

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: Thursday, April 17, 1997

1:30 p.m.

Date: 97/04/17

[The Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, the prayer today is taken from the House of Commons in Ottawa.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we give thanks for the great blessings which have been bestowed on Canada and its citizens, including the gifts of freedom, opportunity, and peace that we enjoy.

We pray for our sovereign, Queen Elizabeth, the Governor General of Canada, and the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta.

Guide us in our deliberations as Members of the Legislative Assembly and strengthen us in our awareness of our duties and responsibilities as members.

Grant us wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to preserve the blessings of this country for the benefit of all and to make good laws and wise decisions.

Amen.

Please be seated.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: Hon. member.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to present a petition signed by 77 people from the St. Albert Alliance Church. They are urging the province to remove and ban all VLTs in the province of Alberta.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. member.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two petitions. The first one's signed by 98 Calgaryians in support of keeping the Calgary General hospital, Bow Valley site, open and fully operational as a hospital.

The second petition is one signed by 1,033 Calgaryians, urging that there be a separate, stand-alone vote on whether in fact there should be a Calgary General hospital, Bow Valley site, as a full service acute care hospital.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. member.

MRS. PAUL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to give you this petition from All Saints Lutheran Church in Castle Downs – sixteen members have signed it – banning VLTs in my constituency.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MS CARLSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give oral notice that pursuant to Standing Order 40 at the appropriate time this afternoon I will rise and present a motion stating:

Be it resolved that this Assembly recognize and congratulate Albertans retired Supreme Court Justice William Stevenson, medical pioneer Bernard Snell, philanthropist Jenny Belzberg, and singer k.d. lang for receiving Canada's highest single honour, the Order of Canada.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

Bill 203

Off-highway Vehicle Amendment Act, 1997

MR. McFARLAND: Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure on behalf of the Member for Livingstone-Macleod to introduce today Bill 203, the Off-highway Vehicle Amendment Act, 1997.

The purpose of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is to promote the well-being of Alberta's snowmobilers through the mandatory use of approved safety helmets.

[Leave granted; Bill 203 read a first time]

Bill 210

Disaster Services Amendment Act, 1997

MR. McFARLAND: Mr. Speaker, I have a second Bill which I am sponsoring myself, Bill 210, the Disaster Services Amendment Act, 1997.

The purpose of this Act, Mr. Speaker, is to outline the terms and conditions under which people can come back to the government for compensation due to flooding.

[Leave granted; Bill 210 read a first time]

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

Bill 204

Provincial Court Amendment Act, 1997

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a Bill being Bill 204, the Provincial Court Amendment Act, 1997.

This Bill will amend section 32 of the Provincial Court Act to grant grandparents access rights to their grandchildren.

[Leave granted; Bill 204 read a first time]

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

Bill 205

Protection from Second-hand Smoke in Public Buildings Act

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 205, which is the Protection from Second-hand Smoke in Public Buildings Act.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is straightforward in that it sets forth a framework for policies to be developed which will protect employees and the public from secondhand smoke when in a public building which is owned or operated by the Crown.

[Leave granted; Bill 205 read a first time]

THE SPEAKER: Hon. member.

Bill 206

Occupiers' Liability Amendment Act, 1997

MR. RENNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 206, Occupiers' Liability Amendment Act, 1997.

The purpose of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is to allow owners of

land access to visitors on their land and limit the liability of the landowner.

[Leave granted; Bill 206 read a first time]

THE SPEAKER: Hon. member.

Bill 207
Alberta Health Care
Accountability and Entitlement Act

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 207, entitled the Alberta Health Care Accountability and Entitlement Act.

This Bill would legislate the right of Albertans to quality health care protected in law, and it would also establish a health care advocate.

[Leave granted; Bill 207 read a first time]

Bill 208
Kananaskis Park Act

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask your leave to introduce Bill 208, entitled the Kananaskis Park Act.

This Bill will have the effect of establishing the Kananaskis area as a park and prohibiting further commercial development in that park.

[Leave granted; Bill 208 read a first time]

Bill 209
School Amendment Act, 1997

MS HALEY: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 209, the School Amendment Act, 1997.

The purpose of the Bill is to more adequately fund the instructional portion of costs for children in private schools.

[Leave granted; Bill 209 read a first time]

1:40

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. leader of the NDP opposition.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to file with the Assembly today copies of an offering memorandum prepared by and filed with the Alberta Securities Commission by HRG Health Resource Group Inc.

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table four copies of reports done by Smith College Studies in Social Work entitled *Lesbians and Lesbian Families: Multiple Reflections*, *The Role of the Father in Child Development* by Lamb, *Interventions for Children of Divorce* by Hodges, and *Series Preface* by John Wiley. These studies conclude that children of lesbians and gays do as well as their peers along the many dimensions measured in addition to being more flexible and tolerant of difference in others.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Mr. Premier.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to table copies of letters I sent in February to the seven Albertans

who were appointed to the Order of Canada this year. As you are probably aware, four of these individuals were formally invested by Canada's Governor General in Ottawa this week.

The seven Albertans are singer and songwriter k.d. lang, formerly of Consort, Alberta; physician, professor, and health care administrator Dr. Bernard Snell of Edmonton; businessman and contributor to native issues Harold Millican of Calgary; research scientist Dr. Charles Richard Stelck of Edmonton; Supreme Court Justice the Hon. William Alexander Stevenson of Edmonton; music teacher and composer A. Richard Johnston of Calgary; and arts advocate and philanthropist Jenny Belzberg of Calgary.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all members of this Assembly will join with me and all Albertans in congratulating this group of fine and talented Albertans. They all do us proud.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table copies of a letter I sent today to Mr. Nick DeHoog, president of the Fort McMurray Oil Barons. Now, when I was traveling with the then mayor, now the hon. Member for Fort McMurray, I had the opportunity of attending a hockey game. Believe it or not, there was a bench-clearing before the puck was dropped, just before the game started. Nonetheless, the Oil Barons went on to show that they actually could play hockey. The letter congratulates the Oil Barons on their winning of the Alberta junior hockey league championship. Again, I'm sure all members will join with me and all Albertans in saluting this team's achievement.

Thank you.

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

MR. BONNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table four copies of a letter dated April 17, 1997, that I have sent to the Minister of Labour.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I join the Premier in congratulating those who have been nominated for Orders of Canada this year, and I would like to table copies of letters that I have sent to each of the recipients of the Order of Canada. They are, of course, k.d. lang, Dr. Bernard Snell, former Supreme Court Justice William Stevenson, and Jenny Belzberg.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

THE SPEAKER: Hon. member.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In recognizing National Volunteer Week, April 13 to 19, I'm pleased to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to all hon. members 10 volunteer tour assistants who offer their valuable services to our Legislative Assembly. Each volunteer brings a fresh, new perspective to the visitor services office. They are industrious individuals who find time in their busy schedules to assist with various duties throughout the year. They are seated in your gallery this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask hon. members to welcome them. Jean Yates has volunteered for over six years; Doreen O'Callaghan will celebrate her third anniversary with us next month; celebrating two years is Wauneita Ross; Clive Lomax and Alice Holmes are our newest volunteers; Danielle Moffat; Karen Machura; Beryl Shawab; and our two junior high work experience volunteers Krista Shimko and Kerri Roper. I'd ask them to please rise in the gallery and receive the warm traditional welcome of this Assembly.

MR. MacDONALD: Mr. Speaker, may I introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly John McManus and Ray Pinkoski. They are both active in the Edmonton-Gold Bar community. They are in the gallery, Mr. Speaker, and with your permission I would ask that they stand and receive the welcome of this Assembly.

MR. BOUTILIER: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon for the first time to speak in this House and to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly an energetic group of grade 6 students, 64 of them, from l'école Dickinsfield school in my constituency of Fort McMurray. They are accompanied today by vice-principal Eve Shapka and their teachers, Deborah Nicholson, Diane Hunter, and Carol Marcellus, and a very dedicated group of parents/chaperons who are attending the trip. They're down here in Edmonton today touring the Legislative Assembly on a school project. Also, the chair and president of Keyano College, Kjersti Powell and Dean Wood, are visiting us here today. At this time I'd like to welcome them all and ask this Assembly to greet them in a warm way and ask them now to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two outstanding Albertans. Both have made a career out of making communities both healthier and safer. They have a variety of experiences in that regard. Currently, Mr. Gordon Sand is the executive director of the Calgary John Howard Society, and he's accompanied by Ms Maureen Collins, who is the executive director of the Edmonton John Howard Society. They're here participating in the annual general meeting of the John Howard Society of Alberta, one of the largest organizations of its type in the world. I would ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you this afternoon Linda Trimble. She's a professor at the University of Alberta and was a contributing writer to the book *The Trojan Horse*. Also with her, I believe, are some students who are participants in her classroom. If they'd please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

Thank you.

MR. McFARLAND: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure for the second day in a row to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly a dynamic young group from the Vauxhall elementary school, one of the largest communities on the east side of our riding. It's also renowned as the potato capital of Alberta. Today with the 46 visitors are three teachers, Mr. Terry Olfert, Mrs. Carol Jones, Ms Lori-Jo Barnes, as well as a number of parent helpers Pat Hobberstad, Esther Friesen, Dennis Brouwers, Ernie Crowson and Koos Van Der Wielen. I hope they made it here safely with the help of their bus driver Jay De Jong. So on behalf of everyone here I'd like to ask them to stand and receive the real warm recognition of the Assembly.

1:50

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to the Members of this Legislative Assembly Lois Akers, a resident of Fox Creek, one of the fastest growing communities in this province. She is seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask that she rise and receive the usual warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: **Ministerial Statements**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Education.

Career and Technology Studies Program

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the biggest challenges faced by the education system in society today is helping students make the transition from high school to postsecondary institutions or the workforce. A key part of meeting this challenge is to provide relevant, credible career preparation for students. Many students, it is true, do not immediately pursue postsecondary studies. Education must prepare these students for the realities of work. We must also encourage students to stay in school and prepare for a career. As we approach the next century, education also needs to address the impact of technology on work and encourage students to explore the many new careers that are being created as a result of that technology.

On June 11, 1992, this Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a motion calling on the government to step up its efforts to implement a career and technology studies program. It has been my great pleasure today to sign the final program of studies for the career and technology studies program. Full provincial implementation will take place in September of 1997.

CTS is designed to allow students to develop critical employability skills and to explore career options in 22 broad occupational categories. It also provides opportunities for students to earn credentials that are recognized in the community, the workplace, and postsecondary institutions.

Hundreds of Albertans were involved in the development of CTS over the last five years. The hard work and commitment of teachers, postsecondary institutions, community organizations, and the private sector have resulted in a program that provides meaningful career preparation and strengthens the links between schools and the greater community.

CTS provided an incredible opportunity to build partnerships during its development. Members of the banking industry were consulted on the financial management program. Similarly, engineers provided valuable input to the fabrication and construction technologies programs. It is my hope that these partnerships will continue as CTS is implemented. Partnerships are the greatest asset that education has.

