly, which all members of this House have agreed to, as per Standing Order 114(2), are only 16 or 18 months old. It says that "these Standing Orders become effective on February 14, 1995." That is indeed the most recent set of orders and rules to which we have agreed.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, I note also a communication dated August 12, 1996, from yourself to all Members of the Legislative Assembly, which is even more recent, regarding the continuation of the Fourth Session of the 23rd Legislature, that indeed the first reference we shall be using will be our Standing Orders. Nowhere in our Standing Orders does it say that when the motion comes forward that "the Chairman leave the Chair," the Bill is then removed from the Order Paper.

So indeed Bill 214, that I'm referring to, introduced by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly, should be reinstated on the Order Paper under the section. When I say Order Paper, of course I'm referring to the entire Order Paper, not the abbreviated Order Paper which most members receive on Mondays and Thursdays. I'm talking about the entire Order Paper which I receive as Opposition House Leader. Bill 214 should be returned to the Order Paper so that it may be dealt with at a future day, as in fact Standing Order 44 refers to.

All orders not disposed of at the adjournment of the Assembly shall be postponed until the next sitting day without a motion to that effect.

So indeed Bill 214 should have been carried over to the next day.

With respect to the issue of private members' days, of course our Standing Order 8(2)(a) gives us direction that says that the next private members' day will be on Tuesday afternoon.

So with respect, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you direct whoever is in charge of the publication of our Order Paper to return Bill 214 to the Order Paper to be discussed at the next private members' day.

MR. DAY: Speaking briefly to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Opposition House Leader said that he thought he would see some obscure Standing Orders or references to same coming forward. There will be nothing in the order of that at all. What we have here is a classic difference of opinion. *Beauchesne* 905 is very clear that

a Member wishing to supersede a question, will move "That the Chairman do now leave the Chair", and if this motion, which is not debatable, is resolved in the affirmative, the Chairman will at once leave the Chair, and with no report having been made to the House, the bill or question disappears from the Order Paper.

The broader question being addressed, of course, is one of: what takes precedence, *Beauchesne* or Standing Orders or past practice?

I think the Opposition House Leader has very wisely referenced Standing Order 2, which says that in all these contingencies these matters must be settled by the Speaker. It is with that in mind, in fact, Mr. Speaker, that I have requested that at the earliest opportunity, which would be on Monday as a matter of fact, there be a meeting to discuss a number of what we'd call vague areas which don't seem to have clear definition. [interjections] Once again, Mr. Speaker, the entire government body of MLAs sat very quietly and listened to every word the Opposition House Leader said. We would ask the same respect be shown by members from the opposite side.

I would go on to say, Mr. Speaker, that I think it would be appropriate that the Opposition House Leader, if we can arrange a time, would also join in the discussion on Monday so that we can resolve these differences.

Beauchesne is absolutely crystal clear on this: "The bill or question disappears from the Order Paper." When it is a Bill of such importance, a Bill in fact, Mr. Speaker, which had I believe unanimous support in this House at second reading, a Bill of such importance that members did not want to see it defeated because there were some grave problems on the mechanics of the Bill, rather than . . . [interjections] You know, once again, Mr. Speaker, we sat respectfully, quietly listening to every word the Opposition House Leader said, and we would expect the same respect from members opposite. Obviously my expectation level is too high.

So at the earliest opportunity I believe this should be addressed. I believe Table officers, yourself, and we'd ask the Opposition House Leader to also consult his calendar so that we could meet, look at this from all sides, and in fact, then, under Standing Order 2 equip you, Mr. Speaker, to make a decision.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, the Opposition House Leader has raised an interesting point, I think, as the Chair heard it, and carefully moved outside the minefields that may be there in that it's not proper to be questioning previous decisions, and that was not, as I took the point of order, what the hon. member was dealing with, although many of the references by the hon. Government House Leader appeared to move in that direction.

The issue, then, as the Chair would hear it, is whether or not Bill 214 ought to appear on the Order Paper for whatever fate that may bring. The Chair will take this under advisement, would consult with the Table officers and others in this matter, and do our best to either explain the absence or reinstate it if that be the case. I would leave that until a later time.

Also, the hon. Government House Leader has indicated that we might have a meeting, and that certainly would be an appropriate thing to deal with the whole matter of private members' public Bills.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MRS. GORDON: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly three of our counterparts from the Hokkaido Assembly: Mr. Toshi Sato, Mr. Kimihiro Kamada, Mr. Hidenobu Takeuchi. All three were elected earlier this year to the Hokkaido Prefectural Assembly for the first time.

As you know, Hokkaido was one of Alberta's most successful sister province relationships. Last year marked the 15th anniversary of the twinning, which celebrated the many exchange visits and co-operative ventures that have taken place between Hokkaido and Alberta. These activities have proven beneficial in facilitating the exchange of ideas in many areas, including industry, education, and culture. With the visit of these visitors today, we continue the valuable exchange of information and the strong relationship that exists between the province of Alberta and the prefecture of Hokkaido.

Also seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, are Mayor Charles Budd, town of Lacombe, and Mayor Keith Ryder, town of Stettler. These two communities reflect the grassroots support for the Hokkaido/Alberta relationship. Lacombe is twinned with Rikubetsu and Stettler with Okope.

I would ask that our visitors rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

1:40

head: **Notices of Motions**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 40 I wish to give the following notice: that this Assembly express its

regrets and condolences to the family of Mr. Justice Tevie Miller and that this Assembly acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Mr. Justice Tevie Miller to the province of Alberta.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

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

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In keeping with this government's openness and accountability once again, I would table the answer to Written Question 179.

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

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table five copies of the Alberta Private Colleges Accreditation Board annual report for the year 1995-96.

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

MRS. BURGNER: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a letter that I received dated August 9 from the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter Association, to which I referred in my debate yesterday afternoon.

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

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table this afternoon four copies of a memorandum from the Department of Justice between Mr. Ho, the director of strategic planning, and our legislative office and others with respect to some of the work that was done on dealing with concerns with respect to Bill 214, Victims of Domestic Violence Act.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three tablings at this point in time. The first tabling is minutes of the meeting on the domestic violence Act, Bill 214, of July 19, 1996, held at the offices of the Alberta Law Reform Institute, wherein there was present the PC caucus researcher as well as the Liberal caucus researcher as well as the director for Alberta Justice strategic planning, the acting executive director of Alberta Family and Social Services, the director, Alberta Family and Social Services, and Alberta Justice Legislative Counsel.

Also, minutes of the meeting on domestic violence Act, Bill 214, of July 24, 1996, held at the Legislative Counsel boardroom, Bowker Building. Present at that were the PC caucus researcher; the director, Alberta Justice strategic planning; the acting executive director, Alberta Family and Social Services; the director, Alberta Family and Social Services; Alberta Justice Legislative Counsel.

I'd also like to table a copy of a report which indicates the type of abuse reported in women's shelters in Alberta in 1995. The source is Alberta Council on Women's Shelters.

Thank you.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With reference to Bill 214, I'd like to table five copies of draft 5 from the Legislative Counsel from the Department of Justice addressed to various support staff in both the Liberal opposition and the Department of Family and Social Services. The date on this is August 15, 1996, showing all of the draft amendments to Bill 214.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings pursuant to Bill 214 and then a third tabling, with your permission. The first of the two tablings regarding Bill 214 is copies of a report based on statistics from the Alberta Council on Women's Shelters which details the more than 59,000 contacts women's shelters had with women needing refuge from incidents of domestic violence.

The second tabling, Mr. Speaker, is copies of draft 6 of the amendments to Bill 214, the Victims of Domestic Violence Act, the sixth of a series of drafts of amendments that involved both sides of the House. This set of amendments was dated August 16, when there was still the promise held out that this Bill would become law.

Mr. Speaker, finally, copies of a letter dated June 26 from the Minister of Health to myself referring a constituent in Edmonton-Glenora to receive information on the control of tuberculosis from the very same civil servants and medical officers that the minister has now gagged and instructed not to talk to the public about the control of tuberculosis.

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

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three tablings this afternoon. The first one is a record of meetings between government employees, including the researcher from the opposition, in regard to Bill 214 during July and August. There were consistently seven government people involved and one of ours.

I also have a tabling of most of the meetings that I attended with large groups during May, June, July, and early August in regard to Bill 214.

My last tabling, Mr. Speaker, is some numbers on the number of women admitted to shelters in Alberta in 1995. The number of children admitted was 6,426; the number of women, 5,437; and the average length of stay was 11 days.

Thank you, sir.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table two tablings: a record of a conversation with a resident of Grande Prairie detailing his concern with the care provided to his wife in emergency and one senior in Edmonton.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I wasn't able to hear, but it sounded like it was some record of conversations, which we've already spoken to the Assembly on as not being appropriate for tabling.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have four guests to introduce this afternoon. They are Chris Vermette and Ron Hodgins, union representatives with AUPE, and accompanying them are Nestor Mandrusiak and Eva Haly, who both have served with the Glenrose hospital for 11 years and now find themselves without employment. If they would please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Stettler.

MRS. GORDON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a constituent worker, Rachele Grabo, who has been with me this summer and soon will be returning to Red Deer College to pursue a degree in psychology. She has been a definite asset to my office. Accompanying her today is my very competent and able assistant, Lori Hellofs. They are seated in the members' gallery. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of the House.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

1:50

MRS. BALSILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to introduce to you and through you to the Legislative Assembly four constituents of the Redwater constituency. I would like to introduce first of all my constituency worker and assistant Carole Triff; her assistant that helps her at home, Heather Dawson; also Carole's two delightful sons, Christopher and Justin. Please stand and we will give you an official warm welcome.

Thank you.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly I'd like to introduce two sets of visitors who make it a habit of regularly visiting the galleries and watching the proceedings. First of all, Merle Schnee, who many members here will be aware of. His background is, I would say, a community activist working for the good of the community. He's accompanied by a gentleman; I don't know his name. If they would stand and receive the warm recognition of the House.

Then secondly, Mr. Speaker, another Albertan we see in the galleries quite often, Heather Rempel. If Heather could stand and receive the warm welcome of this House.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair would observe that there is among us a gentleman who has served longer than anyone else in this Assembly at this time, and he's celebrating a birthday. We're not at liberty to release the number of candles on the cake, but we would like to extend our warm wishes to the hon. Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne.

head: **Oral Question Period**

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

Victims of Domestic Violence Act

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the spring of this year I introduced a Bill to address the problem of domestic abuse.

Over the summer I worked with stakeholders and government members to improve the Bill and address the concerns. Yesterday the Member for Calgary-Currie dug deep into the bag of political tricks to kill the Bill and to expose that the government's sincerity about this issue is still little more than a sham.

MRS. BURGNER: Point of order.

Speaker's Ruling Oral Question Period Practices

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, if you have a question that is reflecting upon an earlier decision, then that isn't in order. If you are asking a question on government policy relative to the topic that you're most concerned about, that would be. We've got in the preamble words reflecting on the earlier decision. [interjection] Order, Edmonton-Centre.

So just a caution, Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly.

Victims of Domestic Violence Act (continued)

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Justice. What does this minister say to Albertans who are caught in abusive situations about the government's concerns regarding domestic abuse when government members move to kill the Bill?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, when I review the comments as are evidenced in *Hansard* from yesterday, I see some very concerned comments being made about domestic violence. I see some very concerned comments about the amendments to a well-thought-out Bill that was proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly and concern about whether or not seven full pages of amendments had been reviewed by stakeholders and whether or not it was appropriate to deal with those amendments at that time.

Now, it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that before question period today we had a number of tablings of minutes and other things, some commentaries about involvement of private members in dealing with the matter of domestic violence, members of the research staff of government working on the matter of domestic violence, members of my own staff working on the matter of domestic violence. We have had a private member's Bill that was approved unanimously. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. We have an important issue on which the minister is attempting to respond to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly.

MR. HENRY: Well, he responded yesterday. We know what he's thinking.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is not, Edmonton-Centre, an opportunity to fire up verbal shots while the answer is being given. Let us remember our parliamentary courtesies, and let the minister respond to the . . .

MR. HENRY: You should have said that yesterday.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You're challenging the Chair, hon. member?

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes, he is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Throw him out.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. I don't need any help from there.

The hon. minister.

Victims of Domestic Violence Act (continued)

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to continue, there was an important Bill brought forward by the hon. member who is asking this question. That Bill received unanimous consent at second reading on the matter of principle. On the matter of principle. In this House we have passed this year a Victims of Crime Act, and although it does not deal specifically and exclusively with domestic violence, certainly domestic violence is very much a part of that Bill.

To argue, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill or domestic violence is being given short shrift by this government and by government members does not play out in the facts, the facts very well proved by the very words from the members across the way that government members, their research staff, and government departments have all attempted to work on an important initiative, the elimination of domestic violence.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First supplemental, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly.

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, as a Minister of Justice who has said that he has zero tolerance for domestic violence, what government advice did you give to caucus when the government members decided to hijack Bill 214?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, this is a very interesting comment coming from a member of a caucus in this House. The integrity of the opposition, the integrity of a political party to discuss matters in their caucuses is fundamental to the democratic process that all of us are elected to uphold. I would never suggest that a conversation in a caucus across the way should become a public conversation here, nor would I stoop to involving myself in that kind of a discussion.

MS HANSON: Mr. Minister, if all is working so well, why is it a policy of your department employees: never – repeat, never – prosecute breaches of restraining orders issued by the courts?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member has any evidence whatsoever of that policy, I'd like to see it in writing and I'd like to see it tabled. They're very good at tabling things. I'd like to see them table it.

MR. DAY: Supplementary information, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader on the supplementary.

MR. DAY: Directly to the supplementary, directly on this very issue, which is critical to the discussion, Mr. Speaker. The government members have said consistently that the principles of this Bill are laudable but that there were things that still needed to be worked out with Justice. The opposition has said that that's

not valid, that everything is ready to go, that there's nothing more to be researched.

Mr. Speaker, I will be tabling an Alberta Liberal caucus "for internal use only" document referencing this Bill. On this very critical issue directed to the minister and which all government members have said there are some things that still need to be worked out, the Liberals say there's nothing to work out, that it's ready to go. On their internal briefing document, as far as an ex parte order goes, it says, "We are still working on what procedure should be in place for the respondent to appeal." On one of the very issues that we were concerned about, they were saying to their own members that they still don't have the answer.

2:00

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, yesterday government members used lack of public consultation as the excuse for killing Bill 214. Well, over the summer the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly conducted dozens of meetings, has fielded hundreds of phone calls, feedback from talk shows. We all heard them. Lots and lots of correspondence from a broad base of stakeholders. In fact, the Member for Olds-Didsbury and the Member for Calgary-North Hill worked closely with Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly in addressing the concerns of stakeholders through a series of amendments that the stakeholders directed, Mr. Minister of Justice. If there ever was public consultation, it happened on 214. My first question is to the minister without portfolio responsible for children's services. Perhaps this question can be taken under advisement, and hopefully this House will have an answer to the question the first of the week. I'd like to know what consultation the minister undertook with her stakeholders over the summer on Bill 214 and its significance to the children of Alberta and how the minister advised her colleagues in caucus about this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, can I continue with a supplementary in the hope that this will be answered on Monday?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Government House Leader, are you the acting minister responsible?

MR. DAY: I do happen to be the acting minister, Mr. Speaker. I can tell the member opposite that we, too, share the same concerns the Liberals do, as just revealed in their secret internal document, that there are still things that need to be worked out.

Referencing children and the concern for children, without releasing names, because I'm not at liberty to do that, recently dealing with a situation: a concerned mother whose husband had a real problem with spending the family grocery money in an indiscriminate fashion phoned their banker to see if some restraint could be put on that husband. Under the provisions of the Bill as presented by the Liberals that woman would have been subject to legal action by her husband for having some concern about the spending of the money, one of many, many areas which the secret document from the Liberals acknowledges still has to be worked out.

MRS. HEWES: The minister, clearly, has not read the Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I'd remind the House that this House has twice turned down the Bill on the rights of children from the UN convention.

My supplementary, Mr. Speaker, is to the member responsible for the Seniors Advisory Council, the Member for Calgary-Currie. I'd like to ask the member what consultation was undertaken with her stakeholders – the council, the ACA, the seniors and their organizations – regarding this important Bill to seniors and how that member advised her caucus.

Speaker's Ruling Questioning a Private Member

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have a little bit of a problem in that we're talking about a private member's public Bill, and we're now asking private members to respond to their actions without going to a minister of the Crown. The chair does not have to respond to this question unless asked by a minister to supplement.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

Victims of Domestic Violence Act (continued)

MRS. BURGNER: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Seniors Advisory Council, which I chair. I think you'll review in my notes and the comments I made yesterday that the entire issue of elder abuse is under significant discussion. In fact, the implications of Bill . . . [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. If you've asked the lady a question and she's now proceeding to answer it, then let her answer it.

MR. HENRY: She's not answering it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Edmonton-Centre, last time.

MRS. BURGNER: May I assure this House, Mr. Speaker, that the issues of elder abuse, as are recognized in the domestic abuse Act that was brought forward in Bill 214, have been discussed at full council, and in fact I reflected on that yesterday in that Bill 214 does not give a broad enough discussion to the implications of abuse dealing with elders. I will continue to advocate that with my council.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, to the same member responsible for the Seniors Advisory Council then: how does that member justify what I consider to be a cute manoeuvre of yesterday to kill this Bill with her comments of May 15 in *Hansard* offering unequivocal support for third reading of Bill 214?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair would give the same advice as for the last supplemental question.

MRS. BURGNER: Mr. Speaker, it indicates the complete lack of understanding of the extensiveness of the issue of abuse. I use the implications of financial abuse that were tabled yesterday in the amendments, amendments that were received in this House and have had no opportunity to be reviewed in the public domain – in the public domain; eight pages of amendments on a 10-page Bill. The issue . . .

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, the Chair just admonished you a moment ago when you were carrying on a debate outside the parameters of the rules of the House with the hon. minister of agriculture. Now you're continuing it with others. It's an important topic, but we could be civil with one another, and that's what the Chair is trying to encourage hon. members to do.

We'll have the next question. The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Protection for Persons in Care Act

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, thank you. In 1995 the Protection for Persons in Care Act was passed even though the opposition said that it didn't go far enough and too many elderly and too many disabled would still be at risk. After it passed, interestingly the government announced that it needed more public input. At the public hearing in Calgary that I attended, there was a call for that Act to be expanded to cover abuse of seniors and the disabled wherever they live. Now, my question to the hon. Minister of Justice would be this: why was it okay to hold public hearings after that Bill was passed but then to kill Bill 214 yesterday allegedly because there was insufficient consultation?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, to talk about two matters and to somehow conclude that they should be dealt with exactly the same way because it would work better with the hon. member's interpretation of what the world about him is all about does not deserve a response.

MS LEIBOVICI: You're hypocrites. Admit it. Your actions speak a whole lot louder than your words.

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, the Chair is prepared to hear your withdrawal of that comment.

MS LEIBOVICI: This one hurts, Mr. Speaker, because of the fact that this government's actions speak louder than its words, but I will withdraw the word "hypocrite" if that is unparliamentary.

Protection for Persons in Care Act (continued)

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

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, it doesn't deserve a response, but I should point out that the persons in care initiative was ongoing for some five years by the time it arrived here in the form of a Bill. Even with that amount of time and effort, it was very clear after the Bill passed through that there were some shortcomings in the Bill. In fact, our hon. Premier stated very clearly that there should be some inclusion of seniors specifically in that piece of legislation.

That, Mr. Speaker, just describes the complexity of issues that we face as a society. We must deal with them in a proactive way. We must deal with them with a serious and a concerted effort. We must take the time, spend the time to try to deal with them so that we can improve society and we can make all Albertans safer. That's precisely what was evidenced by this House on a private member's Bill dealing with domestic violence when there was unanimous support for the principle of the Bill.

Speaker's Ruling Private Members' Bills

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair has tried on various occasions, and hope springs eternal, I guess.

The decision of yesterday was made in committee. It is a committee dealing with private members' public Bills. Although it may be by coincidence or otherwise that a solidarity of govern-

ment members voted on one side and a solidarity of opposition voted on the other, it still is a private member's public Bill, and the decision on the Bill is not, in parliamentary terms, a government decision. It may be a decision of a majority of the government members but is not a government decision as such in how we're handling private members' public Bills. The Chair has on a number of occasions over the past year or two often reminded members that it isn't a government private Bill or an opposition private Bill, that it is a private member's public Bill and tried in the rhetoric of the day to get people to understand that.

One more appeal, then, on the issue of Bill 214, hon. members, to phrase your question so it is in the purview of government policy, of a particular government minister.

Calgary-Buffalo.

2:10 Protection for Persons in Care Act (continued)

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary question to the Minister of Justice would be this: does it mean – because I know the minister wants to be consistent – that the minister and his government now intend to repeal the Protection for Persons in Care Act because there was inadequate public consultation before that was passed in this Assembly?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, that Bill is not under my responsibility, and certainly all of the evidence would show to the contrary. The government is spending more time on that Bill to ensure that it is the right Bill for Albertans.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplemental, hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Certainly, Mr. Speaker. Since both the public and this opposition have told the minister and his entire cabinet colleagues that the scope of that Act is much too narrow, will he amend the law to ensure that vulnerable people are protected wherever they live in this province?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, we have an ongoing public input process through the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow, who is chairing that input process. I presume that the recommendation that the hon. member made here today he's already made to that committee. I would look forward, as would my cabinet colleagues and all members of the government caucus, to the report that will eventually come from the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow as to whether or not that recommendation from Calgary-Buffalo has merit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

Remuneration for Prisoners

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Tuesday my constituents learned that the failure of the Liberals to take responsible action allowed convicted sex slayer Clifford Olson to apply for parole via a judicial review. Today my constituents learned that the Liberals support the practice of paying vacation pay to prisoners who attended a week-long health program, including seminars on smoking and diet, at the maximum security Edmonton Institution. [interjections]

You know, it's interesting. If they took more care on this issue, maybe we wouldn't be standing here today dealing with it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question, hon. member.

MR. JACQUES: Mr. Speaker, all my questions are to Minister of Justice and Attorney General. Mr. Minister, will you give an undertaking to have your department officials contact the Liberals to determine whether or not Clifford Olson will be eligible for vacation pay while attending his judicial review for parole?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I had a difficult time hearing all of the question because of the rabble across the way here. However, I understand that what the member was asking for was whether I would speak to the federal Justice minister on an issue that I presume is a serious issue to his constituents, and that is whether or not Mr. Olson would be capable of receiving any kind of pay for any work that he did during the judicial review under 745 of the Criminal Code. I'm happy to do that, and I'll talk directly to the federal Justice minister.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First supplemental, Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister please advise Albertans as to the policy of prisoner remuneration and vacation pay in terms of our provincial correctional institutions?

MR. EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not pleased to say that in the past prisoners within our provincial prison system were receiving some pay. I say that I'm not pleased to say that because that's not the case today. It's not the case today because we believe that work done by prisoners is part of their rehabilitation. We think that it is a return to the society that they've offended against that they should be paying back their debt, and we think it is the least that could be done and should be done in a system where the taxpayer in this province pays on average about \$68 a day to house a provincially serving prisoner. So, no, we do not have a program for paying prisoners. Quite the contrary.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplemental, Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

MR. JACQUES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister give an undertaking to this Assembly that he will advise the Liberals that their practice of prisoner vacation pay is unacceptable and repugnant to the citizens of this province?

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, if my memory serves me correctly, I have mentioned to the Liberal government through the Minister of Justice at meetings that we've had as justice ministers that we do not in this province believe that pay for prisoners is appropriate and that we have eliminated that process in our provincial correctional facilities. But I'll check my records, and if I've not made that point specifically with the federal Justice minister and the Liberal government in Ottawa, I'll certainly do so.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

Career Designs Inc.

MRS. BALSILLIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday it was revealed that last April employees of Career Designs Inc. did the right thing and came forward with serious allegations of misrepresentation by a company that holds a

million-dollar government contract. The minister admitted that despite this advance notice, he has all but ignored the concerns of these whistle-blowers and has not called in the Auditor General, the Justice department, or even the police to investigate. Instead, the minister participated in a cover-up and continues to send thousands of taxpayer dollars to this company. To the minister responsible: will the minister confirm that the reason he is dragging his feet on this investigation is because one of the owners of the company is a former contract employee of his department who received \$50,000 in contracts and grants?

2:20

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, I don't know why the member would say that I've dragged my feet. There was an investigation by way of an audit which was initiated very early on in this whole event.

MS LEIBOVICI: In July.

MR. ADY: No. It was prior to July that it was initiated. The audit has been ongoing to determine if there were irregularities involved in this. When that is resolved, then we will move forward to take the appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: First supplemental, hon. Member for Redwater.

MRS. BALSILLIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister has dragged his feet.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you have a question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question. Question.

MRS. BALSILLIE: Yes, I'm getting to the question, Mr. Minister. [interjections] Can the minister . . .

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member, being rather new, may not understand that you don't snap back at the Speaker with impunity.

First supplemental, please.

MRS. BALSILLIE: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I was not snapping back, but I do apologize if you thought that I was.

Question: can the minister tell us just exactly when the investigation started given that the minister claims he had no knowledge of the incident until July, yet the employees contacted the government in April?

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, in fact there was initial contact made in April. However, there was not substantial evidence brought forward that could be acted upon until May. My department moved quickly to put in place an audit, much as they do when there are other things reported in my department having to do with other people or agencies who receive funding. When there are reports, when there is something substantial brought forward, they move forward.

Within a month or so they decided that this was of a serious enough nature that they brought it to my attention. I queried them as to the action they were taking. They assured me that there was an internal investigation that was being carried on by our auditors and that they would be forthcoming with the results of that and that then we would be in a position to act on valid information.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplemental, Redwater.

MRS. BALSILLIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Given this department's shoddy treatment of these courageous employees, will the minister now commit to bringing in legislation to legally protect whistle-blowers since he voted to defeat the whistle-blower protection Act, and our caucus introduced it two full years ago?

MR. ADY: Well, Mr. Speaker, it wouldn't be my position to bring forward legislation on whistle-blowers. I suppose it would be someone from the Department of Justice or whatever.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the point that the member raised earlier, let me say that to ensure that there is no cover-up and that Albertans have every opportunity to understand fully and feel confident in the investigation, as of 10:50 this morning the Auditor General was requested to take over the investigation having to do with Career Designs Inc. He has assured me that he will pick up the investigation at this point and move forward expeditiously, and hopefully the Liberals across the way can feel comfortable, as can all Albertans, because the Auditor General is certainly a trusted officer of this Legislature. I await his response, and we will act accordingly when we receive it.

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

Corporate Tax Filing

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we heard the Provincial Treasurer criticizing several Liberal bureaucracies such as the CBC for their ineptitude, and quite rightly so, if I may add. There does however seem to be one Crown corporation that he and his department trust implicitly, namely Canada Post. A chartered accountant in Brooks sent a corporate tax return . . . [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order.

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A chartered accountant in Brooks sent a corporate tax return postmarked on July 31, 1989, the due date, yet was assessed a late filing penalty because it wasn't received until August 9 through Canada Post. To the Provincial Treasurer, one simple question: why?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member and the member's constituent and in fact all members would know that I'm not at liberty to reveal to the Assembly the personal details associated with this file. Suffice it to say that that chartered accountant the hon. member is talking about I presume has been in practice for a number of years, knows the rules associated with filing corporate returns, and is a professionally trained chartered accountant. So he would know the law, and the law is that within six months of a corporation's year-end, that tax return must be filed. The hon. member is talking about a year-end of January 31, 1989, and July 31, 1989, was the due date.

Now, apparently the accountant on this file waited until July 31, six months, 182 days later, to file the return, and that had to be in the corporate tax office by August 4. In fact, it arrived in the office on August 9. If I may, I would like to give a page a calendar so that the member might be able to give to his professionally trained chartered accountant in Brooks that calendar so that he knows and he can count from now on the number of days between when the tax return must be filed and when it is due, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Scope of Questions and Answers

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. The Chair has some angst when we get hon. members getting up and referring questions which are only obliquely within the purview of a minister but particularly when that obliqueness is prefaced with names like "the Liberals" and you have to substitute in there "Ottawa."

We now have a question that deals with, we presume, the post office. We presume the Provincial Treasurer's comments on this are relative to the rules for filing taxes. Therefore, hon. members, that narrow part is within the Provincial Treasurer's purview, not the workings of the post office but the filing of the tax. So I wonder if we could listen to the hon. Provincial Treasurer as he stays within the narrow confines of his department.

Hon. Provincial Treasurer, are you finished?

Corporate Tax Filing (continued)

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, yes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have a supplemental as well, Bow Valley?

DR. OBERG: I absolutely do, Mr. Speaker. To the Treasurer again: would he accept a written, signed affidavit as to the date and time of the mailing as evidence and rescind the late filing penalty as assessed by the Alberta Treasury Department?

MR. DINNING: Visa or MasterCard would not accept such a postdated envelope and an affidavit if I happened to pay my Visa bill one or two or three or in this case five days late. They would still apply the interest charge. In this case, Mr. Speaker, we received the tax filing and the payment from the individual 189 days after the corporation's year-end. So I would think that the corporate tax administration department in this case has acted fairly and appropriately and that the professionally trained chartered accountant, who probably understands the basic tenets of the Julian calendar, would have filed his return on time and perhaps not trusted the liberally operated post office.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplemental, Bow Valley?

The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

2:30 Premiers' Conference Sponsorships

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Premiers of this great nation of ours are currently in Jasper enjoying the hospitality of the Jasper Park Lodge and other sponsors of that meeting. When one reviews the public accounts of this province, one finds that a number of the sponsoring companies are already on the government books for having received government support in the form of loans and guarantees and grants; for example, Canadian Airlines, Telus, Western Beef Jerky. That seems appropriate. My question is to the Treasurer. Were these companies told to provide sponsorship for past government largesse, or were they told to provide sponsorship to ensure future government support?

MR. DINNING: I kind of expected that the Liberals might raise this kind of question, and in fact so too did the organizers of the Premiers' Conference expect that the Liberals or others might

raise this kind of question. In fact, they went so far, Mr. Speaker, before any solicitations were sought or any support accepted from private corporations, as to ensure that the Ethics Commissioner had undertaken a review of this, and he did so and in fact gave the green light to both the solicitation and the receipt of those contributions.