This government, through the People and Prosperity human resource strategy, has committed itself to helping Albertans reach their potential in a changing economy. Career and technology studies is a significant contribution to this goal.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Standing Orders provide the opposition critic up to three minutes to respond to the ministerial statement.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate having the opportunity to respond. Although I would like to say at the outset that I appreciate the government front bench sending over notice

of the ministerial statement, unfortunately we had notice that it was going to be delivered by a different minister.

I would like to say that I am particularly pleased, though, to be able to respond, because I was a key contact in the career and technology studies consultation and, as a matter of fact, served in that capacity for a couple of years in the legal studies area. Many of the recommendations of that group have made their way into the curriculum. The consultation process was a fairly broad one and I think a very productive one, and that is the good news involved in how that motion has been operationalized.

However, there are some concerns that have come to light as a result of that process. As our students prepare for employment and perhaps enrollment in postsecondary institutions, not only should they be prepared for employment through secondary education but they should be prepared for life. That, of course, means a very rich and broad-based education.

The career and technologies curriculum should never become an excuse for the further commercialization of our elementary and secondary education. Market conditions alone should not be the only influence to govern curriculum development. After all, innovation, which springs from a broad-based education, creates those market conditions to begin with.

So while we are pleased to see that the minister has taken up the challenge presented by this Assembly to deal with the motion that was passed in 1992 and while we do believe that the consultation process was a good one, we remain concerned, Mr. Speaker, as to how this government will now take that consultation and what it may mean for the future curriculum of our secondary students.

Thank you very much.

head:

Oral Question Period

Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, in 1991 it was the Premier who negotiated the deal with Al-Pac that included a \$250 million loan. Today that loan is worth \$375 million because Al-Pac has failed to make even a single payment. In 1994 the government said that Alberta would get its investment in Millar Western back in spades. To the Premier: is the Al-Pac investment going to pay back in spades too?

MR. KLEIN: Time will tell, Mr. Speaker. Of course that is entirely contingent on the price of pulp. It was known at that time that this is a very cyclical industry. The price of pulp has been up as high as, I think, over \$800 a tonne, and it's been down as low as \$325 to \$350 a tonne. So the return on the investment is entirely contingent on the price of pulp. It's that simple.

MR. MITCHELL: The Premier seems a little less certain about the prospects for that investment than his Treasurer, Mr. Speaker. Is the Premier now saying that he disagrees with his Treasurer, who very recently said that the Al-Pac investment is doing well and there appears to be no danger? Is he not aware of the cyclical nature of the pulp industry?

MR. KLEIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. At the time there was a deliberate effort on the part of the government to diversify this economy and reduce our dependency on the energy sector and get into the forestry industry in a big way. At that time incentives were offered to people who were willing to get into this industry and risk some of their own money. It was deemed to be the right

thing at that particular time. I don't recall a lot of controversy, a lot of criticism coming from the Liberal Party or the NDs or anyone else at that time, when the government of the day got into the forestry business. Yes, there have been some problems relative to the industry. Those problems relate to the price of pulp.

I can tell you – and you know this very well, Mr. Speaker, because you are a former environment minister as well – that my involvement relative to the Al-Pac mill at that particular time was relative to the environmental concerns. If the hon. member will recall – and he should because he was the critic for the environment at that particular time – that mill was the subject of the first public hearing panel into a pulp mill that eventually resulted in a recommendation that it not proceed. Subsequent to that there was another scientific study. They upgraded their effluent treatment standards, and the mill finally went ahead.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, as the Premier is now trying to establish that somehow the loan part of the deal wasn't his responsibility, is he denying the fact that he was part of a five-person task force established in cabinet to negotiate that deal, which has now seen Albertans in jeopardy of losing another \$375 million or more? This is his deal, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I was part of a negotiating team; I don't deny that. But it was the policy of the government of the day – and this member knows it was the policy of the government of the day – to invest in pulp mill endeavours and to enhance our opportunities to develop the forests of northern Alberta. Yes, I was a part of that panel, but most of my responsibility as it relates to that panel was to ensure that all the environmental concerns were met.

MR. MITCHELL: I wonder if he could run faster from the Getty government, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. leader. You're now onto your second main question by the Leader of the Official Opposition.

2:00

Treasury Branches

MR. MITCHELL: As much as the Premier hates to deal with the past, I have another question about it, the past. In the 1993 budget the Premier announced that the Alberta Treasury Branch would eliminate its accumulated deficit by 1997. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Treasury Branches will announce at the end of this fiscal year, March 31, that their accumulated deficit is not zero; it is in fact \$51 million. Why wasn't the Premier able to keep his word on this promise?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't specifically remember announcing that. Do you have a letter or something or a news release with my name in it making that announcement? If you do, I mean, please hand it over. Perhaps someone in the government made that announcement at that particular time. I will certainly check it out.

Relative to the details of where the Treasury Branch was then, where it is today, I will turn it over to the hon. Provincial Treasurer.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is well aware that some significant steps have been made in terms of accountability as far as Treasury Branches go. Most significant among those is

the handling of these types of situations and challenges, the whole aspect of seeing Treasury Branches move into a competitive basis in the banking system through the process of a duly appointed board, also through significant involvement with the Auditor General, and now, as the member also is fully aware, even some steps that are being contemplated as far as legislation to see Treasury Branches move onto a full and equal footing in that particular competitive field. So we are, as the Auditor General is, somewhat pleased with the steps that have already been taken to see this happen and ongoing secure footing happen.

MR. MITCHELL: If there has been so much significant progress, as the Treasurer says, then why is it that the loan projection of \$23.3 million in the pre-election budget is now going to have to be adjusted to something significantly higher? Obviously these steps aren't working, and obviously more has to be done, Mr. Speaker. It's poor management for a long time.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, the very reason for the reassessment of these loans and the risk of them is because of the concern of this government and giving clear instruction through the board to do a review, which has happened. Actually, that particular review was done in terms of splitting all loan portfolios into two separate files based on the amount of the loan. It's in that very rigorous, fully-accounted-for loan review that indeed it has been indicated that there is a change in the financial assumptions of that organization. It's because this government was concerned about the process for loans and loan evaluation that had taken place over years and years. Not that they were all bad; obviously many, many were good. But because of that more stringent process there is now going to be a more accurate assessment.

MR. MITCHELL: The Premier's commitment to eliminate the deficit in the ATBs by 1993 was made in his budget. Is the Premier now trying to distance himself as much from his own 1993 budget as he is from the Getty government?

MR. KLEIN: In 1993 the budget document – you know, we give them thousands, hundreds of thousands of dollars to hire researchers. If he would pass over the page, the reference, and especially, Mr. Speaker, where it says that it's my budget, that I personally made these statements, I would like to see that documentation. It might have been in the budget of 1993. Hand it over. Let me have a look at it. Let's do the assessment of where we were then, where we are today. If something went awry, let's find out why, and we will get the hon. member his answers.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, some of the questions are very fascinating, and some of the answers are very fascinating, and I believe that all members of the House would like to hear both the question and the answer without interruption. Could I please ask for your indulgence.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

Workers' Compensation Board

MR. BONNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have received what appear to be copies of documents that rightfully belong in the possession of the Workers' Compensation Board. As a result, I have returned them to the minister responsible. These documents appear to contain personal information on over 50 clients of the Workers' Compensation Board. The documents reveal the names

of these people, doctors they have seen, social insurance numbers, AVC educational testing results, and Alberta health care numbers. My questions are to the Minister of Labour, responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board and responsible for freedom of information and protection of privacy. Can the minister reveal what controls are in place at the Workers' Compensation Board to protect confidential and personal information?

MR. SMITH: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question from the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry. In the letter that he has sent to me it says: please find attached a sealed envelope containing what would appear to be WCB records. So I now know that the records have been read by the member. It also says: these documents were given to me anonymously. So we can therefore not tell if they were perhaps given by the people who owned the documents themselves. I don't know about that.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this is a very, very serious matter. We will take not only the information that the member has sent to us, but we will take him, if he so deems, and introduce him to the people at the WCB, an organization that runs on employers' money, an organization that is governed by employers, employees, and injured workers, and ensure that he knows all the safeguards and all the practices that are in place to ensure that anonymous records don't appear, to ensure that this type of thing doesn't happen. I open that invitation to the member.

MR. BONNER: Mr. Speaker, will the minister direct the Privacy Commissioner to investigate this matter and report his instructions to this Assembly?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, we will, as I said in the first response, undertake to inform those parties that are involved of this serious allegation that exists at present and ensure that the member as well as any of those that he comes in contact with surrounding this issue are adequately informed and aware of the due process.

MR. BONNER: Mr. Speaker, can Albertans expect more and more leaks like this information as a result of the Workers' Compensation Board contracting with private health providers?

MR. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the Workers' Compensation Board is an organization that works at arm's length from government. It survives on employer premiums that have been reduced over the last two years. It has moved from a \$601 million unfunded liability to a surplus of \$300 million. It pays out more benefits than ever before, and it does so in a province where the record of loss due to workplace injuries is the lowest it's ever been. This is a professional organization, and we will in fact assist the critic wherever possible to be able to deal with that organization in a professional manner.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. The Standing Orders are very clear that points of order are to be raised at the earliest opportunity. Having just received some information related to Treasury Branches, I'm raising a point of order after question period relating to some misleading information brought out by the Leader of the Opposition. [interjections]

2:10

Private Health Services

MS BARRETT: This is going to be fun. Mr. Speaker, I want to quote from that offering memorandum that I filed earlier today

with the Assembly. It's by the Health Resource Group. It says: the corporation's business is to meet the needs of third-party payers who are seeking greater access to specific health services. By the way, nowhere in this document does it state that they intend to limit their playing field to the Workers' Compensation Board. This is a clear admission that the Alberta government has seriously underfunded health care for the last four years. My first question is to the Premier. Will the Premier, in light of this private for-profit hospital getting ready to function at the Grace hospital in Calgary, now direct his Treasurer to provide adequate health care funding in next Monday's budget?

MR. KLEIN: Well, first of all, I don't need to direct the Treasurer to provide sufficient funding. That goes without saying. There will be sufficient funding to provide quality health care for all Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member: we have challenged the health care system in this province to find those new and better and more effective and more efficient ways of doing things. This has resulted in the closure of some hospitals or the relocation of some hospitals, in the case of the Grace hospital from that site to a site on the Foothills, where it's functioning very, very well indeed as I understand it.

That leaves a perfectly good building and some physicians along with some private enterprisers, who have found a way to put that building to use without – and this is the most important thing, Mr. Speaker – violating any of the conventions of the Canada Health Act. That's very, very important. If they are in compliance and if they are not violating the Canada Health Act, what is wrong with it?

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier says that he challenged the health care system. I'd say that the government has crippled the health care system, which is why the Workers' Compensation Board is now paying doctors additional money to expedite cases. My question to the Premier is: why doesn't he put a stop to this?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask the hon. Minister of Labour to respond to this particular matter and the Minister of Health as well. There are some unique circumstances relative to billing procedures and treatment procedures for WCB clients. I'll first ask the Minister of Labour to supplement, followed by the Minister of Health.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Speaker, in fact it is not new for the WCB to utilize private providers. It's been doing it since its inception, long before the creation of a publicly funded health system, it's done it without any negative effect on a publicly funded health system, and it will continue to do this within its legislated mandate as long as it does not negatively affect the publicly funded health care.