Due to a very excellent something called Word of Mouth Communications – somebody publishes a weekly review of activities in politics – I have a list of Liberal Party political donations in 1994. They include the likes of the very same people that the member is talking about. Telus Corporation gave \$5,000 to the Liberal Party in 1994, and in fact Nova Corporation gave the Liberal Party \$13,800. So if he's asking these questions, I just would wonder aloud: what did those same corporations buy when they gave a contribution to the Liberal Party of Alberta?

MR. BRUSEKER: They buy big loan guarantees, Mr. Speaker, from these guys right over here.

My supplemental question is: rather than accepting sponsorship for the Premiers' Conference, why didn't the Treasurer simply ask these companies to pay this money back to the government to accelerate the payback of what they owe to the government, in the same fashion that the government is doing with their Bill on behalf of their debt to the people of Alberta?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I'm frankly not quite certain I get what the hon. member is actually trying to suggest. I look down this list of Liberal Party political donations in 1994, whether it's Nova Corporation, whether it's TransAlta Utilities, whether it's PanCanadian Petroleum or Wood Gundy or Imperial Oil or Fluor Daniel or the Bank of Nova Scotia and the thousands of dollars that those companies gave in honesty under the ethical law of the province. What is the hon. member suggesting, that somehow we should question those companies or question the Liberal Party's receipt of those donations from those responsible Alberta corporations?

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, I guess he didn't understand a simple question, so I'll try something simpler for him. When is the government going to get out of the business of being in business and let business do their thing and government do government's thing?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, it was this government who brought forward – Premier Klein introduced the Bill – the business financial assistance limitation Act, which prevents any government, this government or any other future government, from getting into the business of loans or loan guarantees. So we put a fence around the kind of financing activities that any government can do in the future.

You know, I'm reminded by my colleague the Government House Leader that there were school groups performing for the Premier at the conference yesterday and today and will be tomorrow, showing off Alberta's culture. [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. We are hopeful that the hon. Provincial Treasurer will soon conclude, but let us extend to him the courtesy that we should extend to all hon. members when they are asking or answering questions, and that is our attention.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I was just saying before the Liberals so rudely interrupted that the school groups provided

entertainment to the Premiers today and tomorrow and indeed yesterday, and their schools are in receipt of grants from the provincial government. Are those school children in conflict for appearing in Jasper? No. That shows how silly the Liberal question really is.

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

Health Care Funding

DR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in this House the Provincial Treasurer assured us that cutbacks in transfer payments from the federal Liberals will not be passed on to Albertans. Yet there is concern that this reduction in health care funding from the federal Liberal government will affect health care. Can the Minister of Health tell the House what his department has done to deal with the massive reduction in federal payments and when reductions in health care spending will be complete?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, as was indicated in answer to a question yesterday, the provincial government in an overall and major effort has been able to, along with following its own very responsible fiscal agenda, absorb the impact of these federal Liberal government reductions. This, of course, has been particularly beneficial to the Health budget, because this is, as I understand it, the single largest area in which this type of assistance has usually been able to be depended upon.

Mr. Speaker, there are still reductions from the federal government having to be dealt with and handled by our budget planning process, but as the Premier announced some weeks ago, the people of the province can be assured that the reductions in the health care budget have come to an end according to the plan. In fact there has been an increase in funding this year in the overall health care budget. So I think that despite having to deal with this very, very substantial financial shortfall which could have reasonably been expected from Ottawa, I can assure the people of the province that we are going to be dealing with it in the way that I've outlined in our budget.

DR. TAYLOR: If the reductions have been completed as indicated, what funding allocations will he commit to for the next two years? Will it be status quo, which is in reality a reduction, or will there be increases?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, this question is really anticipating our very logical budget preparation process. However, I can assure the hon. member once again that there will be no further reductions in the overall budget targets for Health. To aid with the planning for our new population-based funding formula for the regional health authorities of the province, to provide reasonable lead time with respect to that, on June 24 there was the announcement of a \$105 million addition to funding for the regional health authorities in 1997-98 and a \$125 million allocation in 1998-99. So there is a substantial amount of money that has been committed for the two fiscal years ahead for the regional health authorities. The rest of the budget process will have to take its course.

2:40

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplemental, Cypress-Medicine Hat.

DR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the increase in funding the minister has talked about, could he indicate what effect this has had on physician supply across the province?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate and indicated yesterday to some degree that we have had over the last number of years actually an increase in physician supply in the province of Alberta overall. During the past fiscal year, for which there are records, the number of physicians billing the system increased some 5 percent. So overall there's certainly, in general terms, an adequate supply of physicians. Certainly.

In the area of rural physicians, in some of our rural centres in the province there is a shortage. There are vacancies, and we do have in place the rural physician action plan. Just this morning I had the opportunity to meet with the executive of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties. [interjections] I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. members across the way are interested in the views of rural representatives. In any case, I did meet with this group, and they were quite appreciative of the rural physician action plan. They, at their level of responsibility, are very anxious to also work together with local governments and the regional health authorities to complement the efforts the provincial government is making in recruiting rural physicians.

head: **Members' Statements**
Alberta/Hokkaido Twinning

MRS. GORDON: Alberta's relations with Hokkaido began in 1972 during an Alberta government economic mission. This is one of the most active twinning relationships of its kind, and Alberta's continued commitment to this union has resulted in an overall positive image for Alberta across Japan.

Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's four major islands, has a great deal in common with Alberta. Both have resource-based economies and share similar climates and topography. Hokkaido has rich agricultural resources and a large dairy and livestock industry, manufacturing centres for food, lumber, and pulp and paper products. With a winter similar to ours, many of the same recreational activities are enjoyed. Because of these many similarities, a broad range of activities and exchanges have been initiated over the years in such areas as commerce, education, medicine, sports, culture, and science and technology. The benefits have been many and varied. For instance, it is estimated that Alberta exports to Hokkaido are in the range of approximately \$180 million annually.

Currently 25 Alberta schools are twinned with schools in Hokkaido. A number of Alberta postsecondary institutions have affiliations with counterparts in Hokkaido and have developed joint study programs in Japanese and English languages, building and construction techniques, and Canadian studies. Visits between twinned municipalities have involved the exchanges of hockey teams, women's groups, tourists, students, as well as the identification of commercial ventures and opportunities.

Last year Governor Hori and Premier Klein reaffirmed the commitment to continue this relationship and to expand its scope with an additional focus on economic development. I, too, wish to voice my support for the continued strong friendship between our two provinces, where people-to-people exchanges have helped us to understand and respect the uniqueness of our cultures.

Thank you.

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

Domestic Violence

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Domestic violence is an issue that transcends political affiliation, socioeconomic status, ethnic or religious groupings. Our society as a whole is undermined when domestic violence is allowed to continue unchecked without appropriate legal remedies.

All Albertans should feel secure and confident that their personal security and their family's security is a priority of their elected representatives. In 1995 5,437 women were admitted to shelters in our province, and they were accompanied by over 6,400 children. These parents and children are some of the vulnerable in our society, and these statistics, Mr. Speaker, point out that many Albertans sometimes need protection from the people they live with. The figures do not even include the elderly and disabled who also suffer abuse.

It's an unpleasant fact of life that we must not run away from. As MLAs, as elected representatives of the people of Alberta, we have a duty to work co-operatively and build a stronger society. We must work to achieve greater security for those who are vulnerable. Victims of domestic abuse are one group very much in need of our support.

Mr. Speaker, as an elected representative of the people of Alberta I take very seriously my responsibility to represent the issues of each and every one of my constituents. I take great pride and pleasure in serving the people of Alberta. I have met and consulted with thousands of Albertans on the issue of domestic abuse regardless of their political affiliation or their position within the community. The overwhelming response has been in support of the need to protect those who suffer from domestic abuse.

I am saddened that the government has chosen to play political games with this piece of legislation that would enhance the security of so many Albertans and strengthen the fabric of our society. We have an opportunity to do politics differently and, in so doing, make a huge impact on the lives of many. I call on the government to continue to work co-operatively with the opposition in assisting those Albertans who need your help.

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

Glen McFarland

MR. MCFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. September 23 is a significant day, one on which we may not be here for me to make this member's statement. In September a constituent in Little Bow was swathing his grain. He had been on a waiting list for six months for a valvular replacement. One of his main arteries had closed to the size of a pencil lead, and the valve in his heart wasn't working properly.

In the second week of September he went into a Calgary hospital for his heart operation. The family was uncomfortable taking him there. The paint was peeling, and there were cracks in the walls.

The operation was a success, but within hours a major complication arose. With no time to take him back to the operating room, the team of doctors and nurses opened his chest and repaired the problem. For three days the man lay in critical condition, his family waiting outside the double doors of the coronary intensive care unit 24 hours a day. He seemed to be improving.

On Sunday, day 5, with the specialist gone for the weekend, the previous problem reoccurred. The stitching around the new valve

let go, and the chest cavity filled with blood in 43 seconds. At 6:23 a.m. a father and grandfather was dead. The family was devastated. Why wasn't his doctor there? Why was this man the second patient dead of 722 similar operations in the province that year? The fact is that the man's tissue around the valve had deteriorated over the years, possibly the result of more than 30 years of asthma medication. The stitches were unable to hold the valve in place with the new valve functioning properly.

It would have been so easy to blame the hardworking nurses and doctors at Holy Cross. The supports were there; the technology was there; their dedication was evident. It would have been so easy to blame the cuts in funding to health care. Part of grieving is to lay blame on something or someone, and that's how it'll always be. Some outcomes never change.

Our father died September 23, 1990, three years before any health reforms. We wish we could blame his death on health care funding levels. We can't. Sometimes in life there are events that take place, both good and sad, that we as human beings cannot control, as dearly as we want to. We love him.

2:50 Projected Government Business

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under Standing Order 7(5) I'd like to ask the Government House Leader what the plan of business is for next week.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, in anticipation of ongoing movement on Bill 46, as we've seen even up until last night, if in fact it is finished in Committee of the Whole today – and I'm not saying that to diminish anybody's opportunity to speak, but if in fact that happens – then on Tuesday afternoon we'd be in third reading on Bill 46 and second reading on Bill 47, the Reinvestment Act. Then in the evening we would be looking at Bill 47 to continue in second reading and then Committee of the Whole on Bill 41, the Water Act, and hopefully third reading on Bill 48, being the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act.

Depending on His Honour's availability, which of course we're always subject to, for the work which is completed, we will look on Tuesday to have Royal Assent on Bills 48 and 49 and I would hope Bill 46. Again, we will see how debate moves on that one.

Following that, Mr. Speaker, in the remaining evenings we would look to Committee of the Whole, second reading, and third reading, according to the order which we're in and according to daily communication with the House leader. By the looks of it I would think, still allowing a lot of debate time, there would be a good opportunity to complete the business by Thursday, August 29, but that's in the hands of the members. We'll work and communicate daily with the Opposition House Leader.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have a Standing Order 40 before we get to points of order.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

head: Motions under Standing Order 40

Mr. Justice Tevie Miller

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I require unanimous consent of the House to proceed. I think it's clear what the House intends to do.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Might we have unanimous consent,

then, to proceed with Motion 40 as proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? You have your consent.

Mr. Decore moved:

Be it resolved that this Assembly express its regrets and condolences to the family of Mr. Justice Tevie Miller and that this Assembly acknowledge the outstanding contribution that Mr. Justice Tevie Miller made to our province.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my heart fell this morning when I turned the radio on and I heard that Justice Miller had died. A number of thoughts raced through my mind, thoughts that came to me as a result of knowing this man as a young lawyer, as a person involved in politics, as a person who had to deal with the courts, and as a person who saw Mr. Justice Tevie Miller in our community.

Some words came to my mind about this outstanding Albertan. He was gentle. He was thoughtful. Mr. Justice Tevie Miller was intelligent. He was humble. In fact, today at lunch when I sat with another lawyer, the lawyer reminded me that all too often in our profession there tends to be a certain arrogance, and this was a man who was never that. Anybody that came into contact with him knew that he treated everybody with equality and with sincerity and with friendship. He was energetic. He was community minded. He was friendly. In fact, how could you sum it up better than by saying that he was a role model for Canadians, particularly for Albertans?

Mr. Justice Tevie Miller was born in Edmonton, and he received all of his schooling in our city. He graduated from the University of Alberta with an arts degree and a law degree in 1950. He received an honorary doctorate from our university in 1991. During his time at university he was the president of our students' union at the U of A. He practised law in Edmonton from 1951 to 1974, when he was appointed as a judge of the District Court of Northern Alberta, a court that was headed up by my father at that time. He was elevated to the Supreme Court of Alberta in 1976, which later became the Court of Queen's Bench. In 1984 he was appointed Associate Chief Justice of that court and served in that capacity until he elected to take supernumerary status in January of 1993. For several years Mr. Justice Miller lectured at the Faculty of Law at the U of A.

Mr. Justice Miller recently celebrated his 43rd wedding anniversary with his wife, Arliss, their three married children, and their 10 grandchildren, all of whom reside in Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, it's a long list, but it's worthy of putting into the record the accomplishments of this great Albertan. I said that he was the president of the students' union. He was a member of the senate of our university, a member of the board of governors for our university, president of the alumni, chairman of the professional division of the three Alberta universities' fund-raising campaign, a member of the board of governors of Alberta College, a director of the Banff School of Advanced Management, chairman of the Banff School of Advanced Management, lecturer in business at the Banff School of Advanced Management, sessional lecturer at the Faculty of Law, chancellor of our university, president of the United Way, campaign chairman of the professional division of the United Way, chairman of the city of Edmonton Community Foundation, president of the Edmonton

Symphony Society, board member of the Hillcrest Country Club, member of the board of directors of the Edmonton Eskimo Football Club – and he walked around with that ring with great pride – vice-president of the board of governors of the 11th Commonwealth Games in 1978, a member of the board of governors of Universiade, on the retired officers list – and this is a good one – of the Royal Canadian Navy reserve.

Mr. Speaker and members of this Assembly, I'm sure all of us will acknowledge the tremendous contribution of a great Albertan. Thank you.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government and especially on behalf of Premier Klein I want to convey our condolences to Mrs. Miller and to the Miller family and to all those who knew and loved a truly honourable, gentle man, Tevie Miller. I think many of us on this side of the House had reason at times through our career to know Tevie Miller, to see him at gatherings that have been described by the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry. We know that those lives that he touched will always remember a very truly honourable, gentle man.

I believe the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry has done an exceptionally fine job of laying out the accomplishments of Tevie Miller. He's done it both as a dear friend and as a strong parliamentarian, and I think his words suffice in paying the respect that this Legislative Assembly would want to convey to the Miller family.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry, does the Assembly agree to this motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Let the record show that this motion passed unanimously.

We have a number of points of order today. One of the first that was on my list has now been withdrawn, so I won't be calling on that one. If hon. members will bear with me, I'll sit down for a moment. Again, thank you for your forbearance.

3:00

I'll take these in the order in which I have a whole bunch of notes on them. We'll call the hon. members to speak at that time, if that's agreeable.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, who I'm sure is wishing to speak on her point of order, is invited to speak first. Oh, the hon. Member for Sherwood Park is going to speak on that point of order.

Point of Order Clarification

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Rising on the point of order that was raised during question period by my colleague from Edmonton-Meadowlark and citing Standing Orders 23(h), (i), and (j), this is in reference to a supplementary response by the Government House Leader with respect to a question that was raised relating to a private member's public Bill, Bill 214. The Government House Leader was referring to a document which was not tabled in this Assembly but in which the Government House Leader attempted to respond to the question with supplementary information about talking about a secret opposition document.

Mr. Speaker, the document that I have in front of me that the

Government House Leader was referring to is a document entitled Supplementary Bill Brief, "for internal use only." The Government House Leader made reference to that in his comments, that it was an internal document. Now, it's difficult for me to describe it; nonetheless, I will. Superimposed upon this document called Supplementary Bill Brief is the Alberta Liberal logo and the heading that we use for our media releases, so the heading of this is Alberta Liberal Caucus News.

Now, as I say, this logo, the Alberta Liberal Caucus News logo, has been superimposed upon "Supplementary Bill Brief," which is the content of this particular document. I will advise the House and advise you, Mr. Speaker, that in no way do we in our office put our supplementary Bill briefs in our Caucus News. The Caucus News documents come from our media offices, and our supplementary Bill briefs come from our research department. We do not use Caucus News letterhead for the printing of our supplementary Bill briefs.

Now, how the Government House Leader comes to be in the possession of a document that is our supplementary Bill brief printed on our Caucus News letterhead is very puzzling. I don't know, Mr. Speaker, what kind of game the Government House Leader is attempting to play with this, but certainly this is not a document that originates in our department in this form. However the Government House Leader chose to photocopy this document perhaps he can explain to the Assembly. The document that he tables before us this afternoon is not a document that is sourced from our office, and the Government House Leader is attempting to suggest to members of this Assembly that it is a document that comes from our office.

I will also indicate to you in speaking to the point of order, Mr. Speaker, that the Government House Leader, in answering the question supplemental to the Minister of Justice, made specific reference to the statement "we are still working on what procedure should be in place for the respondent to appeal an ex parte order." He was speaking about that in the context of explaining why he and his government members voted to kill Bill 214 yesterday.

I should inform the House that this was dated August 19, 1996, and from our staff we've been advised that after this memo was done, the amendment that the Government House Leader specifically referred to was finalized. It involved significant discussion with officials from the Department of Justice. It was done in consultation with a government researcher by the name of Maureen Geres.

I guess what it boils down to, Mr. Speaker, is that the Government House Leader once again chose to tell half the story to make himself look good in debate and is not giving this House the full information.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DAY: Of course, Mr. Speaker, directly to the point of order. Through you I would reflect Shakespeare's comment to the member, that thou doth protest too much. The shrill and defensive reaction here is somewhat telling. [interjections] I listened quietly to every word, and once again Liberal members do not know enough about common decency and restraint to show the same measure of respect to opposite members.

I digress, Mr. Speaker. Getting back to the point of order. I simply tabled a document dated August 19. They can go on and

panic about superimposed logos or whether it came from a rice box or a box of Cheerios or whatever. The fact of the matter is that on a very important Bill, which is not a government Bill, as we have said a number of times, on a private member's Bill, many private members have said that the principle is supported, but there are concerns with the Bill. This particular point, the ex parte order, which is very significant to people's freedoms, has been one of the main ones. Consistently over the last period of several weeks and months the Liberals have said that this is not a concern and as late as . . .

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Why don't you tell the whole story?

MR. DAY: You know, the Member for Sherwood Park is shrieking about telling the whole story. I simply tabled a document – I don't care what logo was superimposed on it – for internal use only to Liberal members, a secret memo, that as late as August 19 showed: we've got a problem; we haven't worked this one out yet. That's as late as Monday, when they were asking for passage of this Bill. They've got a very big problem over there.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: As the Chair understands the point of order of which the citations were (h), (i), and (j): "makes allegations against another member," "imputes false or unavowed motives to another member," or "uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder" – those were the citations, but as I've heard what we were talking about, the hon. Member for Sherwood Park wanted a point of clarification to indicate that the document tabled under certain categories by the hon. Government House Leader was in fact not a document from their internal operations. I'll think we'll have to accept the word of the hon. member. As you may know, the Chair and the Table officers aren't in the business of proofing all kinds of documents as to whether or not they were photocopied or counterfeit or whatever. Only a cursory glance can be made of them. I think it's a point of clarification, and both sides have clarified what they seem to want.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie rose on a point of order.

Point of Order Clarification

MRS. BURGNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to cite *Beauchesne* 484 and Standing Order 23(i) and (j) on the imputing motives that were directed in an uncharacteristic comment from the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly during question period. In bringing forward Standing Order 64 yesterday, I did so because I have a responsibility as an MLA to craft legislation in a manner which reflects the public policy before us in this province. Also, that legislation must be crafted in a way that reflects an ability to be implemented, to have its fiscal impacts considered, and to have stakeholders involved so that it is effective when we bring it to full bear of the law.

Standing Order 64 I moved in good conscience. Indeed, although that particular Standing Order has not been used before to my knowledge since I have been an MLA, it in no way was an underhanded, obtuse piece of legislation. In bringing that forward, I recognized the need to suspend debate on that legislation at the committee stage. In reflecting on my responsibilities in crafting effective legislation, I was concerned about the impact of seven pages of amendments on a 10-page Bill and how indeed we would be able to address those in the public domain.

Mr. Speaker, we've already had reference in the previous point of order with respect to the Liberals' own concern about those amendments, so I won't reflect on that further.

But let me cite for the record some of the concerns within the legislation as amended which cause me to have that concern. One of the reasons for . . .

3:10

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, I'm not sure that we need to be into the debate on the issues but more to the points of order of what occurred here in the House, that kind of thing, much as it's very interesting.

MRS. BURGNER: Mr. Speaker, then I will let the comments that I made in debate yesterday stand.

May I conclude, then, by saying that domestic abuse is a significant social issue, and we have a responsibility to craft legislation that addresses it in its entirety. To impute motives that I had any other reason for my citation of Standing Order 64 undermines the role and responsibility of every Member in this Legislative Assembly. I can only reflect, Mr. Speaker, that the comments were made because of the emotional nature of the issue for the member bringing forward Bill 214.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo on the point of order.

MR. DICKSON: On this point of order, Mr. Speaker. I was listening, and I didn't hear the Member for Calgary-Currie indicate the specific words that gave rise to her claim that she has a point of order.

I would point this out, Mr. Speaker. On May 15, 1996, in *Hansard* at page 1888 the member said, in concluding debate, "Again, my compliments to the member" – and I say, parenthetically, referring to Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly – "and I will be speaking in support of the Bill at third reading." The reality is clear that because of the initiative taken by the Member for Calgary-Currie the other day, it effectively terminated a debate on the Bill, and that was the point that had been raised and referenced by my colleague for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly. If one looks specifically at the express words of the Member for Calgary-Currie, I don't know how one could come up with any other explanation, how she could say on May 15, 1996, that she was going to vote in support of the Bill at third reading and then initiate a manoeuvre in this Legislature yesterday which effectively killed the Bill at that time. One would think . . .

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I just find that we're getting onto the debate of yesterday and why did you say this and why did you not say that. What we were dealing with initially, as I understood the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie, was Standing Orders 23(h) and (i) and (j), I believe the hon. member referred to – I haven't got any positive affirmation of that – abusive and insulting language, that kind of thing. Then we would have to get into the language that was used.

However, the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie has taken part of the time for the point of order to clarify why she was acting as she was. In that sense, I think that's a point of clarification, and I don't think we need to belabour that any further at this time.

I have enough points of order here to write a book. I believe Calgary-Buffalo had a point of order. Is that so, hon. member?

Point of Order**Oral Question Period Practices**

MR. DICKSON: I did indeed, Mr. Speaker. This relates, actually, to two questions: the question during Oral Question Period raised by Grande Prairie-Wapiti that you recall focused specifically on some practices of the correctional services of Canada, and then I'd conjoin with that the question asked by Bow Valley which had to do with the federal postal service. Now, the authority would be Standing Order 23(1), "introduces any matter in debate which offends the practices and precedents of the Assembly." Further, in the alternative *Beauchesne* 409(6), which references the prescription that "a question must be within the administrative competence of the Government." Further, in the alternative subsection (5) to 409 that says, "The matter [must] be of some urgency."

What we've got is this, Mr. Speaker. Although I didn't hear all of your comment, between the time I signaled that I had an intention to raise a point of order to this point, I think I heard you raise a similar concern. I'd just say this. One would expect that all members in this Assembly respect the division of powers that exist in the Constitution Act of Canada. We have 83 men and women who have been elected and are supported and resourced by the people of Alberta to deal with issues within the legislative competence of the province of Alberta. One would think that with all the important, pressing issues in terms of health care, education, government secrecy, and so on, all members should be constrained to address those matters which ministers of this government have an ability to be able to revise, change, or improve.

So I'd just say that this seems to be a recurring kind of theme we've seen in this Assembly. This isn't the first time we've had questions and, specifically, long preambles that talk about what the federal government is or isn't doing or what some federal government agency is or isn't doing. I'd simply encourage you, Mr. Speaker, to remind those members that if their principle area of concern is what the government of Canada should or should not be doing, they ought to run for elected office as a Member of Parliament. So long as they've been elected as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, let's focus on those two-year wait lists for those people waiting for hip replacement surgery; let's focus on those children who can't get English second language instruction when they need it and the host of other issues and concerns that are in front of Albertans and that certainly pose a challenge for the government opposite.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. EVANS: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. I listened very attentively to Calgary-Buffalo, and on part of his presentation I entirely agreed. I agreed when he talked about the importance of limiting our questions to the legislative responsibilities of the ministers who are being asked the question. I quite concur with that, and it's my recollection that you, from the Chair, made reference to that during question period today and pointed out that on the narrow issue of taxation the question from Bow Valley was relevant to the responsibilities of the Provincial Treasurer and that that was in order. I concur with Calgary-Buffalo that that should always be present in the minds of the members of this Assembly so that we do use our time productively and discharge our duty to our constituents.

But then Calgary-Buffalo went on to editorialize about what are the most important issues for members of this Assembly to ask in the Assembly, and there, Mr. Speaker, I part ways with the Member for Calgary-Buffalo. The Member for Bow Valley brought forward an issue that is of concern to his constituents, and in this great province of ours, a vast territory, I would remind the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo that there are many issues that would not necessarily be of interest to his constituents in central Calgary but are certainly of interest and concern to other Albertans, and all Albertans are represented in this Assembly.

So I would say in conclusion that we have to make sure that, yes, we stick to the issues that we are responsible for, but we should not be so presumptuous as to challenge an hon. member for bringing up issues that are of importance and meaning to his or her constituency. It will be his or her constituents who determine whether or not the proper issues are raised.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo has raised a point of order with regard to the questions asked by the hon. Member for Bow Valley and then, in speaking about them, reflected upon comments that were made subsequent to the original point of order being issued. Both hon. members who spoke on the issue have referred to the fact that the Chair had some difficulty with the question and asked the Provincial Treasurer to follow the narrow line of what his portfolio took in, and I think he did so.

Then we got into some extra things. Not being a lawyer – what is it? Overdicta or something. Whatever, some extra thoughts. I would indicate to the hon. member that he may have a view of what is important to be asked in question period, and he's certainly entitled to that opinion. But the Chair must observe, as the hon. Deputy Government House Leader observed, that hon. private members in this Assembly are allowed to ask questions, and it's up to each one of those hon. members to decide for themselves what's important to their constituencies. You can't always deal each and every time with the highest order of urgency in each and every question. So there are questions that hon. members must decide for themselves as to their importance, and I don't think the Chair can properly get into that. I think we've clarified that.

The Chair can't remember if there are any more points of order. There are? No.

head: Orders of the Day
3:20
head: Government Bills and Orders
head: Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call the committee to order.

Bill 48
Appropriation (Supplementary
Supply) Act, 1996 (No. 2)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Leduc.

MR. KIRKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know it's Thursday afternoon and all would like to leave this premise as quickly as they could, but I think it's important to talk to Bill 48, and I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 1996, (No. 2).

I would start my comments, Mr. Chairman, by complimenting the hon. Minister of Community Development. The dollars that her department is asking for or requisitioning, as I understand it, are intended to deal with seniors' programs. Now, the minister will recall that there have been many debates in this House forewarning that the programs the government was reducing would cause harm to seniors, and that forewarning came from this side of the House, the loyal opposition. We had indicated at that point that the dollars which were being directed to seniors were deficient. They would not adequately address a quality level of income. So I assume that this \$6 million that will be infused into Community Development will assist that particular segment, the seniors of our province. Our seniors are an extremely important and valuable asset. They deserve respect and fair treatment from this government, so I'm pleased to see that \$6 million come into Community Development.

However, Mr. Chairman, when I look at the appropriation Bill and see that there is \$10 million being requisitioned by Alberta transportation – now, I don't misunderstand the need to deal with the Lesser Slave disaster situation, and I emphasize “the need.” Hopefully the province moves with a little more expediency to recover some of those dollars from the federal government than they did in 1987, when the tornado devastated the east side of Edmonton. It was some seven or eight years later that those outstanding federal dollars were still on the provincial books because the province had not provided full and proper documentation to access those federal dollars.

When I look at the dollars associated with this requisition, of particular concern to me is specifically the infusion to deal with the resource roads improvement program. Now, Mr. Chairman, when I look at this, I look at it in the context of the Leduc constituency, which includes divisions 6 and 7 of the county of Camrose. The minister of transportation would be in receipt of a letter signed by the county of Camrose reeve, one Jack Lyle. In essence, that letter indicates that as that county is not blessed with an abundance of natural resources, the infusion of more dollars into the resource roads improvement program will not benefit the county of Camrose. As a matter of record, the letter by Reeve Jack Lyle outlined that counties such as Camrose are really disadvantaged when we deal with the resource roads improvement program, and it's due basically to the fact that the traffic counts that are expected to qualify for these dollars are difficult to meet if you do not have the natural resources. I would suggest that this county is being relegated to a second-class county simply because they are serving farmers or agriculturalists, those families in that sector that has contributed so much to Alberta's prosperity. So these counties I would suggest deserve the comparable dollars that other rural areas receive to ensure that they can provide a comparable service to their constituents.

Now, when I move along to the requisition for the \$20 million for Alberta Health, Mr. Chairman, I would have to again pat the Liberal caucus on the back, because we have indicated in many of our debates that the program that was being introduced by the Conservative government was one that was without plan and one that would cut too deep. This infusion of dollars at this particular point I would suggest is testimony that we were absolutely right on the mark there. We were very correct. Our assessment was that there would be a tremendous amount of hardship and pain as a result of those cuts.

As I understand it, the lion's share of this infusion is going into the Capital health authority region, with some \$6 million going into improvement of air and ground ambulances, Mr. Chairman.

Now, I'm somewhat troubled by the \$6 million directed to the air and ground ambulances, troubled because many of the ambulance bills today, quite frankly, are off-loaded to unsuspecting patients. When I say that, I will take you back to the Leduc constituency and give you an example of that.

That example comes in the form that the hospital itself has created two or three holding beds. Now, Mr. Chairman, as you can envision, those holding beds are simply to give the hospital the ability to avoid ambulance costs. A patient would be admitted, they'd be put into a holding bed, assessment would be completed, and if the staff is not in the hospital or available to the Leduc hospital, then those patients are forwarded on to the Capital health care authority. That being the case, they would never have been admitted to the hospital, and when they leave the hospital, they take with them an ambulance bill of some \$350 from Leduc to Edmonton.