If you read an article in the newspaper this morning, Mr. Speaker, in the *Edmonton Journal*, one of the orthopedic surgeons who speaks for the group said: it adds an extra hour to our day; it allows us to do more with existing facilities; it allows us to get to customers faster; it allows Albertans to get better service.

MR. JONSON: If I might further supplement, Mr. Speaker, certainly there has been a role for the private health care sector in this province for some time, not only with respect to the WCB but also with respect to oral surgery and with respect to cataract

surgery. I would like to just support and emphasize the Premier's remarks in that we are certainly monitoring this situation. We want to be certain that this proposal falls within the parameters of the Canada Health Act.

Mr. Speaker, if I might, I'd like to table with the Assembly four copies of my correspondence with the Health Resource Group.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives make a case for private, for-profit health care in Alberta. Fine. Just fine. The Canada Health Act allows that. My question to the Premier is this: will he tell those private, for-profit health operators that if they want that system, they stick to that system and that system only, no double-dipping back into the public system.

MR. KLEIN: Well, I think again – and I'll have the hon. Minister of Health supplement – that this is fundamental to one of the points we had to get settled with the federal government, and that is the ability of doctors to operate in a purely private setting and at the same time, if they're required, to operate also in the public system. Again, as long as it does not violate the principles of the Canada Health Act, there's deemed to be nothing wrong with it.

I will have the hon. Minister of Health supplement.

MR. JONSON: Yes. Mr. Speaker, the private sector has a role within the public sector of the health care system in terms of contractual arrangements that has gone on for some time. We have companies operating laboratories in this province, and as I referred to earlier, we have other areas of surgery as well. We are very sensitive to the need to meet the requirements of the Canada Health Act, and as a recent article in the *Edmonton Journal* indicates, the important thing here is that the public interest, quality health care, and timely health care for Albertans be protected and that we provide it in the most appropriate way possible. That is our goal.

MR. HAVELOCK: Mr. Speaker, I beg your indulgence. I'd like to raise a point of order to be discussed later regarding the document which was tabled by the leader of the NDP. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

School Volunteers

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a newly elected MLA it's a special honour for me today to have this opportunity to ask my first question in this House, and I'm pleased to ask a question relating to education. In the structuring of education over the past few years the government of this province has placed an emphasis upon parental involvement and support in the delivery of education. I suppose that has always been true to some degree as we honour the work and the volunteerism of such groups as the home and school associations, parent advisory groups, and, more recently, school councils. My question is especially relevant during this particular time as we celebrate volunteer week in this province, honouring among others those that have served on school councils. I know that in my constituency a lot of parents are volunteering time in their children's schools. Can the Minister of Education explain what these parent volunteers are contributing to our education system?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, I've made the observation from time to

time and asked the rhetorical question: why are fences around school yards? Is it to keep kids in the school yards or is it to keep the community out? I think that it's very important that members of the community do get involved in schools. Parents are a very, very important part of that formula.

It is true that parents all over this province are volunteering their time and effort to children's education in schools and in their communities. During volunteer week and throughout the year it is important to recognize the contribution that these parents make to education, and this volunteerism should not be underestimated or underappreciated. Extracurricular activities all benefit from parent involvement. Parents supervise in the library; they participate in field trips. Today, of course, we had parents not only from Fort McMurray but also from Vauxhall. Those types of activities for students would not take place but for the involvement of parents. Parents participate not only in supervision but also participate in programs, and they also provide valuable input to school policy and program development.

I think the most important message to students, Mr. Speaker, is that education is important, and if it's important to parents, then surely it will be more important to students as well. That's an important message.

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

MR. JOHNSON: What is this government doing, then, to support this kind of volunteerism?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, knowing the value that parents can contribute to education, this government mandated school councils right across the province so that every school could benefit from parental and community involvement. In the previous year, '95-96, we did provide funding for school council in-service and developed a handbook outlining the roles of school councils. We also established regional consortia to organize ongoing in-service programs which involved parents in many facets of education.

2:20

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, are these school councils really contributing to the program development, or are they just glorified fund-raising bodies?

MR. MAR: Well, Mr. Speaker, we certainly don't want to derogate from their role. First of all, most volunteer activities are not glorious at all, but they are vital and they are appreciated. School councils have a much more valuable role than simply fund-raising. They recognize and reaffirm the right of parents in the school community to have meaningful involvement in the education of their children. I think that those people who participate with groups like the Alberta Home and School Councils Association provide very valuable input to our program development.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, followed by the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Before you get up, hon. member, the Speaker will allow a little bit of flexibility, recognizing that certain individuals and certain members are raising their first question in the Legislature. The Speaker will take the view that the second question now makes that individual a veteran of this Assembly.

Hon. member.

CKUA Radio

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. CKUA radio has

become another example of this government's habit of taking assets which belong to all Albertans, giving it to their friends, who then run it into the ground. Taxpayers gave CKUA radio a \$4.7 million grant for good management of the station, not Tory management. Incredibly, CKUA is now faced with the possibility of being sued by the very people who destroyed it. My question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs: will you reimburse CKUA radio for the money that was paid to your Tory friends and which has crippled CKUA's ability to recover?

MS EVANS: Mr. Speaker, through you and to our member of the opposition, may I make the following response. First of all, the moneys that were provided for the foundation were provided at a time when we were moving a number of the corporate entities of this province to arm's-length foundations that would more adequately provide time and opportunity for people with expertise to get involved outside of the larger government assembly. I just make the observation that when the Premier asked for the Auditor General's report to be done, I followed through on that request. We have the Auditor General presently conducting that rigorous scrutiny of those records, and when we have an answer, the hon. member will receive it.

MS BLAKEMAN: Will you at least commit to covering the legal costs of CKUA Radio should your Tory friends attempt to sue the station they destroyed?

MS EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat stung by the hon. member's attitude. If we in this Assembly are truly interested in the reinstatement of CKUA, we will not be taking unnecessary jibes at people who have served in the capacity of leaders of that particular station. If we have a hope that CKUA will come back on the air, then I think it behooves every member of this Assembly not to try and further pull it apart but to pull it together for the listeners in Alberta.

MS BLAKEMAN: Can the minister assure Albertans that not one more penny will be drained from CKUA for severance packages paid out to your friends?

MS EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the hon. member, I am sure she is well aware that the foundation that is running CKUA is at arm's length from this government, that the foundation itself, with Mr. Tommy Banks and Mr. Bud Steen and Brad Orsten, is running it now. It is not a government agency; it is a private foundation. I don't think that should be lost with all of the response that we've had on CKUA. It is a group that is handling their affairs in the best way possible, it is a group that is doing that under the duress of an Auditor General's report, and it is a group that I would think the hon. member would be interested in supporting.

Agriculture Financing

MR. DUCHARME: Mr. Speaker, agriculture, in spite of problems relating to weather, transportation, marketing, and input costs, continues to prosper in this province. This is a testament to both our farmers and processors as well as the ministry of agriculture. However, capital financing continues to be a concern to both the primary and secondary producer. To the minister of agriculture: what are you doing to ensure that reasonable, long-term capital financing is available to them through the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation?

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, congratulations to the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake for rising so quickly to represent his constituents of Bonnyville.

The Agriculture Financial Services Corporation is committed to playing a very major role in facilitating the investment of approximately \$7 billion worth of capital that's necessary and required to meet our goal of a \$20 billion industry in the processing sector, but we are changing our role as the corporation. We are going from a direct financier to one of a facilitator, and we have been entering new strategic alliances with other financial institutions and sources of capital. This will help the industry access the private-sector risk capital that is required for the industry to grow.

The early results are indeed encouraging. We committed financing of just over 15 and a half million dollars last year. Eighty-five per cent of the corporation's activity is in the area of funding provided from outside sources.

MR. DUCHARME: Mr. Speaker, my first supplemental to the minister is about our pork industry. What are you doing to help increase pork production, which is both labour and capital intensive?

MR. STELMACH: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a real potential for growth in the pork industry in the province of Alberta, given the present situation in Taiwan with foot-and-mouth disease, and a window of opportunity of about 18 months to access a market that's required of about 7 million hogs. We are going to use two ways of accessing capital. One is setting up the Pork-Alta fund in the area of about \$50 million. There's a number of institutions that are contributing: the FCC – the FCC is the Farm Credit Corporation – chartered banks, and the credit unions. We also have some outside investment interest from the Netherlands. The second is by using the local community bond issue and again moving from guaranteeing the losses to one of facilitating and using the community bond to facilitate through an RRSP-eligible deduction.

2:30

MR. DUCHARME: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second supplemental question has to do with the Alberta farm credit stability program. What is the current status of this program, and will you consider refinancing outstanding loans at an interest rate lower than the present 9 percent?

MR. STELMACH: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is talking about a program that was introduced in this province back when interest rates were reaching the 23 percent level, and the government of the day had to provide some stability in the agriculture industry. As a result, they invested about \$2.46 billion in 1991. There were approximately 30,500 producers that accessed capital under this program, and the loan agreement was for 20 years. There is about \$715 million remaining outstanding. Really, in terms of rewriting the loans, farmers are making the decision on whether they still want the protection of the consistent, predictable 9 percent interest rate or moving to the private sector and writing those loans down to possibly about 7 percent.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, followed by the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Bow Valley Centre

MR. DICKSON: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Over 55,000

Albertans live in downtown Calgary. Many of them are seniors, low-income residents; many of them are students without a car. There's a big concern always with access to a hospital when they have a problem that can't be adequately dealt with at a walk-in clinic. Local community leaders, city aldermen, the Inner City Coalition, and, yes, the Liberal opposition have proposed keeping open the two most modern buildings at the General hospital site, maintaining 24-hour emergency care and the kinds of services to make that work and to back it up. My question this afternoon is to the hon. Minister of Health. Why do the minister and his government refuse to listen and to respond to a concrete, constructive suggestion to retain that part of an old hospital that's modern and still fully serviceable?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member across the way well knows, this whole issue of costs and efficiencies with respect to maintaining the Bow Valley has been well studied in Calgary. I know there are differences of opinion on the matter, but I think it has been well shown that there are tens of millions of dollars of savings both in terms of the alternative arrangements that have been made now and the overall cost of replacing the Bow Valley.

Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member and all people in Calgary now are aware of the detailed plan that the Calgary health authority has to reconfigure the system, the fact that there will be additional operating room time in the new plan and more modern and better-equipped facilities. There will be certainly an increase over the current number of acute care beds when all of the refinements have been made. Most importantly, I think, relevant to the specific question, there is 24-hour care at the 8th and 8th location in downtown Calgary now, attuned to specific needs, and, yes, there are certainly needs in the inner city.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about the health care of Calgarians, and the minister talks about dollars and cents.

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question would be this: given that last year 6,100 Albertans showed up at the General hospital with a life-threatening condition, what's the concrete plan of this government to deal with those Calgarians in that kind of a situation who go to an elaborate walk-in clinic on 8th Avenue and then have to be rerouted to a proper hospital emergency ward?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, as the member I think is also aware, the regional health authority is very rapidly putting into place their overall plan, which would involve three emergency sites located strategically in the city of Calgary. He is also aware that Calgary has just very recently, as of yesterday, opened a world-class trauma facility, which has increased capacity over the current situation as it has the capacity to deal with severe trauma well into the 21st century.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, the issue is one of access.

My final question to the hon. Minister of Health would be this. How much money does this government plan on giving the city of Calgary Police Service so that they can provide a police escort every time somebody is seriously ill and has to be transported across town to the Foothills hospital? [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Minister of Health, please. We're awaiting your answer.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I think one should be very specific, and I wish he had been specific with his question. He's actually

just alluding to, I expect, a very tragic accident in Calgary. There has not been neurotrauma treatment in the Bow Valley for some years. The decision was made well before the overall restructuring. I think this particular event shows that things are working very well in Calgary. The transport of those that were injured to the Foothills was within the standards that there are for ambulance services. These people were able to go to a very, very high-class, very well-functioning and well-staffed medical centre offering neurotrauma services. The system's working.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Grain Marketing

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta farmers will soon be on the land planting their crops. We hope they have good weather and a bumper crop. Alberta growers of wheat and barley who voted for marketing choice in Alberta's plebiscite in 1995 by a margin of 66 percent are still being denied that choice. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Can the minister describe the impact on Alberta farmers of the recent court decision concerning the Charter challenge by the Barley Commission?

MR. STELMACH: Mr. Speaker, the decision reached was certainly very disappointing to Alberta producers. Part of the decision that Justice Muldoon delivered ruled that the monopoly in his opinion was a reasonable infringement of individual rights. However, he said that it's also clearly the responsibility of Parliament to change the system to allow for a continued Wheat Board monopoly or to allow for a dual marketing system. So it's now up to Parliament to change.

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the same minister. Will the department of agriculture intervene and support an appeal of Justice Muldoon's opinion that the Canadian Wheat Board in his opinion is a reasonable infringement on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

MR. STELMACH: Mr. Speaker, the challenge was brought forward by private citizens. We will certainly leave our door open to further discussion through the Barley Commission. I'm looking forward to meeting representatives of the commission. Should there be an appeal, then we'll have further discussions on that at a later date.

MR. SEVERTSON: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary to the same minister: could the minister state the status of the two court cases that Alberta's filed with the courts, what the present status is?

MR. STELMACH: Mr. Speaker, there are currently two in the court system that we await rulings on. The first, of course, is the reference to the Court of Appeal as to the legality of Alberta marketing choice program. That will probably be rendered before the federal action concerning the Canadian Wheat Board one-sided contract system. So hopefully by the end of the summer we'll have both decisions.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview, followed by the hon. Member for Airdrie-Rocky View.

Foster Parent Program

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The best interests of a child have always come first when placing children in foster homes. Departmental criteria has reflected this priority, and it has worked well. Now it appears that this government is prepared to allow the individual prejudice of a minister and an opinion survey, nonscientific and three years old at that, to replace this long-standing criteria. My question is to the Minister of Community Development, responsible for human rights. What steps has the minister responsible for human rights taken to instruct her colleague the Minister of Family and Social Services and other members of her caucus that personal prejudice cannot be allowed to replace departmental policy?

2:40

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I expect that the question was directed at me and my responsibilities as the Human Rights Commission reports through my office. Let me inform the member and all members of this Assembly that there is a Human Rights Commission in this province. It has a record of functioning extremely well when human rights concerns have been brought to that office. If the hon. member has any concerns in this area, I expect her to direct them in that way. I do not think that it is appropriate for her to suggest, which she may have through her question, what I discuss with my colleagues on this side of the House.

MRS. SLOAN: Until this matter is resolved, do prospective foster parents have to ensure that their personal histories are in line with the minister's beliefs rather than the departmental criteria for placement?

MR. HAVELOCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to take that question on notice for the appropriate minister.

THE SPEAKER: My understanding was that the question was addressed to the Minister of Community Development.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Certainly I will take that question if it was directed at me. I would expect that it would be far more appropriately directed to the minister responsible for the placement of foster children.

I will repeat, if the hon. member can listen one more time to this carefully – and I mean this most sincerely, hon. member – the process that is in place in this province, that has served this province well. If there is an issue of human rights concerns brought forward, it is directed to the Human Rights Commission, an arm's-length body – I am sure that that caucus supports the body being arm's length from this government – and it is dealt with appropriately at that level. It has not been my practice nor will it be my practice, Mr. Speaker, to interfere with the function of that office in the carrying out of its duties.

MRS. SLOAN: Will the minister responsible for human rights – and my question is to the minister responsible for human rights – intervene in the case of Miss T to ensure that the long-standing policy that children will come first will not be sacrificed for ministerial prejudice?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence I will answer this question, I believe, for the third time. The Human Rights Commission in this province operates at arm's-length from

this government. It does indeed report through this ministry. I have said previously and I will repeat one more time: it has not been my practice to interfere with the operation of the Human Rights Commission. It will continue to be my practice not to interfere in the operation of that body. If there is a human rights concern from any member of the Alberta public, there is a process to bring that to that body, and it would be my expectation that that body would address that concern in an appropriate way.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Airdrie-Rocky View.

Special-needs Education

MS HALEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last few months the Alberta Teachers' Association has raised concerns about students with special needs. My question to the Minister of Education is: could he please respond to the claim that we are not adequately funding students with severe disabilities and that as a result they get less help and fewer classroom resources?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, of all the issues that I have heard about in my travels throughout the province to the many schools that I've visited, the issue of special needs does come up from time to time and is one of the highest areas of concern that I have. Government is supporting increased numbers of students with severe disabilities. School jurisdictions are, in my observation, doing a much better job of identifying those students and developing services to serve sometimes small groups of students and sometimes even individual students. Changes in our funding framework mean that every single student identified as having severe disabilities is now fully funded, and that was not the case before. Those students will receive \$8,910 over and above the basic instruction rate of \$3,686.

Mr. Speaker, in 1996-97 government added almost another \$18 million to help school systems serve those students. That additional funding should provide resources to include teachers, teacher aides, and technology to assist those students, and that will benefit all students in the classroom.

MS HALEY: Could the minister explain why it's so difficult for schools to access these funds?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, from time to time I do hear some people complain about the assessment that is necessary to identify these students, but the reason for the assessment process is not just to establish eligibility for funding. The second reason for it and perhaps even the more important reason is to help develop appropriate educational programs for those particular students. So that is the reason why we do have this assessment process, not only to establish eligibility for funding but also to develop educational programs for the student.

MS HALEY: My final supplementary, Mr. Minister: why is there not designated funding for students who suffer with mild and moderate disabilities?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, funding for students with mild and moderate disabilities is incorporated in the basic instruction rate for all students. Instruction funding is allocated to school boards on a per student basis and provided in a block based on student enrollment. That is in recognition of the fact that boards want flexibility in terms of where it is they spend their money, and accordingly we block fund it. So the money that is allocated for

dealing with students with mild and moderate disabilities falls within the instruction rate of \$3,686.

head:

Members' Statements

Volunteer Week

MRS. O'NEILL: Mr. Speaker, the volunteer sector is one of the most important segments of our society. This week we pay tribute to that sector through volunteer week. This is a nationally proclaimed week held to recognize the valuable and significant contributions that volunteers make to our lives. On behalf of my colleague the minister responsible for the Wild Rose Foundation I would like to ask this Assembly for its unanimous support in recognizing this week, April 13 to 19, 1997, as volunteer week in Alberta.

All across this province events and activities are taking place to thank volunteers, who play such vital roles in our communities. The Wild Rose Foundation in collaboration with Volunteer Alberta facilitates the provincial focus for volunteer week. This year a record number of 85 Alberta communities, representing more than 2 million Albertans, are participating in this weeklong series of events. It is estimated that the volunteer sector is worth \$1 billion to Alberta's economy and \$1.4 billion to the national economy. The commitment of lottery dollars is helping to reinforce the efforts of those who through their many and diverse selfless acts enhance the quality of life for all of us.

As a result of the strength of Alberta's voluntary sector our province will be the site of the International Association for Volunteer Effort World Volunteer Conference to be held in August 1998 in Edmonton. It is expected that 2,500 delegates will attend the World Volunteer Conference, with an economic impact estimated at \$2 million. The IAVE World Volunteer Conference will provide a unique opportunity on an international level to showcase Alberta's voluntary sector leadership.

Through the Wild Rose Foundation this government supports not only the volunteer sector of this province but the quiet volunteer work in homes and among families. I encourage this Assembly to continue its support of volunteerism in the province. Throughout Alberta our volunteer spirit is contributing directly to the health and well-being of our communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

2:50

THE SPEAKER: I would just like to remind all members what the rules are that we follow with respect to our discourses, and for members' statements it is two minutes. That was the first one.

We'll now hear from a veteran, the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Bow Valley Centre

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. The closure of the Bow Valley centre emergency last Tuesday, April 8, wasn't simply the closure of another hospital in Alberta; it was also the end to a building that had symbolized the true meaning of quality health care.

The Calgary General hospital was an idea that began in 1890 when a man by the name of Jimmy Smith died without medical aid, and in Mr. Smith's will he left a \$100 donation for a public hospital to be built. By November of that year the Calgary General hospital emerged as a two-storey frame house on 7th Avenue. This eight-bed facility dealt with such ailments as typhoid, pneumonia, and tonsillitis. Five years later a more

permanent home was built at the 12th Avenue location in Calgary-Buffalo. Donations from former patients and community fund-raising enabled the General to expand and add additional wards and services.

Through the years the General hospital survived outbreaks of the Spanish flu, typhoid, and polio. Technology and medical science advances were embraced by the General, and it was often a trailblazer in accepting new methods of medicine and programs. This downtown building became the hospital that people in Calgary treated with warmth and affection. Everybody in the city knew someone who had either been born or treated at the General hospital.

Despite the fact that this health care facility managed to stay current in the health care field and provide crucial health services in the downtown core, it was closed. Indeed it seems as if this health care facility, which could survive the most dangerous contagious diseases throughout its entire respective history, couldn't survive the wrath of health care cutbacks.

Many Calgarians have argued there was a different option than to close the entire Bow Valley site: keep a smaller facility in the most modern buildings, F, D, or G; retain 24-hour emergency service, mental health services and beds. The Calgary General hospital deserved that chance. Calgarians deserve no less.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

Alberta Junior Hockey League Championship

MR. BOUTILIER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity, as the Premier had mentioned earlier today, to congratulate the winners of the AJHL championship, the Alberta Junior Hockey League championship, which was determined in a hard-fought battle of hockey last night at the Calgary Max Bell Centre. Of course this series went seven games, and by way of background let me tell you that this is the first time in the 16-year history that the Fort McMurray Oil Barons have ever captured the Alberta Junior Hockey League championship. I'm very proud of this achievement, as is the entire community.