So I am having difficulty rationalizing in my mind that \$6 million that is being infused into air and ground ambulances. If it is intended to deal with situations such as that, then I would applaud it. I certainly wouldn't discourage it if it means we're going to save lives and if in fact we're going to improve the air ambulance services in the province of Alberta. I would suggest again that if you look at history and the opposition advocating that we should have a provincewide air ambulance, I would like to think this should improve and make a step towards that. As we know, many of our rural residents are not close to hospitals that can provide the emergency care or the specialized care that's required on some occasions. That air ambulance certainly would be helpful in dealing with that.

3:30

Mr. Chairman, I don't want to belabour the discussion on the infusion of the \$14 million to the Capital health care authority. It would be my respectful submission that all health authorities are inadequately funded. Not to take away from the Capital health authority – because I know they're extremely busy – but all of those health authorities in my view should receive more dollars to provide health services to their constituents and their residents.

Mr. Chairman, you would be aware of many, many examples that the opposition members, as well as some government members, have brought before this Assembly illustrating the inadequate funding of health care in the province of Alberta. Just to frame my comments that I'm advancing, on Tuesday of last week, the 13th, I had a constituent call my office, one Anne Boylan. She is a Beaumont resident, and she called to express her profound frustration and disappointment with her experience with the health care system. Anne is a nurse, so she has a very sound understanding of the provision of health care services and the delivery of those health care services. Unfortunately, Miss Boylan broke her ankle in three places on Sunday, the 11th of August, and when we speak about an ankle broken in three places, that's a very serious break. She was discharged on Tuesday, the 13th.

Now, Miss Boylan is the sole occupant of her home. She has no family at home that could provide assistance and no family in the area that could provide assistance. When she was discharged from the hospital, Mr. Chairman, she was not provided with any direction on home care. She was simply instructed to visit a medical supply business to secure crutches to assist with her mobility. I think that when you're dealing with an ankle that's been broken in three places, mobility is very important even to look after your personal needs. She was sent home by herself without any sort of support and without anybody questioning

whether she had the support herself. To her dismay when she did visit that medical supply service, she found she was expected to pay \$110 for crutches. As I indicated, Anne Boylan is a nurse, unfortunately one that can only secure a casual position in an overworked and understaffed health care system. As a casual employee she is privileged only to a minimal number of benefits in the health care system, and provision of such aids as crutches is not one of those luxury benefits that she had. So Anne Boylan was faced with a \$110 health care fee she could ill afford. On top of that particular stress she also had no direction or indication as to how she should access home care in the community of Beaumont. [interjection]

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Red Deer-South seems to make light of the fact that this woman has an ankle broken in three places, a single mother working casual, and seems to think that \$110 would be no sort of difficulty to her. We all should have his dollars so in fact she could deal with it on a regular basis. What you're seeing here is a lack of compassion towards Albertans, and we've seen that time and time again. The Member for Red Deer-South continues to belabour and show that lack of compassion.

Mr. Chairman, I use Anne Boylan as a microwindow of the much larger problems Albertans are encountering with our health care system. I would suggest, when we look at that \$20 million infusion, that quite frankly it is not adequate dollars to address the health care needs of Albertans. When we look at the per capita spending in this province on health care, we are one of the lowest provinces in the country of Canada. I would suggest that that's an embarrassment. That is not treatment that Albertans deserve and not treatment that Albertans should be subjected to.

So, Mr. Chairman, when I look at that \$20 million that's to be infused into health care as a result of the appropriation Bill, Bill 48, that is before us, on one hand I compliment, because certainly it is a small acknowledgment by this Conservative government that they did not plan properly and that they did not adequately fund health care. I would encourage the minister to continue to examine and scrutinize health care with the finest of eye.

We know there are difficulties out there. We know there are problems to correct, and if we are finally brave enough and courageous enough to admit that those problems exist, then we have taken the first step to correcting them. Albertans deserve better health care, Albertans can afford better health care, and Albertans will demand better health care.

So with those comments I would yield my seat so others might offer their thoughts and their comments on this Bill.

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

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise in Committee of the Whole to speak to the appropriation Bill. I in second reading had already made a number of observations about the appropriations process and the necessity of links between appropriations and performance, explicitly in the targets, and a comment to the effect that I'd like to see better integration of performance to expenditure, because I think that's important in assuring Albertans that their money is well spent.

The issue I want to discuss in the committee stage with regards to these appropriations relates in large part to the issue of data and numbers and the justification for this appropriation. I think, as my hon. colleague from Leduc observed, the province of Alberta, in terms of expenditures per capita on health care and education and as a share of GDP, is the lowest in Canada. Now, that has

meaning, Mr. Chairman, only if in fact you can put it in context, because it could be easily the case that we have greater productivity here, that restructuring has in fact brought forward greater productivity so we can spend less and get the same amount of output that other provinces do.

But one of the things that historically exists in the delivery of services is that it is a sector that's been characterized by relatively modest productivity growth, and it's a sector where in part you measure output only by measuring inputs. That's always been a problem in measuring the delivery of services: to have a tangible, quantifiable measure of productivity. Measuring performance by inputs is imperfect at best, and in fact it sends out incentives to put more in without any concern as to what you are getting out of the system.

So I would have hoped that in the appropriations process we would have seen for the \$20 million in the health care budget, for example, data that told us how many cardiac operations we're seeing by region, particularly the waiting lists in the Edmonton area, and that this will in fact address those issues. We could have seen specific references to waiting lists by category of trauma or illness or elective surgery so that we would actually start putting the debate on a factual, analytical basis so we'd know what the nature of the problem is.

Again, with a supplementary appropriation what you're acknowledging is that there's a request for expenditures that were not anticipated in the February budget. The issue then becomes: well, why didn't he anticipate it? What was missing? So when ministers come forward and request additional funds, I think it behooves them to in fact provide us with data, provide us with numbers, show us waiting lists, talk about the problems, because to the extent that government is saying that it's simply giving money, without understanding or addressing the nature of the problem it's sort of business as usual. That's certainly a concern that I have.

The other issue is the concern I have over the extent to which this is a generic problem and is going to rear its head in other health care regions. We know there are significant differences in expenditures across this province on a per capita basis. I mean, WestView is one extreme, where in fact it's very clear that in per capita terms that region gets significantly less. So had we in fact discussed this allocation in terms of various analytical criteria, we might be ahead of the game because we could anticipate what's going to happen.

3:40

I think the one thing that you can point out on this is that Alberta right now has the youngest median age population in the country, but the data show that for Canada as a whole and for Alberta in particular the population is aging and aging significantly. The total fertility rate is down. Immigration as a share on the margin is down. So we're dealing with an aging population, and the data clearly show that with an aging population you get significantly increased expenditures on health care. On one hand, expenditures in per capita terms on education may decline, but there's more than a proportionate increase in expenditures on health care.

So we don't yet have a factual basis by which to assess how much and where. For a government that has already made a commitment to the business planning process, the fact that we don't get that type of detail, we don't get that type of justification for expenditures means we haven't learned a heck of a lot in the past three and a half years. It remains business as usual.

The only other point I would make is that in part it may be

business as usual, particularly with regards to health care and expenditures, because the Auditor General year after year – you just look at the Auditor General's reports for '91, '92, '93 – highlighted the very imperfect nature of the data that we have collected on health care in terms of being able to assess the cost of various procedures, the cost of delivering services, and how to allocate those costs across fixed and operating lines of expenditures. Part of the problem we have now is that we still don't appear to have that data. We can't compare within regional health authorities, and we certainly don't appear to have the capability of comparing across regional health authorities either, yet we're going forward with a population-based funding model, something we haven't seen yet but have been assured is coming. It would have been nice in fact, Mr. Chairman, to be able to debate that legislation or that formula here, because after all we do represent those constituencies. We represent collectively 17 regional health authorities. We're their spokespeople in this Chamber, but we're not seeing the formula. It may come forward in November.

Again, how do we know, in light of that formula, that this \$20 million for the Capital regional health authority is enough? Perhaps it's too much. Furthermore, we heard the Premier on June 24 talk about the abundant riches that lie down the road in '97-98, '98-99. Well, is that enough? How do we know that we need those moneys? How do we know that it's not too much or too little?

DR. TAYLOR: Take my word for it, Mike.

DR. PERCY: Yeah. The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat says to take his word for it. Well, give me a break.

Let's get the debate on an analytical, factual basis and away from "Trust me; it's a good thing," to "Here are the numbers, and this is why we're doing what we're doing."

So with those comments, Mr. Chairman, I'll take my seat.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise to speak to Bill 48 this afternoon. There's no doubt that I will be voting for this money. There's a definite need for it in the province; we've seen it time after time and again. What I speak to this afternoon particularly is the lack of process and lack of accountability on the part of the Provincial Treasurer here. It's something that is serious and significant and needs to be addressed. The reason why he would come back at this point in time and ask us for more money in these particular areas is because he's miscalculated the budget. He's been unable to adequately project what the needs of the people are and the dollars that are tied to that need in a manner whereby he's got to come back five months into the year and ask for additional dollars at this time and perhaps more at another time.

He put a plan in place at the beginning of this fiscal year that hasn't worked. It's failed. He's been unable to live within the means that he promised the people of this province he could and now needs to come back for more money. The worst part of the whole process is that he's prepared to come back and ask for more money without any public consultation or without being able to explain why and specifically the needs of what it is so that he's required here to put more moneys into Community Development and health care.

Yesterday and today we heard a great deal of debate on the reasons as to why Bill 214 couldn't be passed. The primary reason for it on the government side was that they had to adjourn debate and refuse to speak to it because there hadn't been enough public consultation. Well, there isn't enough public consultation to talk about victims of abuse – you tabled the Bill – but you can come back and ask for another \$36 million to operate this budget and you need absolutely no public consultation on that. There's no requisite on the Treasurer to be publicly accountable for those dollars. He doesn't have to outline what went wrong and specifically how it is that he's fixing it or any guarantees or assurances that this in fact will be fixed for the future.

Mr. Chairman, I find it appalling that this can happen with this kind of a budget. Certainly it never happens in private industry. Having spent nearly 20 years helping companies prepare budgets and live up to them, I know full well the degree of accountability that's required in the private sector if you make a mistake in your budget and you have to come back to the purse holders and ask for more money. You need to detail exactly what it is that went wrong, list all the reasons why you had poor judgment in the exercising of the initial budget, justify why it is that you need additional funds and just can't live within the mandate you had set out. Many times heads roll based on that. People are asked to leave positions of high authority when they make these kinds of mistakes. Yet the Provincial Treasurer is accountable to no one in this regard, and there are no guarantees that what he is asking for now is going to be adequate or address in any form or manner the fundamental problems within the system or that we will be seeing any sort of fixing of that system.

I find it particularly appalling when we take a look at Agenda '96, which was the business plan the government came out with at the beginning of this fiscal year, and we look at what they stated as their goals within the health care system. When we're asking for another \$20 million at this time, we should take a look back at those business plans and see how close the government is coming to meet any of those goals or strategic directions. When we take a look at them in health care, we see that the government has fallen abysmally short of what they projected they would be able to do, even after us being nearly halfway through this fiscal year.

When we take a look at Health, goal 1 that they laid out at the beginning of the year was an "accountability framework [that] sets clear expectations for performance of the health [care] system." Well, an accountability framework would be a plan, Mr. Chairman, and we do not see a plan that's come through that has set clear expectations which can be measured and which can be carried out at any time during this first five months for the original budgeted amounts. We clearly do not see a plan for the balance of the year or a plan clearly outlining the \$20 million that's requested in this particular Bill. So they've failed on goal 1.

In goal 2 they talk about "legislation, policy and standards [that] facilitate continuous improvement in service quality." Well, Mr. Chairman, if there's an area that they've really failed in in this fiscal year, it's in service quality in health care in this province. We've seen day after day in this Legislative Assembly examples – not one example and not two examples a day but dozens of examples on an ongoing basis – of service quality lacking, sometimes to the extent that people's lives are put in jeopardy and sometimes to the extent that people have died in a system where prior to these kinds of budget cutbacks being incurred, we didn't have deaths. We didn't have the number of complaints that we

have now, we didn't have concerns about basic cleanliness, we didn't have people talking about chaos and crisis, we didn't have people talking about Third World medicine, because before in fact we did have service quality. We're not even close to continuous improvement here. Mr. Chairman, you don't need to take our word for it. You can talk to the people in this province, and you can hear the statements that they've been making one by one as individuals, collectively as communities. In the health care professional field we have doctors, we have nurses, we have inside workers, we have outside workers, we have other professions that are complaining about this. We see no service quality and for sure not a continuous improvement. So the government's failed in goal 2 of their health care business plan, yet still they need to come back for more money.

3:50

Goal 3 talked about how strategic directions are coordinated with other government departments and levels of government, and healthy public policies are in place.

Well, there hasn't been any strategic co-ordination. What we've seen is a lack of co-ordination: a lack of co-ordination between the government departments, a lack of co-ordination when we talk about the RHAs, and lack of co-ordination in terms of government interference in those plans. We see once again that of the three goals that the Health department had in their business plan, they failed in all three. So that lends us the question of whether \$20 million is adequate, is good enough. Is it going to be all that's needed? We have no way to measure that at all.

If we take a look at service delivery, which was a core business goal laid out in the business plan, they talk about an accessible "range of core health services [being] available." Well, we see a questioning right now on this government side of even what core health services are. There's no continuity in that regard. There's no ability for them to be able to say what they are or that they will be consistent throughout the health regions. So people within this province can't even rely upon consistency.

They talk about "timely service" as being one of their major goals, laid out right here on page 245 of the business plan, Mr. Chairman. Timely service is a joke in this province now. We have people waiting months and months and months for procedures that can be had in a timelier fashion in Third World countries. We have other provinces now starting to complain about the length of wait that people have for any kind of service. It seems like if you don't know someone in the government or aren't connected to someone who can move you up the queue, you're never going to get timely service in the health care system as it stands right now.

They talk about "consumer charges [that] do not prevent access to needed health services." Well, it seems to me that a needed health care service would be to pick someone up who has fallen out of bed in a hospital and lain there for hours and hours and hours. That's basic fundamental access to a service when you're already in the hospital. It isn't even talking about or addressing the kinds of needs that people have getting in. It's once you're in there that your family can be assured and that you can be assured that you are in fact going to get needed access. It isn't happening, Mr. Chairman. It isn't happening at all on many different levels.

I still remember just a few weeks ago attending the funeral of a lady in my constituency who died after repeatedly being denied access to health care services in this city, not just at one hospital but at three hospitals and not just once but day after day after day.

Mr. Chairman, this woman had gangrene in both of her feet. To think that in this province at this time in our history we would deny access to a woman in those circumstances is absolutely reprehensible. She needed to be in a hospital. She needed the gangrene to be taken off her limbs. She needed proper medication so that the pain in the circumstances could be minimized. The pain associated with gangrene is intense. It is the worst kind of pain that a person can feel, because what actually happens is the gangrene eats away at the nerve ends in your body, which produces excruciating pain.

Her family took her first of all to the Grey Nuns. They didn't have the room for her or the adequate services to be able to treat this kind of a situation; the family was turned away. They went to the University hospital, and exactly the same thing happened. They went to the Royal Alex hospital, and exactly the same thing happened. At that point they contacted their family doctor, who contacted all three of those hospitals and tried to get this woman admitted, all to no avail. At that point, Mr. Chairman, they called me and asked what we could do. So we contacted the University hospital, and they admitted the woman, but they only admitted the woman overnight. The next morning she was kicked back out. Her family was called and told to pick her up because there were no beds available. During that time period no doctors came to see her. She did receive some pain medication, but there was no plan put in place to amputate, which was the required course of action at that time. She was just simply sent home.