Hockey fans from across Alberta have enjoyed and been treated to an excellent calibre of hockey over the past year, and I do know that members from both sides of this House are very proud of their teams that competed in the Alberta Junior Hockey League over this past year. Those teams included the St. Albert Saints, the Grande Prairie Storm, the Bonnyville Pontiacs, the Calgary Canucks, the Calgary Royals, the Fort Saskatchewan Traders, the Lloydminster Blazers, the Olds Grizzlys, the Sherwood Park Crusaders, and the Bow Valley Eagles.

As the Premier has done earlier today in congratulating the members of the team, I'd like to also congratulate a gentleman from Edmonton who's the president of the AJHL, Marty Knack, and his board of directors for another successful season and also Nick DeHoog, who is the president, and his board of directors of the Fort McMurray Oil Barons and their staff and all of the dedicated community leaders past and present who had the vision of bringing junior A hockey to our community over 16 years ago in supporting the youth of our community.

Now, if the Assembly will graciously allow me, because it's not often that our youth get recognized in this Assembly and get referred to in *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to indicate at this time to the Assembly the names of the players who in fact are winners of this Alberta junior championship and who will now represent our province at the national competition. They are captain Darren Tiemstra, Doran Zemlak, David Konowalec, Fred Brebant, Chad Bannerholt, Chris Hartman, Paul Cabana, Rody

MacNeil, Ryan Strate, Tyler Junck, Brent Coutu, Kevin Hasselberg, who scored the winning goal with less than a minute left in the game, Travis Gladue, Adam Redmond, Shawn McCann, Dimitry Kluchko, Ken Farrell, Todd Jacobs, Colin Kent, Colin Savostianik, Neil Palmer, Ross Mowbray, and Trevor Anderson. The coaches are Fran Gow, Wendell Hodgson, and Gaethan Genereux.

You know, Mr. Speaker, before a team like this can go successfully and compete on the ice, they have to have very progressive and active sponsors, and they have to have a team work ethic, where they together achieve a lot more.

Finally, I must say that for those of us living in the north and in Fort McMurray, none of us could be any prouder of these young athletes. Mr. Speaker, we would wish them the very best on the road to a national championship as Alberta's ambassadors.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: And we're all going out to buy season tickets.

head: Projected Government Business

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Orders and ask that the Government House Leader, in the spirit of openness and co-operation, provide this Assembly with projected government business for next week.

MR. HAVELOCK: Yes. Mr. Speaker, as certainly this government has always done, I'd be happy to continue in the tradition of openness, honesty, respect, et cetera.

Next week the projected government business is as follows. On April 21 we will be having the Budget Address at 4 p.m., and I believe that evening we will have the Leader of the Opposition replying to the budget.

On the 22nd we are looking at second reading for Bill 1, and in the evening we'll be going into Committee of Supply. That will be supplementary supply, day 1.

On Wednesday the 23rd we will be in Committee of Supply, and that will be supplementary supply on day 2 in the evening. We will be introducing the supplementary appropriation Bill that evening.

On the 24th we will be in the afternoon in Committee of Supply, main estimates, transportation. We will also be doing second reading of the supplementary appropriation Bill, and around that we will certainly be spending additional time on members addressing the Speech from the Throne. [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Perhaps we might continue the discussion through the Chair.

We've now got a number of points of order that have been raised, but I've also had a request from the Provincial Treasurer. Is this on a point of order that you want to raise, or is it supplementary information to a question raised earlier in the day that you want to respond to at this time? There is a difference.

MR. DAY: Correct, Mr. Speaker. Just as you were acknowledging the member's statement, I was standing to table information supplementary to some issues that had come up in question period. So it was just a matter of you noticing the other member, quite correctly, of course.

THE SPEAKER: So you want to supplement a question, then, that was raised of you earlier today?

MR. DAY: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: Okay. The rules clearly allow, then, that you provide the information and the questioner then has an opportunity to raise a question of you.

MR. DAY: Absolutely. That would be the only way I would want to see it happen, Mr. Speaker.

head: **Oral Question Period**

Treasury Branches

(continued)

MR. DAY: Further to information which I gave in question period, this is the actual documentation to back it, which comprises, Mr. Speaker, a news release of November 26 of '96 discussing how "Alberta Treasury Branches Launches New Direction for the Future," a backgrounder on the ongoing loan review, which I referred to – the actual stats are there – and the third-quarter update of the government of Alberta. Again, in my reference to the Treasury Branch loan review and what that does to the consolidated fiscal summary, the numbers are all here, have been public for quite a while. I'm somewhat surprised that members opposite were not aware of them. I will table them to save them going to get the actual documentation from the library.

3:00

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, maybe I can ask a question. I did not say that I was not aware of those. I will repeat my question. What I said was: if these new measures are working so well, why is it that the ATB's losses this year will be significantly higher than the \$23.3 million that the government said they would be in its pre-election budget? Things are going from bad to worse.

MR. DAY: Well, I'm happy to respond to that, Mr. Speaker. I was going to in the point of order, but I'm glad the member opposite did speak to this.

MR. MITCHELL: It wasn't a point of order.

MR. DAY: I said that I'll respond to that also in the point of order.

He has now changed his words, Mr. Speaker, and this is what is a key point and is further to the information here.

MR. SAPERS: Another point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DAY: I'm responding to the supplementary response, Mr. Speaker.

This time the Leader of the Opposition has correctly said: the government said the ATB deficit, et cetera, et cetera. When he stood earlier, he clearly pointed to the Premier and said: you said, you said. The Blues will show that. It's that point that I will raise on the point of order, suggesting he should be correct and not try and give information which in fact is erroneous.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, if I have understood this correctly – I'd just like to go through this order. Just nod if this is correct. First, notice came from the Provincial Treasurer on a point of order. Then there was a point of order indicated by the Government House Leader, then a point of order by the Opposition House Leader, then a point of order by the Government House Leader, and then a point of order just recently here by the Opposition House Leader. So that's five points of order that we can deal with.

Before we proceed to the points of order, the Chair would just like to clarify something that occurred last night. At the conclusion of the exuberance of one of the speeches given in the Legislative Assembly, there was a motion for adjournment, and there was certainly a call by the Chair for all those in favour of adjournment. It seemed to be such an overwhelming response, the Chair unfortunately forgot to ask if anybody was opposed to adjournment. He did forget to do that, and I want to thank the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert for drawing this to the attention of the Chair.

So, Provincial Treasurer, the first point of order.

Point of Order

Allegations against Members

MR. DAY: Going back to the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest that you have set a very positive tone in terms of decorum in the House and in terms of having us be consistent and in fact be very clear in how the rules operate. What I'm asking in this point of order could be classified under 23(h) and is that you encourage each of us – this time it would be the Leader of the Opposition, next time maybe myself; who knows? – when we're giving information, to not do it in a way that could – I'll underline "could" and give the member the benefit of the doubt – mislead people. Certainly the Premier speaks for the government. Obviously there is no question about that. But when a member stands and points and says, "You said, you said," the allegation is very clear, then, that a statement was made which a particular member is personally responsible for. This is not saying that the Premier does not speak for the government; obviously he does.

The reference, now that we've checked it, is from Budget '93. The name there is Jim Dinning, Provincial Treasurer. Now, is it the Premier saying he doesn't support the budget? No, not at all. Is it the Premier saying he doesn't speak for the government? No, not at all. But the Leader of the Opposition pointed clearly and directly to the Premier on camera before the nine people who watch question period at 3 o'clock in the morning and said: you. Then he used the words "and I quote" and said: you said. The Premier then asked as he was standing and then later sitting and I echoed it while we were all sitting: please send over the quote so we can check it. The Leader of the Opposition merely laughed, rolled back in his chair, and wouldn't acknowledge where the direct quote came from.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier is not one inch of distance backing off from any statement or this particular document. In the materials which I've tabled, it's very clear that Alberta Treasury Branches prior to the '93 budget brought forward certain information in which they said the deficit would be gone by the end of '97. That statement was reflected in the budget. That was not a direct quote from the Premier. The same quote also refers to Workers' Compensation Board saying that their deficit would be retired by the end of '97. It was retired two years earlier than that, and I don't see them complaining about misinformation on that point.

THE SPEAKER: On this point of order.

MR. SAPERS: On this point of order. I'll have to beg your indulgence, because the words of the Treasurer suggest perhaps even a more serious point of order, and that is a statement that is – can I say that the statement was misleading, Mr. Speaker, instead of the member? I'm reviewing the Blues right now, the exchange between the Leader of the Official Opposition and the

Premier, and nowhere is it recorded in *Hansard* that the Leader of the Official Opposition in his supplementary or in his questions used the words "and I quote." So I would hope that the Treasurer would stand in his place and retract those statements, because if he doesn't, then he is purposely misleading this Assembly on what that exchange was.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have copies of page 12 of Plan for Change, which was from budget document 1993, and I do acknowledge the quote refers to Treasury Branches and Workers' Compensation Board. But there's also a highlighted quote from the Premier himself on that page clearly indicating that the Premier, at least in 1993, was somewhat attached to his Treasurer's budget. Also, in official correspondence from the Treasurer, which I will provide to the new Treasurer, we see very clearly that management indicates publicly that the deficit for ATB will be eliminated.

Mr. Speaker, if it is not the Premier who is ultimately responsible for the government and the statements and work of his ministers, then who is it? How could it possibly be a misstatement of truth to say that the Premier said? When any member of cabinet or the Executive Council talks about government policy, how could it be a misstatement to say that the Premier is responsible for that?

Mr. Speaker, I await your ruling on this and the Treasurer's apology or retraction of his unfortunate choice of words.

THE SPEAKER: On this point of order?

MR. DAY: Yes. Mr. Speaker, if the Blues show that the member of the opposition did not say "and I quote," then obviously I will retract that. But my original point was that the member of the opposition, the leader, pointed over and said, "You said," personalized it. That is the key statement – not that the Premier's backed away. The quote that the member referred to in the budget by the Premier is a totally separate, different quote with quotations around it.

MR. MITCHELL: No, it isn't.

MR. DAY: Yes, it is. If you look carefully, you'll see it in the sidebar. Thank you, Opposition House Leader, for showing your leader what the deal is there.

All I'm asking, Mr. Speaker, is that you guide us carefully, as I'm sure you will. When we attribute a quote to somebody, we should be able to back it up and say: here is the quotation. That did not happen today because that was not a direct quote.

THE SPEAKER: Okay. The last point on this point of order.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your indulgence with this. I am still looking at the Blues, and I am struggling to find anywhere where it's indicated in the Blues what is now being attributed to the Leader of the Official Opposition by the Treasurer. He is clearly imagining some other set of events but not the occurrence that happened here. I would hope that he would just take his lumps, check his losses, and retract the entire point of order, because he seems to be making it up as he's going along.

3:10

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, I've listened very attentively and I've listened very carefully to the point of order that was raised, heard the discussion back and forth, and the best that I

have here is a copy out of *Hansard*, the Blues. It's amazing. We sit here and talk to one another, yet I really didn't hear very much in the question period that's described later. Now, I can read the Blues and repeat all of the words that were used. I can do that. I don't think it's necessary. I don't find the word "misleading" in any of the questions that were raised in terms of the purported point of order. I do know that the word "misleading" is not an appropriate word to be used in the Legislature, and this was not used today at all. "Deliberately misled the House" or anything like that certainly was not used. I can wait till Monday till we get all the official documents and read them, but I would rather deal with this today, I think, to get it out of the way.

I think that this may very well be an interesting prelude to the debate on the budget, that will probably begin Monday night and will probably capture our attention for quite a number of days and quite a number of weeks. I do not believe, hon. Provincial Treasurer, that the words that were suggested were in *Hansard*, and if you read them over the weekend and if the words are there, I'll be happy to find them. But in the text that I have that just came, they're certainly not there.

So let's use this as another good learning experience to move forward and deal with the second point of order, and that is from the Government House Leader.

Point of Order Tabled Documents

MR. HAVELOCK: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to refer to the document which was tabled by the New Democratic opposition today. It's dated April 17, '97. It's headlined: Tory friends stand to benefit from creation of private hospital and two-tier health care. Later in the document there is a comment that Frank King is mentioned as having close links to the Conservative government and the Premier. Later on there's also a reference to the husband of one of the MLAs on the government side, the MLA for Calgary-Currie, standing to benefit financially from this arrangement.

I'm rising under section 23(h), "makes allegations against another member," and 23(i), "imputes false or unavowed motives to another member." I believe, Mr. Speaker, it's important for you at this stage to establish a tone of honesty and respect in this Legislature. Unfortunately, the sole purpose of the tabling by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands is to embarrass, to cast aspersions, and needlessly attempt to destroy reputations. I am advised that Mr. King does not in fact have close links to the Premier. I'm also advised that the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie has discussed this matter fully with the Ethics Commissioner. It has been cleared by the Ethics Commissioner. In fact, the hon. member has been totally open with respect to her husband's expertise and involvement in this project.

Now, again, as I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that it's very early in the term. However, I think it's important for you to send a message that this type of behaviour is unacceptable. I don't believe that we should be using this House indirectly to attempt, one, to discredit people who cannot defend themselves and, secondly, not mention that the matter has actually been dealt with fully by the Ethics Commissioner and indirectly mislead this House into thinking that something is wrong.

I'd also like to give notice on behalf of the Member for Calgary-Currie that she will be spending the weekend reviewing the document, and she may wish to raise a question of privilege with you next week.

Thank you.

MS BARRETT: I should hope so, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, what I filed with the Assembly is the offering memorandum from HRG. I did not file with the Assembly, to the best of my knowledge, a background, which does refer, in fact, to Frank King. If I'm not mistaken, the *Calgary Herald* ran a picture of Frank King with the Premier right around the time that he was elected to lead the Progressive Conservative Party. That was in 1992.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I did not in any way – and one can read it right in the news release – imply any conflict of interest with respect to the Member for Calgary-Currie. That issue was dealt with during the election, and I accepted the assurances that the member gave to the media, that according to instructions that she received after dialogue with the Ethics Commissioner, she would refrain from participating in discussions revolving around health care. Not only have I accepted that, but I have accepted it on the record. It's in writing I believe in both the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Edmonton Sun*.

MR. HAVELOCK: Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ. I have a document in front of me here that's dated April 17, '97. It states on the back: for more information contact Pam Barrett, Leader; copies of the complete memorandum offering have been tabled and are available from the Clerk's office. To suggest that this document does not in any way impute wrongdoing on the part of some of the individuals mentioned in here is ridiculous. The heading again is: Tory friends stand to benefit from creation of private hospital and two-tier health care. The document then specifically mentions Frank King, the Premier, and the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie's husband. So you're trying to suggest to me that there's not an imputation of improper action or motives on the part of the parties mentioned in here? That's the only interpretation you can put on the document.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Clerk, if I may. I filed four copies . . .

THE SPEAKER: Questions do not go to the Clerk.

MS BARRETT: Oh, sorry. Can I do it through you?

THE SPEAKER: Hon. member, make your comments in the House. They'll be recorded in *Hansard*, and we'll proceed that way.

MS BARRETT: You bet. All right. Okay.

The document that I handed a page – there's really some concern now; the pages are wondering what's happened here – is around 20 pages. It says at the top: Alberta, form 20, Securities Act, 1981, "Report under section 108(1) of the Act of a trade made under section [X, Y, and Z]" – never mind all that – "of the Securities Act or section 122 [et cetera] of the securities regulation." The full name and address of the vendor shows HRG Health Resource Group Inc. based out of Calgary. It says "Name and address of the issuer of the security traded and description of the security," same title.

I don't know how this happened, Mr. Speaker, but the document that I filed is not the document that the Government House Leader is referring to.

THE SPEAKER: We're on a point of order, and the point of order will not degenerate to: is my paper your paper? I'm not

sure whose paper is what, so I'm going to defer a decision on this matter until Monday. We will check to see what paper has been filed. Everybody understands that it is the responsibility of the hon. member who deals with paper to take responsibility for that paper.

The next point of order raised by the Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order

Oral Question Period Practices

Designation of Department Estimates

MR. SAPERS: Thank you. There are a couple of points that I wish to make with you, and I'm a little bit concerned that with all of the points of order raised, these are out of sequence. I will give you the citation first out of *Beauchesne*, which is 321, "A point of order against procedure." I have two comments to leave with this Assembly and for your judgment, Mr. Speaker.

The first has to do with the practice evidenced today by members of the Executive Council in raising points of order in which they interrupted the proceedings of question period to raise their points of order, which is appropriate, but then went further to describe those points of order, which has not been the practice of this House, which is inappropriate, I submit, and in fact takes up time. I would hope that they would be counseled to not do so.

I also am in receipt of your note regarding the Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose's question and, in fact, that question being posed to the Minister of Education, which could only be described as an invitation to give a ministerial statement. I appreciate your comments and your admonishment of that practice, and I'm encouraged by the thought that that won't happen again.

Finally, I would like to raise a point, again quoting *Beauchesne* 321, on the Government House Leader's response to my request for projected government business. As I read the Standing Order 58(4), I read that

the Leader of the Official Opposition may, during the period when the estimates referred to in suborders (1) and (2) are under consideration by the Committee of Supply, by written notice to the Clerk prior to 4 p.m. on a Monday, designate one department's estimates to be considered by the committee on the following Thursday.

The way I interpret that, Mr. Speaker, and I await your judgment, is that it's really the prerogative of the Leader of the Opposition to determine which department's estimates will be going to Committee of Supply on Thursday. The Government House Leader suggested in his response that it will be the department of transportation. I guess I'd like to suggest through you to him that we'll get back to him about that, and I await your ruling.

3:20

THE SPEAKER: Government House Leader, did you want to make some comments? First of all, just take your chair for a second.

When hon. members raise a point of order – Opposition House Leader, you're absolutely correct – stand up, say, "Point of order," and sit down. There was some editorial comment today. It happened rather quickly. There were hon. members still waiting to speak. So that's very clear, hon. member. The Government House Leader is well aware of that, and all other members are. For clarification, if you have a point of order: stand up, "Point of order," sit down. It will be dealt with at the end of the question period.

The third point that you had in there you were going to discuss, arrange, deal with.

The second point. I already indicated that in these first few

days of this new Legislature – there are some new members – there was a bit of liberty and there will be a bit of liberty given to all members as they get their feet wet in terms of the rules and the amount of time allocated for speaking. So I believe that's been dealt with.

The next one then is the Government House Leader.

Point of Order

Allegations against Nonmembers

MR. HAVELOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately I have not had the benefit of reviewing the Blues. I'm not sure where they are, but I've asked for them a number of times. Nevertheless, I am referring to the comments made by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre during what I would refer to as her tirade with respect to CKUA. I would look again at sections 23(h), (i), and (j), where she was making some I think unsubstantiated comments. I think that there were some accusations in there with respect to friends of government, et cetera, and I would again refer to the comments I made earlier regarding the integrity of this House. I think we really walk a fine line when some members are allowed to continue to, in my view, abuse the immunity afforded by this House by making reference to third parties without repercussion. I think that we need to be careful when we do that in the future.

Also, let's try and maintain some degree of decorum when we are raising questions. I understand that it is Thursday and the opposition wishes to have a bit of a pop so that people don't forget about them over the weekend; nevertheless I still think that we need to maintain some reasonable degree of decorum. I would ask that you rule with respect to that.

Thank you.

MR. SAPERS: The Government House Leader makes a suggestion that something inappropriate happened during question period when the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre raised her question. Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of faith in the Chair, and I'm certain that if something in fact had been inappropriate in the preamble or in the phrasing of the question, you would have so indicated. You've been giving us guidance over these last few days, and I know you will continue to do that.

In my experience I heard nothing that was inflammatory, nothing that was making an unwarranted accusation – simply asking a minister in her area of competence to take accountability and be responsible for her department and for the actions of government and to respond in this forum, which has been the tradition over hundreds of years in Oral Question Period. The Government House Leader may be concerned that the question was pointed and that the question may in fact have been right on target and made some of his colleagues uncomfortable, but that, Mr. Speaker, I submit, is no point of order.

MR. HAVELOCK: We certainly do not experience any degree of discomfort when the opposition raises any question with us. Nevertheless, I still feel that the manner in which questions are raised in this House – I think it's important for you to maintain that degree of decorum within the House. Just as we're attempting to speak about this, for example, we have Betty Boop over there chattering away, and I'm having some difficulty making my comments. [interjections] In any event, Mr. Speaker, let's try and maintain some degree of decorum, and I do apologize for that remark. I take it back. Strike that from the record.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. member, I didn't hear a comment that was made; I did hear an apology. So I take it that that's been covered.

The point of order that's been raised by the Government House Leader is an interesting one in the sense that there is a plea for decorum in the House. I think all members would certainly agree with that and would ask for that, and certainly the Speaker would ask for that.

I think that if all members would take a look at Standing Orders, certainly Standing Orders 23(h) and (i) dealing with allegations, and I might also want to refer the members to *Beauchesne* 409(7), it is not an allegation to suggest that someone is your friend. If the statement is made that someone's friend is benefiting, it's up to that individual, I guess, to respond one way or the other, but that's not an allegation. I know even the Speaker has a lot of Tory friends. So that kind of statement is not out of order, and there's absolutely nothing in Standing Orders or nothing in *Beauchesne* to suggest that that's any kind of an allegation against anyone else.

I also would draw to all members' attention *Beauchesne* 493(4), which cautions against making allegations against people outside of the House, and that's of course in a different realm, a different matter. So I appreciate the advice, but that one, I'm afraid, is not a point of order.

The last one is a point of order by the Opposition House Leader. You've dealt with all of yours now? You took three a minute ago.

MR. SAPERS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I think we were able to cover them all, and I would seek some clarification from the Chair. Your judgment on Standing Order 58(4) was to direct the Opposition House Leader and Government House Leader to meet and determine the designated department for subcommittee of supply on Thursday?

THE SPEAKER: Government House Leader, did you want to make a comment on 58(4)? It's a matter of the tradition and interpretation. Perhaps it must be the word "may" that . . .