They said in the hospital that she had home care services. Well, in fact she did. She had one hour of home care service a week, which is clearly not adequate for a person who can't walk. If you can't walk, you can't use bathroom facilities on your own. You need help and assistance. She had to rely on her son and her daughter-in-law to be able to provide those basic kinds of fundamental services. If you can't walk, you can't prepare your own food. If you're in a great deal of pain, you jeopardize your safety and the household's safety by trying to perform any of those functions on your own. She couldn't do it, Mr. Chairman.

They took her back to the Royal Alex hospital with a phone call from me and was admitted there once again overnight and kicked out the next day. This happened no less than six times before this woman finally said to her family: just take me home and let me die; this is too hard to do. So in fact that's what they did. They went home. From their family doctor they got adequate pain medication prescribed, and the gangrene simply ate its way up her legs until the toxins in her system literally killed her, Mr. Chairman.

Now, that's the kind of story we expect to hear in an underdeveloped, Third World country that's in the midst of a war. It isn't even the kind of treatment we expect to happen to people in a Third World country who don't have adequate health care resources. Yet here we see it happen in Alberta, in a province that's supposed to be prosperous, that's supposed to provide an Alberta advantage for all of its residents regardless of age, regardless of health. Yet it doesn't happen.

That's a basic, fundamental core business goal that was laid out in the business plan for the Health department at the beginning of this year. It hasn't been addressed, and we don't know, Mr. Chairman, if there's any intent to address it with this additional \$20 million that's being asked for. It looks like that won't be the case. In this operating expense line that's in here, the Treasurer has not had to address the basic key components of what this money will be specifically spent on and how it is going to solve these kinds of problems or prevent them from happening in the

future by in fact having some sort of basic level of accountability and, as they stated in their goals, a framework that sets out clear expectations as to what we can expect. I'm hoping that the Treasurer will stand next to address this and alleviate not only my concerns but the concerns of all people who have been negatively impacted by the drastic cuts to health care in the past two years and, most specifically, the past five years, which is what this Bill addresses in terms of a shortfall in revenue.

We see an additional \$6 million here going into Community Development, specifically in conjunction with seniors. Once again, when we take a look at the business plan of this government that was brought out this year, Agenda '96, we see significant and major shortcomings in the government's ability to even keep in line with the vision that they talked about in Community Development which addresses the needs of seniors. They talked about "a strong province with a high quality of life and fair opportunity for all." Well, Mr. Chairman, I challenge the Provincial Treasurer to stand up and tell us that there has been fair opportunity for seniors in this province and that the \$6 million they're asking for here is going to now provide an opportunity for the high quality of life that our seniors expected and anticipated in their golden years and that they've got a fair opportunity.

4:00

When you knock nearly 20 percent out of their individual household incomes without any warning and without any chance to adjust and then you continually change the rules and have high expectations for them to be able to stay in close contact with a 1-800 number and continue to fill out forms for programs that are built on the spur of the moment, because seniors' quality of life is being jeopardized on an almost daily basis in this province, I don't call that fair opportunity, Mr. Chairman. I don't think any of the seniors call that fair opportunity. It certainly doesn't ensure them any high quality of life, and it particularly disadvantages low-income seniors, which is very interesting because that is particularly what the business plans talked about paying special attention to. It states specifically here in their strategies that they would review and provide ongoing policy decisions that would ensure assistance goes to those seniors who need it the most, which primarily are the financially disadvantaged, people who have English as a second language in this province who are seniors, and those who are least able to cope with the changes and the new requirements that are happening in the seniors' department.

It's interesting that that clearly contravenes what they laid out here in their business plan too. They promised to emphasize the delivery of programs, and they promised to assess "the impact of economic, demographic, social and policy changes." Yet what we see is a measly \$6 million going back to them which provides primarily information and dollars for seniors who have got a one-time problem. It doesn't speak at all to those seniors who have ongoing drastic lifestyle changes and who cannot afford to maintain anything close to the same quality of lifestyle that they had prior to this business plan being implemented.

They talk about here as a goal: "To ensure lower income seniors receive the income support for which they are eligible, and government policies effectively anticipate the needs of seniors." Well, they haven't anticipated, and they're not meeting those needs. They're coming back now for another \$6 million, which we don't know is going to adequately address those needs at all: if it's going to be enough, if it isn't enough, or if it's even going to be going to the right seniors, Mr. Chairman. There's absolutely no detail, no information here to tell us that's happening.

What they talked about in the strategies for the '95-96, '97-98 business plan was that there would be an ongoing policy and regulatory review. The minister spoke to this the other night in here. I would like the minister to table that review, Mr. Chairman. We haven't seen it, and seniors in the province haven't seen it. We need to know that there has been some sort of a conscious effort made on behalf of the department to actually do this and to be able to justify that the \$6 million is going in the right spot and that it's meeting the needs, because it isn't happening.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to join the debate this afternoon in Committee of the Whole on Bill 48, the appropriation Bill. I'd like to add some comments with respect to the appropriations that we are talking about in the areas of Community Development, Health, and Transportation and Utilities, in particular speaking to the appropriation on Health.

It's important for me, Mr. Chairman, to consider carefully the expenditures in the Capital regional health authority. We recently in our community in Sherwood Park and in Strathcona county, through the request of our local council, asked the Minister of Health to move Strathcona county from the Lakeland regional health authority to the Capital regional health authority, and that did come into effect on July 1 of this year.

Now, the reason that that happened is because the Minister of Health continued to assure residents in our community that the health care system was a seamless system. What the residents of our community found was that it was of course not a seamless system, and the Minister of Health obviously didn't seem to realize that the so-called seamless system in health care was not a seamless system at all. We found in our constituency and in our community that people were continually hitting barriers to access by attempting to come into the Capital regional health authority for health services when indeed they lived in the community of Sherwood Park or in the county of Strathcona.

It was to the point where it was the residents who pushed for the change from the Lakeland regional health authority to the Capital regional health authority simply because while the minister said, "Trust me; it is a seamless health care system," the people who were suffering in our community said: "It is not a seamless health care system, and if the government is going to be so blind to the problem that exists in accessibility and to the lack of seamlessness in the system, then we would like to go health care region shopping. We would like to make sure that that problem is solved for us by simply being absorbed into the regional health authority."

I have no doubt that as the government continues to delude itself by believing that it's a seamless health care system, many other constituencies and many other communities in Alberta are continuing to go regional health care shopping so that they can essentially circumvent the problem of accessibility and barriers to access rather than actually dealing with and solving the problem of the seamless system.

Now, in our case the Minister of Health was quite happy to accede to the wishes of our local council as they represented and spoke on behalf of the residents of our constituency and our community and was quite prepared to let us go health care region shopping, recognizing that it was much easier for the Minister of Health to circumvent the problem of a seamless system that doesn't exist rather than actually recognizing that the problem

does exist and trying to work toward fixing that problem. So we're no further ahead in trying to fix the problem of a seamless system because the government just continues to ignore it and lets constituencies move around regional health authorities to solve their problem that way.

I was listening intently, Mr. Chairman, to the comments that were being made by my colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud, recognizing that we still have not as yet moved the debate to a factual or analytical debate about performance measures and whether or not we are getting good use of our money that is being spent in the health care system and that we are still speaking to these estimates and speaking to the issue in far too much of a generic nature and not enough in a specific, factual, data approach to looking at how much money is going into the system, whether it's the right amount, whether the money can be used efficiently.

Now, I note from the debate that occurred this week on August 20 that the Minister of Health is on record in *Hansard*, found at page 2275, as saying that he agrees with the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud that in fact we do need to work towards "performance measures and accountability within the health care system." Interestingly, he goes on to say that it is this government that is "one of the first governments, if not the only government . . . to really work hard at setting performance measures across all departments." Well, that's not entirely correct, Mr. Chairman.

I know that certainly in the area of Environmental Protection two years ago the minister came forward with a list and a series of performance measures that he intended to implement in that department, and then last year in the budget estimates we discovered that most of those performance measures had vanished. The Minister of Environmental Protection said: well, we're working on it, and we're hoping that we'll have a business plan developed some time over the year, after we ask for all the money. At this point in time we still have never seen the business plan from that department. So I guess it really does boil down to your interpretation of what "really [working] hard at setting performance measures" really means. From his comments, I take it, the minister believes that the government is working really hard at setting performance measures. Those of us in opposition, looking at the performance of government, would take a contrary view, that they're not really working very hard at all in trying to get the performance measures established.

I was reading the debate from last day, Mr. Chairman, and reflecting upon the request for the sum of \$14 million for the Capital regional health authority. The Minister of Health, in speaking to that, did not give us the specifics of the \$14 million dollar request and in fact asked the chairman of the standing policy committee on health restructuring, the Member for Bow Valley, to comment on the specifics of the criteria. Now, I want to point out from his comments that he made in *Hansard* on August 20 at page 2276 that with the \$14 million that is being requested for the Capital regional health authority, it is being requested, according to the supplementary supply estimate booklet, "to ensure the continued quality of health services during restructuring." So the request is for continuing the quality of health services in this particular region.

4:10

We hear on a daily basis of the problems that are occurring in the Capital regional health authority due to underfunding. It comes from doctors, it comes from nurses, it comes from members of the regional health authority, it comes from the executive director, it comes from people who say, "We are underfunded, and we need further resources so that we can deal with the patient volumes that

we have and deal with some reasonable level of waiting lists and so on for surgery."

I think it's interesting to point out that in his comments – and this is a quote from page 2276 in *Hansard* of August 20, 1996 – the Member for Bow Valley says:

I think our government has been more than generous. Quite frankly, it was more than what we recommended in our report to the Capital health authority.

Now, what he says in his comments is that the government is prepared to give more money to the Capital regional health authority than they asked for. They didn't ask for that much; they're giving them more. Here's his quote on the same page. "We have given them in these estimates an extra \$14 million, which is more than what they had asked for when it comes to patient care."

Well, then let me go back to the comments made by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. Where does the number \$14 million come from? Why is the government putting forward today a number of \$14 million, and what is the number based on? Is it based on data that we can analyze to determine that that's correct? The Member for Bow Valley says: well, it's more than they wanted. What kind of a budgeting process is it when the government just picks a number out of the air and says, "Well, it's more than they asked for, so I guess there won't be any complaints"?

Well, Mr. Chairman, I know that's how this government has budgeted in the past. They simply pick numbers out of the air, make everybody happy, run up deficits, create debts. Sure, they know how to do that. That's the old way of doing it. But the Minister of Health is on record as saying that there's going to be a new way of doing it. So where does the number \$14 million come from if the Member for Bow Valley says: it's more than they asked for; we're being more than generous; use the money somehow; we don't know what it's for? Well, hon. minister, tell us the data, show us the specifics, give us the criteria that justify and establish the \$14 million figure, because the Member for Bow Valley says that it's more than they asked for.

Well, you hear and I hear from constituents that that's not going to be enough to be absorbed in the system this year to deal with some of the specific problems. The minister likes to not refer to people; he likes to refer to pressure points. So when somebody is really suffering in the health care system, the minister doesn't have to think about the people; he just has to think about the money and he has to think about the pressure points, which he likes to refer to them as.

Let's get back, then, to the debate on what the right figure is, to why \$14 million, hon. minister, is the right figure. Can you rebut the statements by the Member for Bow Valley that we're being more than generous and that it's more than they asked for? Can you rebut the statements from the regional health authority and from the people of Alberta who utilize the regional health authority who say that it is simply not enough? How can the Premier and the cabinet say: there is lots of money next year for health care, lots of money the year after that for health care; we'll be swimming and drowning in money that we'll be putting into health care, but we can't put it in this year.

Why do we need it next year, hon. minister? Why can't the money come in this year? Why aren't we doing more in terms of supplementary estimates? Why can't we deal with the pressure points now? Why are we dealing with the pressure points later? What are all the answers, Mr. Chairman, to these questions? Why are we not dealing in this debate with some specifics, with some data, and with some reasonable, analytical approach to

dealing with funding for health care rather than simply willy-nilly numbers that the minister runs by the pundits and the spin doctors and the advisers saying, "Will that keep the people quiet for a little while so that we're not going to take such a hard hit on health care"? That's really what it boils down to. That's the only reason the minister has come up with this particular number.

Now, one of the things that's happened in the last few days in this Assembly, Mr. Chairman, is that members of the opposition have responded to Albertans who want their story told about concerns they have with the health care system. I want to start by commending those Albertans for coming forward, because I think it must be terribly difficult for a family to take a personal tragedy and to expose that to public scrutiny and to expose that to belittling by the government of their circumstances, with the government keeping their head buried in the sand and saying: there's absolutely no problem in the health care system; we really don't know what the opposition members are talking about. I think it takes tremendous courage for those Albertans to come forward, until you finally get to a volume of complaints where the government hopefully in the near future will say: yes, there is a problem in the health care system; yes, there is a problem in the Capital regional health authority.

Now, with a number of cases that have come forward, very tragic, very difficult on the families, very difficult on the patients who survived, we've heard the minister say: we're going to check into that; we have the regional health authority that's going to conduct an inquiry into that one; we'll be looking into that one. I recall in my own case a constituent in Sherwood Park, Bonnie Cessford, bringing forward to the minister her concerns with the health care system as it related to her mother, who unfortunately passed away – and our condolences to the family – the tragedy that they endured in dealing with the health care system, graphic detail of the litany of problems compounded on problems compounded on problems compounded on problems. The minister says that we're going to look into that.

Now, I bet that the Minister of Health has got such a stack of problems in the pressure points that he is going to look at that we're all of a sudden looking at a significant amount of money that's going to be necessary to conduct all of these inquiries. So I'd like to ask the minister in debate this afternoon – we're dealing with the Capital regional health authority – about the extra funding that's going for health care. Just how many inquiries do you have on the go, Mr. Minister, and just what kinds of costs are going to be associated with having the experts and the right people taking the time and the resources away from patient care to be looking back at all of the problems that exist and the litany of problems that have been occurring in the Department of Health in the Capital regional health authority? That's going to have to be a costly amount. That's going to have to take a lot of resources from patient care.

I think we're at a point, Mr. Chairman, where we're going to have to be asking the Minister of Health what the cost of all the inquiries is going to be so that they can respond to Albertans who have said, "This system doesn't work, and let me tell you exactly how and why it doesn't work." The minister has got to appreciate and understand that Albertans have in large measure lost faith and lost trust in their health system.

4:20

Mr. Chairman, in terms of the estimates for Community Development, I think certainly that the same comments can be made. We have an appropriation for the sum of \$6 million in financial assistance to the Alberta seniors' benefit program: the

figure of \$3.75 million for accommodation and \$2.25 million under the special needs assistance program. Again, the debate needs to focus around specific information, specific performance measures and not just simply putting money back into a program without some justification and some statement of reason why that particular number is the appropriate number for appropriation. We don't have it. We don't have that information so that we can reasonably debate why the sum of money is right or why it may not be the right amount and to in fact have the government justify, because it's the government that spends the taxpayers' dollars. It's not the opposition that spends the money. I noticed that in question period today the Provincial Treasurer couldn't make that distinction. Nonetheless, it's the government that spends taxpayers' dollars, and it's the government who has to justify why the dollars are being spent where they are and whether or not the dollars are being spent efficiently and effectively in those particular programs.