MR. HAVELOCK: Yes, Mr. Speaker. However, I'd be happy to nevertheless meet with my opposite member and work this out.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

We now, I believe, have a Standing Order 40.

head: Motions under Standing Order 40

Order of Canada

MS CARLSON: Mr. Speaker, while the Premier this afternoon and the Leader of the Official Opposition sent letters to the four current recipients of the Order of Canada, we as an Assembly also have a collective responsibility to recognize these outstanding Albertans. We have as an Assembly an historic tradition here of recognizing all honours of this magnitude under Standing Order 40. Our tradition includes doing this at the first available opportunity. The first opportunity is today, which speaks to the urgency of this motion. I would ask for the House's unanimous approval to proceed and congratulate these very worthy recipients.

THE SPEAKER: May we have the unanimous consent to proceed with the motion as proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

Ms Carlson moved:

Be it resolved that this Assembly recognize and congratulate Albertans retired Supreme Court Justice William Stevenson, medical pioneer Bernard Snell, philanthropist Jenny Belzberg, and singer k.d. lang for receiving Canada's highest single honour, the Order of Canada.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Order of Canada is the highest single honour that anyone in Canada can receive, and this week four Albertans were among 50 Canadians who were invested with this order by Governor General Romeo LeBlanc at a gala ceremony in Rideau Hall in Ottawa. The four people whom we should all acknowledge and recognize here in this province are as follows.

The Hon. William Alexander Stevenson from Edmonton, Alberta. Throughout his distinguished law career he made important contributions to the administration of justice in areas such as legal education, scholarship, and law reform. He has been a highly respected jurist and teacher of law, an outstanding judge, and a Justice of the Supreme Court, as well as chairman of the Alberta Institute of Law, Research and Reform. He contributed to the rewriting of the Alberta Rules of Court and was the author of a report which resulted in the establishment of the Canadian judicial institute. Over the years many students have benefited from his vast experience. We all here in the Assembly would like to congratulate him.

The second recipient is Bernard Snell, also from Edmonton, Alberta. As one of Canada's foremost leaders in health administration and community medicine he has had a long and distinguished career as a physician, professor, and administrator, culminating as president of the University of Alberta hospital. He also laid the groundwork for the Northern Alberta Children's hospital and the Walter C. Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre. He has given selflessly of his time and energy to numerous tasks and committees related to the delivery of health care while at the same time providing leadership in community affairs in Alberta through a variety of organizations. We here in the Legislative Assembly would like to acknowledge his contribution and his award.

Jenny Belzberg from Calgary, Alberta. Jenny has been a tireless advocate for the arts and education, an outstanding volunteer, and a true philanthropist. She is able to link diverse elements of society and encourage a larger sense of community. She was involved in the development of a partnership between the artistic community and inner-city schools in Calgary, and her exemplary leadership in Jewish organizations and groups like IMAGINE and the selection committee for the Alberta judiciary has earned her the respect of her fellow citizens. We in the Alberta Assembly would like to congratulate her on having received the honour.

3:30

k.d. lang, formerly from Consort, Alberta, now residing both in Alberta and the United States. k.d. is one of Canada's top singer/songwriters, whose dramatic and original style has given a new dimension to contemporary music. She has played an important role in the recognition and development of both Canadian country and popular music and has had a significant influence on the careers of our musicians. Dedicated to her

country and to encouraging home-grown talent, she continues to promote a Canadian presence on the airwaves and the tour circuit in North America and around the world. The Legislative Assembly will congratulate her on her outstanding achievement here in this province and throughout the world.

It's an honour for me to stand here in the Assembly and congratulate these four people who I believe are very worthy recipients. I thank you for the time.

[Motion carried]

head:

Orders of the Day

head:

Consideration of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

Mr. Shariff moved:

That an humble address be presented to His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To His Honour the Honourable H.A. "Bud" Olson, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank you, Your Honour, for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

[Adjourned debate April 16: Mr. Renner]

MR. MacDONALD: It is an honour for me to speak on behalf of the constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar this afternoon. Edmonton-Gold Bar was represented with distinction in the past, and I hope to carry on that tradition which was established in 1986 with the election of Bettie Hewes.

Mr. Speaker, I would rather speak to this Assembly this afternoon than sing the blues.

On behalf of my constituents in Edmonton-Gold Bar I would like to congratulate you on your election this past Monday. It is historic for the constituency of Barrhead-Westlock to have their representative in the Speaker's Chair. It is also historic for the Speaker to come from northern Alberta, for a change. I look forward to your advice and your guidance during the life of this Legislature. I would also like to congratulate all members of the opposite and surrounding benches. You are to be commended and congratulated on your victories.

Edmonton-Gold Bar's 32,000 people are diverse in their cultural traditions and economic means. They are a reflection of this city and this province. Gold Bar is the home of The King's University College, the *Edmonton Journal*, the *Edmonton Sun*, the Muttart Conservatory, and of course the Ottewell Curling Club.

The Ottewell Curling Club is the home of the Alberta and reigning Canadian champion, Mr. Kevin Martin, and his team: lead, Don Bartlett; second, Rudy Ramcharan; third, Don Walchuk; and coach, Jules Owchar. I am sure all members of this House wish them well at the world curling championship this week in Bern, Switzerland. They represent our province very well, and we should all be proud of their skill and their sportsmanship.

As I look around the benches of this Assembly, I see concerned Albertans with the best interests of this great province utmost on their minds. I see ranchers, teachers, auctioneers, nurses, broadcasters, lawyers, and doctors. All walks of life in Alberta are represented in this Chamber. While we may not always agree on certain policy issues and the resolutions for the problems that face us, our good fortune is that we are able to discuss the issues

in an open and honest way without any fear of reprisal. I have in the years that I have lived in this province given much thought to provincial political issues. I have learned that it is fundamental to the democratic process that we all struggle so hard to preserve that we learn to tolerate and respect differences. We have always assumed in this country that with diligent, hard work the next generation could be better off than the last. This no longer holds true. In the Alberta of today we are rapidly becoming a province of haves and have-nots. There is no sense of community. One group is made to work against the other. This meanness must stop. This is not the Alberta advantage.

This throne speech talks of growth, prosperity, and jobs. I agree with the members across the way that there has been growth in the number of jobs created in this province. They have all been, the majority, part-time jobs with no benefits, and they do not allow people to prosper, just live payday to payday, a meagre existence. Ask striking Safeway workers if their province is a work in progress or not. Some workers make more on strike than they do working.

[Mrs. Gordon in the Chair]

It is a comfort for me to see that fiscal responsibility remains a priority of this government. Prudent fiscal management is a policy I admire. I have always followed the affairs of this Assembly with interest. It was unclear to me why this government would require a general public referendum on financial policy, but clearly, after the \$244 million financial loss in Whitecourt with the Millar Western company this government, as ridiculous as it sounds, needs laws to protect themselves from themselves. The government must learn to manage tax dollars without blaming past administrations.

Madam Speaker, this government across the floor talks of less government. They do not practise what they preach. We now have more government: two new full-standing policy committees, three new subcommittees. It's a pity this government is not as interested in advocating an adequate disposable income for the striking Safeway workers as they are in looking after their own financial well-being; \$22,000 and \$15,000 pay raises for government backbenchers is more than some Safeway workers actually earn in a year. Do not tell us about fiscal responsibility remaining a priority.

We must be very careful about deregulation of the energy industry. To the east of my constituency is one of the largest concentrations of industry in this province. Unchecked deregulation is not endorsed by the voters of Edmonton-Gold Bar. It is in everyone's interest to ensure that these industries maintain economic viability. These industries can now, as a result of past government policy, police their own emissions in the water and atmosphere. Strict environmental regulation and enforcement is not an enemy of economic growth. This government talks about leaving a debt-free province for future generations, but this means very little if there is no water fit to drink or air pure enough to breathe. Keeping our citizens healthy must be a priority.

Madam Speaker, little is said of the plight of the province's senior citizens in Tuesday's throne speech. The city of Edmonton has on average 9 percent of its citizens who are over the age of 65. Edmonton-Gold Bar has double that at 18 percent. The seniors of Edmonton-Gold Bar made sacrifices when they built the provincial infrastructure. They should not now be made to sacrifice their retirement years because of uncaring policies and fiscal mismanagement. An adequate disposable income for

Alberta's seniors is not mentioned in this throne speech, just a review of services for seniors. This is unacceptable. It is not enough. It is not the Alberta advantage.

3:40

I am pleased, however, to see that this government is willing to accept a responsibility to provide programs and services. Three years ago government ministers were traveling around the province bleating, "All government is baaad." Now I sense you realize you have a duty. I admire people who recognize their mistakes.

We talk about education. I am the father of a young family, two of whom have entered the public education system in this city. They attend their local school in Strathearn, and they are getting a good start in life. The teachers are very well qualified, there are good test results in the school, but unfortunately all moneys have to go to the front line, to the teachers. The classrooms are overcrowded. The plaster is falling off the walls. The bathrooms do not work. We are not looking into the future whenever we ignore the infrastructure of the public education system. Bake sales are not the answer to inadequate educational funding.

I notice also that there are plans to revise Alberta's apprenticeship program. Alberta's apprenticeship program is well respected and honoured throughout Canada and internationally. I will be watching diligently for these revisions. We must be sure our standards are maintained and protected.

Madam Speaker, there is nothing in this throne speech to change the cycle of domestic violence, which unfortunately is all too common a problem in our communities. There is nothing to address changes in the workforce. There is nothing to indicate how the community lottery boards are going to be set up. Are they going to be like the regional health authorities: appointed? Or will they be like this Assembly: the members will be elected?

I spoke earlier of Alberta becoming the place of haves and have-nots. In my constituency armed security guards are now employed in the Ottewell neighbourhood. This is a strong, symbolic warning of what the future holds for us if we do not promote programs which distribute income equally to all. Three years ago this was not necessary. I would ask the members opposite to please consider this warning.

The struggle of man is the struggle of memory against forgetting, Madam Speaker. The business of this government has been to make people of this province forget, forget about fiscal mismanagement, forget about failed industrial strategies, forget about misguided health care and educational reforms, and forget the failed delivery of Alberta health care and seniors' benefits to the retired people. It is my duty to make sure that the people of this fine province do not forget.

Thank you.

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

MS KRYCZKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is with great pleasure and pride that I rise today for the first time in the Legislative Assembly to deliver my maiden speech. It is an honour to be standing before this Assembly on behalf of the constituency of Calgary-West.

I would like to thank the Lieutenant Governor for his insightful speech and for outlining the direction in which our government will proceed. May I also congratulate you, too, Madam Speaker, on your recent election. I am confident that in the role in which I see you today, with your years of experience and the knowledge

that you've gained of parliamentary procedures you will be a very effective guide to the Legislative Assembly in its duties.

I would like to sincerely thank the constituents of Calgary-West for choosing me to represent their best interests in this Assembly. It's my personal belief that it is our role and responsibility as legislators and representatives to serve our constituents with integrity, honesty, and openness. When the people of Calgary-West elected me to the Legislative Assembly, it was with the mandate to serve them and to accurately convey their concerns to this Assembly. They expect their representative to be accessible, accountable, and to act on their behalf with the utmost integrity. Madam Speaker, I will work to fulfill all of their expectations and remain true to this mandate.