I think the same could be said for the appropriation for Transportation and Utilities. I think the Minister of Transportation and Utilities was speaking, Mr. Chairman, about the resource road program and was asked a question by the Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert about the resource road program. The minister said: well, we don't know what roads we're going to be doing; we're not sure where we're going to be doing it. He really could not, if you read *Hansard* of August 20, 1996, give an answer as to how the funds have been apportioned, what the criteria is. He refers to criteria. We haven't seen the criteria; we don't know what they are. It really looks like it's kind of another willy-nilly program that is probably in some measure just a pre-election injection of money into road building in the province of Alberta.

DR. WEST: There was a program before.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: I notice that the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism would love to once again be the Minister of Transportation and Utilities, but he needs to move on, Mr. Chairman. He's got to slash and burn a new department. He's done with Transportation and Utilities. It's time to move on and slash and burn somewhere else, hon. minister. I know that the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism would love to enter into the debate. Hon. minister, obviously you're welcome to do so.

In speaking to the estimates in Transportation and Utilities, I'm reading the statements of the Minister of Transportation and Utilities, trying to understand in his comments what it is and how the funds have been allocated under this program for resource roads. I can't get the answer that I'm looking for because of my colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud, who speaks of the nature of performance measures, who speaks about the kind of data that we need, who speaks about the efficient use of taxpayers' dollars . . .

DR. WEST: Your problem is you haven't read enough. There's a resource road program in existence.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Indeed, Mr. Chairman, the minister wants to shout me down. I didn't say and have never said that the idea of resource roads is a bad idea. I just want some answers as to how the money's being spent.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking.

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to just speak to and in support of Bill 48, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, that's been introduced by our very hon. Provincial Treasurer.

In response to some of the requests put forward by elected officials of various municipalities, especially in northeast and central Alberta – this request came as a result of quite a significant decision made by the federal government that had about \$8 billion on the table to offer farmers in the western provinces, looking at the impact of the elimination of the WGTA, and when the dust settled, all that western farmers got was around \$1.6 billion. As a result, a lot of the onus for the additional repair and maintenance of roads is now on local municipalities. I have to say that the request by the local municipalities for support to try and offset the need for further maintenance and repair – because a lot of our agricultural goods will be transported now by road as opposed to railway, and it's going to put a fair bit of onus on the municipal tax base.

The other is with regard to the resource road grant. The various municipalities will be looking at where their resources are located. There are those municipalities that have a fair amount of oil field and drilling activity. They of course are responsible for maintaining those roads, and where they identify those roads, I'm quite sure that the hon. minister of transportation will look at their applications for the resource road grant.

So with those comments, Mr. Chairman, I would like to move that we adjourn debate on Bill 48.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Vegreville-Viking has moved that we adjourn debate on Bill 48. All those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The motion is carried.

Bill 46 Electoral Divisions Act

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Justice.

MR. EVANS: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to begin by thanking hon. members for all of their comments and their input on second reading of Bill 46. I know, as I stated earlier, how contentious electoral boundary provisions are in various parts of this province and how important it is to constituents to have the feeling that they know their MLA, that they have a recourse to their MLA, that they have a dialogue with that MLA and can make their points known to he or she and in turn have those points articulated in this Assembly. I appreciate the heartfelt comments and suggestions that were made at second reading about the process itself, the impact on constituents, and some of the suggestions that had been made.

That said, Mr. Chairman, in terms of a government response, we are very cognizant of the fact that this was a unanimous report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, and accordingly the government will be making only one amendment to this Bill at committee stage. I hope the Table officer will circulate the amendment now, and while that process is ongoing, for the record

I would just like to make note that the amendment the government is proposing is to six names of constituencies within Alberta.

The current names are indicated in column 1 of the amendment, and the new names that are proposed are in column 2. I will read them off while the amendment is being circulated: Calgary-East to become Calgary-Fort, Calgary-Forest Lawn to become Calgary-East, Airdrie to become Airdrie-Rocky View, Bow Valley to become Strathmore-Brooks, Cardston-Taber to become Cardston-Taber-Warner, and Olds to become Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Chairman, these amendments of names are consistent with the input that MLAs have received from their constituents. They are minor in nature of course, and I would so move.

4:30

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Before I call on the Member for Edmonton-Centre, hon. Minister of Justice, you're moving these all at one time, so we will call them A1.

MR. EVANS: A1 would be fine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

To talk on the amendment, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much. I would like to rise to speak to the amendment. I acknowledge that the minister has gone through some of the changes and has described what those changes are. I was having trouble seeing you, Mr. Chairman, because of members trying to block my view.

I'm surprised at some of these changes, Mr. Chairman. What surprises me about them is that I've heard several members on both sides of the House talk about the process of establishing an independent commission and talk about the need for having elected members not involved in drawing and determining the boundaries, which would include determining the names of the constituencies.

I do have some trouble with but I do have some understanding of the desire of certain members to want to change some of the names. I mean, I can see why there may be one or more members in this House who may want to change Edmonton-Glenora to Edmonton-Dinning. They may want to do that. I can see that desire. I wouldn't share that desire, but I could certainly see that desire, to perhaps name a constituency after oneself or after somebody in history or because somebody lives there or has lived there.

Once we get into doctoring, tinkering with, changing the recommendations in the report, while I do have an understanding that they only want to have names that they feel are more reflective of their constituencies, once you open that door to making changes, what comes next? While the hon. minister has stated that he has simply one amendment to table, I'm wary about making amendments to this particular piece of legislation that would then open the door for a member to stand up as an independent, as a private member, and make a change, another amendment that would actually change a boundary.

I'm having a problem here with the principle of establishing an independent commission, that commission having a framework, which we debated at length in this Legislature. I can recall – the Member for Calgary-McCall may not recall because of course he wasn't elected at the time – that we had a very significant debate as to what the total number of MLAs should be in this Legislature. The member I believe from Fort McMurray made an amendment to have a reduction from 83 to 65 MLAs, and while

I know that would mean less seats in all our communities, several of us supported that measure. But it was defeated by the government members, and the record is clear on that one.

The point I'm making here is that when we drafted the legislation that created the commission, when we crafted that piece of legislation, we had very thorough debate as to what kind of parameters. We didn't put in there that the commission should not name the constituencies. We could have very well said that the commission should name the constituencies from one to 83, or if we had our way on this side of the House, from one to 65 and then leave the actual naming of the constituency to the recommendation of each MLA. Then we all could have had an amendment to the legislation here. But we chose not to do that.

We said to this commission: "Go and have public hearings. Go look at court decisions both in this province and in other provinces, nationally. Try to come up with something that's a bit more fair than what it is we've had in the past. Then publish a report. Consult with people and listen to people and go throughout the communities." I specifically recall, Mr. Chairman, that we didn't say at that time, "Simply issue the report and wait to see if anybody says something."

We specifically put in the piece of legislation that once the interim report came out – we said it had to come out in January of 1996 – you must as a commission hold another series of hearings, and you must hold those hearings right throughout this province. I credit the commission members and the staff of the commission. They did in fact follow the legislation right to the letter. There were hearings in Edmonton, certainly, and in Calgary and Red Deer and in many secondary urban centres, in Lethbridge, in Medicine Hat as well as smaller rural-based communities in our province. So there was a second set of hearings right throughout our province.

In fact, the commission took it upon themselves – and I give them credit for this – to write to each and every individual member of this Legislature and say: we've issued our report; we want to have feedback; we want to know what the public thinks. And at that point they wrote to me – I received a letter – and they asked for my individual – individual – input into the process. I was glad for that letter, Mr. Chairman. I was a believer that MLAs should not be drawing the boundaries, that we should have an independent process, and we had a more independent process this time, to the credit of all the members of this Legislature, than we had last time.

DR. MASSEY: And a unanimous report.

MR. HENRY: And a unanimous report, which was again a major credit to the authors, the five commission members. We had a unanimous report.

But I had some thoughts about my constituency, and I was wondering whether it was appropriate for me as an MLA, given my belief that we should not be drawing our own boundaries, to actually make a submission to the commission. So when I received this letter from the commission chair, I actually contacted one of the commissioners and said: "Do you think it's appropriate? Do the other commissioners think it's appropriate?" He said: "Well, that's why we sent the letter, Michael. Yes, we do think it's appropriate for you to have input. We don't think it's appropriate for you to be drawing the boundaries but to have input."

So I actually made a submission, Mr. Chairman, and in the submission what I did was focus on two issues. One issue I

focused on was the issue of how the matrix was developed. The other issue: I tried to give the commission some information about my constituency. I said: if you need to add to the numbers, here's where it's logical to add; if you need to subtract, here's where it's logical to subtract. Then I left it up to the commission to make the decision as to whether to add to my constituency or subtract from my constituency, and I'll talk about that at another time. The point there, point 1, is that I left that to the commission. Point 2 is that I had an opportunity as an individual member to give input.

One of the things I did not give specific input on at that time was the name of my constituency. I did not suggest a series of names that my constituency could be called. Mr. Chairman, I could have done that. I could have said to the commission in my written submission: "Here are some options. If you want to change the name of Edmonton-Centre, you could call it Edmonton-Downtown." My constituency often gets confused with what is referred to loosely as the inner city, but if you look at the actual boundaries, the traditional inner city is not in Edmonton-Centre. So it may have been more appropriate to call it Edmonton-Downtown. As well, it would be very appropriate to refer to it as Edmonton-Grandin-Oliver, because we have a major Grandin community and a very, very active Oliver community as well.

Mr. Chairman, the point I want to make is that I did have an opportunity to have that input. I could have talked about the name of my constituency. For the reason of having consistency in terms of the name, I thought it better not to change the name and not to recommend a change to the name unless there was a very good reason for doing so. When I look at Calgary-East being changed to Calgary-Fort, I'm sure there's an historical reason for doing that. From Calgary-Forest Lawn to Calgary-East, I'm sure there's obviously a reason for doing that. Airdrie to Airdrie-Rocky View obviously refers to the economic and school board community called Rocky View. From Bow Valley to Strathmore-Brooks, that is probably more familiar to some people. I could go on and on.

4:40

Again I wonder, if the government's coming forward with these amendments at this time, why the Member for Bow Valley didn't make a submission saying that Bow Valley really is not as immediately recognizable by the people outside of that area and that it would make more sense to call it Strathmore-Brooks. I see the hon. Member saying that he did say that. If that's accurate – and I certainly take him at his word – then I have to raise the point that I'm leading to again, which is: why is it that we're sitting here when we've had the opportunity to make recommendations and submissions, when indeed we've had individuals such as the Member for Bow Valley make submissions and recommendations, and the commission then was charged with weighing those and coming up with something that makes perhaps as good a balance as can be had, given the variables that we live with when we draw the boundaries?

[Mrs. Gordon in the Chair]

If I believe in the independence of the commission and if I believe that it is dangerous here to open up, to start making amendments to the legislation, which I give the minister credit for is an exact reflection of what's in the final report of the commission, then I have to on principle question why it is that we would want to get into that.

I know, through the Chair, that the Chair is aware that I lived

for some time in the Lacombe area, in the constituency of Lacombe-Stettler, and the recommendation in the report and in this legislation suggests that it would remain Lacombe-Stettler. Now, there are some who would say that it should be named Lacombe-Rosedale Valley-Stettler. There are some who would say it should be named Lacombe-Alex-Stettler. There are some who might say it should be named Lacombe-Alex-Mirror. There are some who would say, "Gee, maybe Bashaw should be in that constituency, given the trading." All those things would be as logical as the amendment we have here, but I don't see them here. I'm glad I don't see them here, because I think it's dangerous for us to start fiddling with a process that we have determined is going to be independent, that we have designed a framework for in a piece of legislation.

Again, it may have been a framework that not everybody in this Assembly may have agreed with one hundred percent. I refer to the reduction in the number of MLAs that we proposed on this side. But it was a framework that we all agreed to in the end, and it was a framework that overall was the best balance. We gave it to the commission. We suggested to the commission to go about their work. We required that they use the framework that we gave them. They did an absolutely excellent job, and I don't hear any government member or opposition member saying that the commission didn't try their best and didn't do a good job in trying to weigh the evidence.

So now here we are with the minister actually coming forward on his own Bill, for goodness sake, wanting to start opening up debate as to whether we should be amending this Bill here or there. I, again, take the minister at his word that this is the only amendment that the government wants to sponsor for this Bill, but I don't have any assurance that somebody from Calgary-East, behind the minister, won't jump up after we vote on this particular amendment and actually have another amendment, now that we're going to do amendments to the report and to the Bill, and actually redraw boundaries. I think that would be regrettable, if we got into that sort of mess, and it would be a mess if each of us stood up and said, "Here are our boundaries."

We know, Madam Chairman, that we're all elected, and in the next year or so we'll be going back to the polls. Many members around here would love to get re-elected to this Legislature, and it's only human nature to have our own self-interest at heart. If we were all sitting down in a closet by ourselves and drawing the perfect boundaries for ourselves, we would be tempted – we're all human – to do what was done in one of the previous reports prior to the past election: have a boundary that would exclude those areas that were not favourable to us and include those areas that would be favourable to us.

I have this incredible vision, Madam Chairman, that if we opened up this debate and all started drawing, somebody would come to me with a great idea and say, "Henry, why don't you cut out that little poll that didn't" – I was going to say "that didn't vote for me," but they all did last time. "Maybe you should make sure that your sister's house is in that constituency," or "Gee, you still have one or two friends in Lacombe; why don't we just draw down Highway 2 and include that little section down there in your constituency?" I'm being a bit facetious and a bit absurd, but I think the point I'm making is that we shouldn't be opening up this particular report to the kinds of amendments that we see here.

Again I want to be very, very clear that I don't personally have a problem with any of the name changes. Although the minister hasn't gone through them individually and explained them, I'm

sure there are good reasons for each of the changes. But on a matter of principle, Madam Chairman, I am going to have to regretfully say that I am going to vote against this amendment because I think it sets a dangerous precedent in this current debate on Bill 46 and opens this up for potential abuse later on by members on either side, including myself. I think there are a significant number of us in this Legislature who believe in the sanctity of the independent process that we created, and to subvert or undermine that process at this late stage I think starts us down the dangerous, slippery slope of throwing the whole Bill wide open.

I have to say, Madam Chairman, that if this amendment had come – and I know it's not procedurally possible, but if we had seen this amendment perhaps before second reading or if we had been able to deal with it, I may have had a different light on it. But I sat through much of the debate at second reading and participated in it myself, if you'll recall, and I heard several members on the government side and a couple on my own side get up and talk about the legislation and the report, talk about how they would have trouble supporting it, talk about how they didn't think it was a fair report, talk about how they didn't think it did justice to their constituencies. Having heard those kinds of comments from, again, members on both sides of the House, I am very, very leery, then, to vote for an amendment that would open up that whole process of taking the Bill, throwing it open on the table, and starting to amend this section and that section.

If we're going to amend and change Olds to Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills and we're into that particular clause of the piece of legislation – and if you want, I can refer to that particular clause of the legislation that changes the name of Olds, which is on page 47, section 67 of the piece of legislation. If we're going to do that, then why aren't we allowing or encouraging members to alter the description of the boundaries of it?

With those comments I will take my place and allow other members to speak to this particular amendment. Thank you.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

4:50

MR. AMERY: Thank you, Madam Chairman, and thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to make a few comments on this amendment. Before I do that, I would like to thank the people of my constituency who took time out of their very busy schedules to attend the meetings held by the commission and offer suggestions and make presentations to the commission.

At the same time, Madam Chairman, I'd like to thank the commission for an excellent job, because I believe that they deserve some acknowledgement and thanks. They had very, very tough decisions to deal with and a very difficult task. I know it is very hard to please everybody, especially to please 83 members of this Assembly and to please the people of Alberta.

Madam Chairman, I was listening to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre when he mentioned in his speech that he believed there were some good reasons behind the change of name from Calgary-East to Calgary-Fort, and I will give him some of the reasons behind this change.

Let's speak about Forest Lawn first, Calgary-Forest Lawn to Calgary-East. Forest Lawn is only one of six communities in the new constituency. It is also one of the smallest communities in that constituency. The name does not properly illustrate the riding as a whole.

To give you some historical facts about the Forest Lawn area and the Calgary-East area, Madam Chairman, Forest Lawn,

before its incorporation into the city of Calgary, was a town on the eastern outskirts of the city of Calgary, along what is now known as 17th Avenue. They call it International Avenue. The name "Forest Lawn" has been used generically to describe all communities along the 17th Avenue southeast corridor, but now each community has its own identity, its own active community association, with dedicated volunteers, and they have their own community halls. The name "Calgary-East" respects and harmonizes this diversity.

Madam Chairman, over time electoral boundaries in Calgary have shifted from being named after communities to more geographic or historic names. I'll give you examples. Calgary-Bow, Calgary-West, Calgary-Egmont, and Calgary-McCall are examples of such names which stood the test of time. Calgary-East is a more appropriate name geographically as the riding is situated in both the southeast and northeast quadrants of the city. This new constituency is comprised of communities which were built from the 1950s through the 1980s. As Forest Lawn is one of the older communities of the constituency, it does not reflect the youthfulness of its newer areas and residents.

Madam Chairman, the name "Calgary-East" has been used by both the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and the House of Commons. It is a name Calgarians are familiar with and recognize. As this is the third redistribution in only 11 years, I believe it's important to keep names of constituencies consistent. It has been only three years since the last election, and many Albertans throughout the province are just getting used to the new names of their constituencies.

Now, Madam Chairman, I'd like to give you a few facts about Calgary-Fort. Calgary-Fort will symbolize the history of the constituency as Calgary's birthplace. Calgary-Fort is also rich in history from the founding of Fort Calgary to the development of the Canadian Pacific railway and the CP shops in Ogden. Calgary-Fort will be the site of the 2005 Expo.

Madam Chairman, many of these sentiments were expressed by constituents during the Electoral Boundaries Commission's hearing held last spring in Calgary. Mrs. Nancy Page, the president of Erin Woods Community Association, on behalf of her community members made a very passionate presentation and suggested the name change to Calgary-Fort. Another very prominent lady by the name of Mary Anderson, who happens to be a very active community worker and a volunteer with the community of Forest Lawn, made the suggestion to change the names of both constituencies. Another prominent Calgarian is Mr. Doug Piepgrass, who worked so hard to help the commission redraw the boundaries of the said constituencies and offered very, very real and constructive suggestions, had made the same suggestions about the name changes.

Madam Chairman, I am very happy to say that the commission responded in a very positive way in some areas, but it fell short in some other areas, and that's why we have this amendment today. I urge everyone in this House to vote for the amendment.

Thank you very much.

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

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

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Speaking to the amendment to Bill 46, I've listened to the debate from my colleagues, the Member for Edmonton-Centre and the Member for

Calgary-East. Admittedly, when I saw the amendment introduced by the Minister of Justice, my first thought was: well, here we go again; the minister and the government have to make sure that the message is sent loud and clear, that they can start tinkering with this piece of legislation. We'll hear the droning of the rhetoric about how the commission is the independent body, the commission is the one who has heard from Albertans, the commission is the one charged with the responsibility for establishing not only the boundaries but the names of the boundaries. Then of course the Minister of Justice has to start the interference process as we go through second committee and third reading of this particular Bill.

I recall that before this particular commission, the one that dealt with electoral boundaries in 1993, there were many who made submissions to that Electoral Boundaries Commission, not only about size and geographical location of constituencies but on the names of constituencies. I recall that there was considerable input in our community, at least for the constituency of Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, which encompasses much of the county of Strathcona, that the name Clover Bar should remain in the name to recognize the historic significance of that name in the province of Alberta. Indeed the constituency was named Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, and that name is retained as we move into this commission's report.

Now, it suggests to me that the body and the party that hears from Albertans about the names for the constituencies is the Electoral Boundaries Commission. They're the body that received the public consultation. I don't recall the Minister of Justice telling us what public consultation process took place between the filing of the electoral boundaries report and the coming forward of the Minister of Justice's amendments, the public consultation that was undertaken to show why these name changes were justified.

Now, we've heard much discussion today in this Legislature, Mr. Chairman, that the government's hands are tied, that they can't do anything until they have adequate public consultation. Well, I guess that is only when the government members are of the view that it sounds good to say the words "public consultation," but they really don't have any meaning. I'd like to know from the Minister of Justice whether or not the Electoral Boundaries Commission concurs in the name change based on their submissions of public consultation. I don't recall the Minister of Justice saying, "These are recommended by the Electoral Boundaries Commission." These are just plucked out of the air willy-nilly by the Minister of Justice. I don't think there's any public consultation that went into this process. So why would hon. members opposite now agree to a change to a piece of legislation, an amendment to a Bill, without public consultation? Where are all the hon. members opposite saying: "Oh, we couldn't possibly consider this amendment and the ramifications of this amendment. We haven't had adequate and sufficient public consultation. We can't do anything without adequate public consultation. We're sorry, hon. members. We're sorry; our hands are tied." Perhaps what we should do this afternoon is think about – and I'm not doing it, but maybe for hon. members to consider. Maybe we should ask you to leave the Chair, you know, because we haven't had adequate and sufficient public consultation on this whole amendment to a particular Bill. How can we do that?

5:00

I mean, Mr. Chairman, you heard yesterday the debate in the Assembly. The government's hands are tied; there's no public

consultation process that takes place. [interjections] So the hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw is yelling at me to put my money where my mouth is, but if the hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw would stand up and enter debate, we could hear which side of his mouth he's going to talk out of today.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw on a point of order.

**Point of Order
Clarification**

MR. HAVELOCK: A point of clarification, Mr. Chairman. I did not say: put your money where your mouth is. I called him a pond-dwelling salamander.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry. I think from the look on your face you had the same problem I did. The member mumbled something, but we couldn't understand exactly what it was he said. [interjections]

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order. I don't know whether there's a point of order, because I couldn't hear him, nor can I hear the hon. Member for Sherwood Park. [interjections] Order. We've had a reasonably good afternoon. Let's keep it that way. Although we don't agree with what people say, let's just keep it low.

Hon. Member for Sherwood Park, try to keep on the amendment, please, though.

Debate Continued

MR. COLLINGWOOD: We are indeed speaking to the amendment this afternoon, Mr. Chairman.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Oh, excuse me. I wanted an opportunity – and I didn't want to interrupt you, but then my mind can't work both ways at the same time. Today we have Carolyn Laird's last day as our page, and I just want to thank her. She's been with us for quite a while, and we're certainly all going to miss her. So I think we'll give her a round of applause.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We certainly want to wish her the very, very best on her last day and in the future. I hear the Minister of Education yelling that if she goes, he goes, and I'd like to wish him the very best in his future as well.

Speaking to the amendment, Mr. Chairman. I notice that the first amendment coming forward from the Minister of Justice, which he fails to explain, is that he wants to change the name of the constituency of Calgary-East to Calgary-Fort, and he wants to change the name of Calgary-Forest Lawn to Calgary-East. Now, the thing that I think we've got to consider always in terms of our electoral boundaries legislation is the ease with which the voters of the province of Alberta can participate in the democratic process.

Now, I look at the table of concordance, table 11 in the report, proposed electoral divisions, areas, boundaries, and names for Alberta, and I note that the proposed electoral division for Calgary-East will continue to encompass 61 percent of the current constituency of Calgary-East. So that makes to me, Mr. Chairman, a lot of sense, that the bulk of the people who currently reside in Calgary-East will continue to remain in Calgary-East and

will not have to go through this uncertainty of the name change to the constituency in which they reside.

I note that the constituency of Calgary-Forest Lawn takes in as a majority of the constituency the constituency of Calgary-Montrose. What really should happen is that Calgary-East should remain the same, and if we want to do this for certainty and for clarity for the voters of Calgary, we would then decide whether or not Forest Lawn is the appropriate name. Perhaps it should remain as Montrose so that we continue to have some consistency in the new electoral boundaries.

I think that what the commission has pointed out several times, as I recall, in its report is that it is always disruptive to have changes in electoral boundaries and changes in the names of those particular ridings, those particular constituencies. It is disruptive for the people of Alberta, who aren't really thrilled about having electoral changes occur over and over and over again. They want some certainty and they want some clarity so that they know that the constituency they're in is not being shaken up. "Well, am I on this side? Am I on that side? Am I still in Calgary-East? Am I now in Forest Lawn? Okay; so I thought from reading the report that I was in Forest Lawn, but now I realize I'm in Calgary-East. Oh, but I'm in Calgary-East. No, you're in Fort." It's just ridiculous. It's just ridiculous, Mr. Chairman, for the Minister of Justice to come forward with some rationale – I have no idea what it is – to come up with some name changes that really don't meet the needs of the voters of the city of Calgary for certainty and for clarity in those constituencies.

Now, I just looked at the title, Mr. Chairman, and of course this report does deal with the electoral division areas, boundaries, and names for the province of Alberta. I encourage the Minister of Justice once again to stand up and tell us what consultation occurred, what involvement the commission had in the drafting of this amendment, and whether or not it was the commission who pushed for some changes because of perhaps an oversight.

You know, we look at the name changes for Airdrie to Airdrie-Rocky View. Well, what's the significance of that? Was it the people of that municipal district who insisted on the name change? I don't know. The minister hasn't said so. Bow Valley is a very important historical name in the province of Alberta, as the Member for Bow Valley will attest to. Now all of a sudden the name is changing. No discussion about that in the report, about the idea for a name change. Now we want to identify and recognize the communities of Strathmore and Brooks. Well, there will be, I'm assuming, some folks who like the name Bow Valley because of its significance.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: On a point of order, the hon. Member for Bow Valley.

**Point of Order
Questioning a Member**

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would the hon. member entertain a question?

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Mr. Chairman, time is short, so I'll continue my comments, and the member can enter debate and talk about his specific concerns with the amendment, if he has any, or he can question the minister about where this amendment came from. He may know. We have no idea where they came from.

Debate Continued

MR. COLLINGWOOD: So you go down the list, Mr. Chairman:

the constituencies of Cardston-Taber, adding the name of Warner to that, Olds-Didsbury to become Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, again to recognize those communities. Now, there's nothing wrong in recognizing those communities, and in fact that may even certainly support a proposition that you need certainty in those communities so that they have a clear understanding and a recognition of where they are in terms of their constituency, what the boundaries are and what the name is, so that they have ease of access to the democratic process, in particular the most important component of which is voting in a general election.

I will just simply conclude by going back to the confusion that will be created on this amendment with Calgary-East becoming Calgary-Fort, Calgary-Forest Lawn becoming Calgary-East. No justification, no explanation by the Minister of Justice, no public consultation at all, which now all of a sudden is quite suitable and okay for members on the government side when a few hours ago it was not. It just simply makes no sense, Mr. Chairman, without some justification. So until that comes from the Minister of Justice, no way am I going to support the amendment.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Three Hills-Airdrie.

MS HALEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will be very brief, but I did want to take an opportunity to talk about two of the name changes on here. The first one, in recognition of what the electoral commission referred to as Airdrie, actually encompasses about 85 percent of the Rocky View municipal district and quite a large number of communities in that area, including Crossfield and Bearsapaw as well as Chestermere, Indus, and Langdon. It was our hope in changing this to Airdrie-Rocky View that we would in fact be able to recognize that this riding is much larger than one centre, that it in fact encompasses the Rocky View municipal district, and that the people we're welcoming into our new riding would in fact have some recognition in the name of that riding. I think it's easy if you're from Calgary or Edmonton and every riding that you have starts with Edmonton or Calgary, but it's not so easy in a rural area to explain to somebody why they're a member of a riding that has only a city designation; in this case, the city of Airdrie.

5:10

The other riding that I wanted to mention briefly is the Olds riding, as it was referred to in the Electoral Boundaries Commission, coming into the new name, which would be Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. Both ridings, both these areas that are merging together in one, have a very long and valued history in our province, the Olds-Didsbury riding and the Three Hills riding, which I was very proud to be the MLA for for the last three and a half years.

The Three Hills riding originated back in 1979. Since that point in time, Three Hills has always been in the name of the riding that they participated in. When Airdrie first went in with the Three Hills area, Airdrie was a small town of about 1,500 people, and the riding was designated strictly Three Hills.

AN HON. MEMBER: Should we read this one into the record?

MS HALEY: I'm getting a lot of help, Mr. Chairman, and I don't really need it.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I know you don't need any help. Continue, please.

MS HALEY: Thank you. I'm getting it anyway.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I know.

MS HALEY: I did want to talk about the Three Hills area. It's just simply too much having the Member for Calgary-Shaw this close to you every day. It just makes you crazy.

MR. HAVELOCK: Point of order.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Calgary-Shaw on a point of order.

Point of Order Factual Accuracy

MR. HAVELOCK: Well, Mr. Chairman, I have to take exception to that. I actually haven't been writing these notes to the hon. member. I've simply been sitting here listening very intently to what she had to say. However, if the person who has been writing them would like to be courageous enough to admit to it, that would be more than acceptable.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Obviously that's not a very good point of order.

The hon. Member for Three Hills-Airdrie.

MS HALEY: I'm not going to even respond to this, because it's not worth getting into it.

Debate Continued

MS HALEY: At one point the small community of Airdrie was part of the Three Hills riding. It was not designated Three Hills-Airdrie, in recognition of the fact that Three Hills was the largest community in the riding. In the last electoral boundary change, just a few years ago, it was recognized that Airdrie had not just grown but in fact had surpassed Three Hills in population levels, but Three Hills was kept in the title because they are a major community in that area.

We now find ourselves in a position where the entire municipal district of Kneehill has been moved into the Olds-Didsbury riding. I believe it will be a very strong rural riding, and I'm very delighted that the MD of Kneehill was able to be kept together in recognition of that.

Having said that, just the name Olds doesn't actually reflect the true value of the rest of that riding, and I think that it will be very good for the people of that area to know that they're part of the Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills riding.

I was kind of saddened to hear Edmonton-Centre talk about it in such a derogatory way, that would call into question what it was we were trying to accomplish here. There are no other amendments coming forward. This is the amendment.

Bill 48 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 1996 (No. 2)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. Member for Three Hills-Airdrie, but under Standing Order 61(4) I must put the question proposing the approval of the appropriation Bill on the Order Paper for consideration by the Committee of the Whole.

[The clauses of Bill 48 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Opposed, if any? Carried.

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

MR. McFARLAND: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain Bills. The committee reports Bill 48 and reports progress on Bill 46. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: All those in favour of the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried.

[At 5:18 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]