Calgary-West has had a strong Progressive Conservative tradition with the distinguished service provided to this constituency by former Premier Peter Lougheed for many years and MLA Elaine McCoy. I'm aware of the challenge before me as I follow in their footsteps.

I would like to thank our Premier, Ralph Klein, for his vision and determination that brought our government to where we are today. This government kept its promise to Albertans that it would listen to their needs and concerns. As a result, our province now has a balanced budget, a diminishing debt, and the lowest overall taxes in the country. We can now look to the future with optimism, knowing that we will enter the 21st century on solid footing.

Madam Speaker, it's truly an honour and a privilege to represent one of the most diverse constituencies in the province. Calgary-West is a rapidly growing and upwardly mobile constituency. It's comprised, in my mind, of three distinct areas, each approximately equal in size but with its own unique characteristics.

On the east side of the constituency lies an older residential area with roots firmly embedded in the constituency. It includes the communities of Wildwood, Westgate, Rosscarrock, Glendale, and Glenbrook. While door knocking or visiting in this area, one gets a true sense of the value these Calgarians place on community and family. Many of the residents have lived in this older area for numerous years and some of them their entire lives. During my nomination and provincial campaigns I met with people who have resided in the same home for 30 to 40 years, and they have children who are raising their families close by. This is a community in which neighbours become lifelong friends. It's this pride of ownership, family values, and a strong sense of tradition that is steadily attracting newer, younger families with young children to this area of the constituency.

Calgary-West has a newer and ever growing residential community, which is located toward the west, and we call it on the hill. It encompasses the communities of Patterson, Prominence Point, Coach Hill, Strathcona, Christie, Signal, and Richmond Hill. These communities in the hill area are experiencing surges in both residential and commercial growth. This current trend of active development is one that is expected to continue. The residents of these communities range from young working adults to families with working parents to senior citizens who have chosen to live in these vibrant communities.

I would also like to introduce the members of this Assembly to the third most westerly region of Calgary-West. You'll probably hear me talking about it. That's the newly annexed east Springbank. It used to be part of Banff-Cochrane. In 1996 the provincial boundaries revisions included this area in the constituency of Calgary-West. Madam Speaker, this addition has nearly doubled

the geographic size of the constituency as east Springbank consists of acreages which are now part of the city of Calgary. Over the past year's campaign I've come to understand this community is facing certain changes as a result of the 1995 city annexation. I have seen firsthand the need for co-operation and consultation in regard to land development and school-related boundary issues. As the provincial representative for Calgary-West I will continue to work with east Springbank to ensure that the needs of the schoolchildren are the priority.

3:50

Clearly, Madam Speaker, the constituents of Calgary-West are a diverse group of people with many religious, cultural, and language identities requiring an MLA who understands and respects their own particular needs and interests. In Calgary-West diversity also means senior citizens, students, entrepreneurs, stay-at-home moms, tradespeople, educators, health providers, and professionals.

Madam Speaker, although a constituent's needs and concerns may differ, their expectations are the same. All of my constituents expect a high quality of life for themselves. They expect the provincial government to continue to be fiscally responsible and continue to pay down the debt in a timely manner. At the same time, they expect access to high-quality services when they need them.

Madam Speaker, the mandate of this government, as outlined by the Lieutenant Governor, is to ensure that all Albertans continue to benefit from growth, prosperity, and jobs and also quality, responsible, and affordable public services. Clearly this government has listened and responded to the needs and concerns of all Albertans.

Madam Speaker, during the election campaign it was repeatedly conveyed to me that education is a top priority. My constituents will be pleased to hear, as mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, that education remains a priority for this government. We must ensure that all Albertans have access to quality education, from ECS to high school and postsecondary education.

As with most communities, in Calgary-West we must consider the needs of a growing population and ensure that future school accommodations are adequate in all communities. I believe that a choice of alternatives is important, but it must be at a price Albertans can afford and not at the expense of the public system.

I was pleased to hear in the Speech from the Throne the Lieutenant Governor speak of strategies aimed at establishing curriculum standards for students in the area of technology. A proficient knowledge of technology will facilitate a smooth transition for students from schools to jobs and careers. Madam Speaker, it is critical that young people of today have the necessary skills to meet the needs of the marketplace in the 21st century.

I also applaud this government's initiative to introduce career and technical studies as a permanent component of the high school curriculum. Young Albertans should be thoroughly aware of the career and job opportunities available to them in order to make informed choices.

Access to quality programs should be provided to those youths who continue along the path of lifelong learning to a postsecondary institution. It is essential that we give our young people the skills, education, and training they need to compete and to succeed in the emerging global marketplace.

Madam Speaker, government must also be supportive of job strategies that will provide increased opportunities for graduates. In the Speech from the Throne the Lieutenant Governor spoke

about this government's new human resource strategy, People and Prosperity. I am particularly pleased with the development of an intellectual infrastructure partnership between public and private sectors that will conduct research to assist this province in building on the Alberta advantage.

Madam Speaker, health care is a priority for the constituents in Calgary-West, as it is for all Albertans. While most of the people I spoke to during my election campaign had positive experiences in the health system, many did want to be assured that when they are sick or hurt they will receive the treatment they need. I know that over the next four years we will continue to improve the quality and stability of our health system to ensure it meets the needs of Albertans today and is sustainable in the future. We need to address not only current pressure points in the system but establish a system that will be sustainable and responsive to our future needs in order to ensure quality, accessibility, and stability in the health system. Our government must be responsive to the needs of an increasing and aging population. Seniors must have access to services such as long-term care, but more importantly seniors need to be aware of what services are available to them and how to access these services when they are needed.

Madam Speaker, the province of Alberta now has a solid foundation on which to build. We have created a climate for the private sector to generate wealth, investment, and jobs for Albertans. I am committed to working with the government and encouraging decisions that will facilitate a healthy economy. I am confident that Alberta will continue to lead the nation in economic, jobs, and growth.

In closing, Madam Speaker, our province is a work in progress. We must continue to listen carefully to Albertans, to be cognizant of their needs, and to respond. We must continue to build on our strengths to ensure that as we head into the 21st century, we are a strong and viable province.

Madam Speaker, I would once again like to thank the constituents of Calgary-West for placing their trust in me to be their representative. I will work diligently over the next four years to be deserving of such a privilege and an honour.

Thank you.

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

MR. GIBBONS: Madam Speaker, thank you very much. Once again may I congratulate you on your election. Like my colleagues from all the other parties and representing the constituents of Alberta, I also look forward to your advice from the Chair and guidance to us rookies in the back side here and the back side over on the other side. [interjections] It's just a phrase.

I would like to express my thanks to the voters in the constituency of Edmonton-Manning who have placed their confidence and faith in me to represent their views in this House. I'm grateful to the constituents for putting me here, and I look forward to serving them.

If we as newly elected members to this Assembly have anything in common, it is a commitment that each of us has made to our respective constituencies in order to earn their trust and have the honour of representing them. Madam Speaker, the commitment was one to change, persuade, and have in this government – to govern is to have a conscience.

To go along with fiscal responsibility, this government should never forget that it is a public government. This large government needs to be compassionate and respectful of its people, of

individuals, of all Alberta. I want those who tax us to be accountable for the quality and availability of the programs and services. We trust our government to manage core programs on our behalf. We trust our government to improve these programs on our behalf. We trust our government to ensure that as taxpayers we are getting the best of each of our tax dollars.

When we talk to our neighbours, we hear: well, we needed to do something. But few of us have heard our neighbours say: I am pleased with the way the health care system has changed, with the way that our seniors and the most vulnerable among us have been treated. I have yet to hear a single neighbour praise this government over the last three and a half years.

The ability to govern in a fiscally responsible way means also having a plan. Dismantling existing systems, we must have well-informed and dedicated people to rebuild and maintain our health and educational systems and our programs for our seniors and those that are the most vulnerable among us. Building from the ashes is not the way to go.

I'm a graduate of NAIT and in the last 25 years have been part of management and sales management in large to small companies, from building Syncrude and the largest German company that came over here a few years ago, Krupp, to small sheet metal and structural steel companies. In all the years that I've been a part of the business system, I never, ever did anything without a plan. That is something that we have to look forward to in this government, and hopefully they will do that from now on.

4:00

Edmonton-Manning constituency is in the northeast corner of Edmonton. It is flanked to the north by Redwater, to the east by both Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview and Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, to the south by Edmonton-Norwood. We are a pocket in the north that is very diverse. It runs anywhere from the corner of 66th Street and the Fort Trail, with the very diverse community of Belvedere, to the far north and the farmland of Horse Hill.

One of the items that we have with our residents up there is we're running anywhere from people that are in social need in the south to those that are living around Cherry Grove and Hollick-Kenyon in the northern part. Those of you that have traveled the area and lived in the area or even gone through it will know that you can go anywhere from an \$80,000 house to a \$500,000 house in the area.

We also have Evergreen, and Evergreen, for everybody's understanding or knowledge or memory, is the community that will be celebrating a horrible tragedy of 10 years this coming July. Evergreen has rebuilt. I have watched, helped, and I've gone to a banquet as late as last weekend. This community has rebuilt itself, having been caught between the crooks and the crannies of having to go out to hire their own social worker. They are now in the midst of setting up their own educational system there, and I will be knocking on the hon. Mr. Mar's door in the next while for their case of educating their students.

Outside of Evergreen you have the rich vegetable farmlands that are noted for their potato growing and market gardens. From there you have the Alberta Hospital, which has been downsized.

The residents now live throughout the city of Edmonton, close to the LRT stations, then stretching halfway out to my hometown of Gibbons.

This constituency is very much in need of people watching what's going on.

I have a long history in the northeast, 25 years of living there, volunteering there. Both sides of my family, both my paternal and maternal sides, settled in Alberta, just north of the city,

before the province became a province. In my voluntarism in the northeast I spent 18 years with minor hockey in Edmonton, chairing all levels of it. I was an original member of the northeast health committee in the late '70s in order to build a sorely required medical facility, which, I add, is still not in place due to a lack of planning and funding. The northeast health facility is now proceeding 15 years after the fact.

I've chaired citywide arena strategies for the last 10 years, where we were instrumental in deciding where arenas will be built, and was instrumental in developing a computerized allocating ice system for the city of Edmonton. We were part of a formation of agreement between the two school boards and the city of Edmonton on the joint use agreement. For the last 10 years I have sat on the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues board and am presently the president, which I will be turning over the reins of in the next couple of weeks. The Federation of Community Leagues, for those out in the country, has a population between 2,000 and 10,000 per community. These communities are similar to the size of Wetaskiwin. They administer sports, planning, and everything from that entity. I also want to let everybody know that in our caucus we have five people that have grown up through the 4-H system, so we know what the country is like.

I strongly believe in caring for the children of our neighbourhood, our elderly, and our disadvantaged. I believe that I must convince this Assembly that caring for the residents of this wonderful province is of our utmost importance. When knocking on the doors, many people asked me if I felt I could influence this Conservative government to have compassion and have a conscience in administrating this province. If I can do that, then I have fulfilled my mandate. I ran for this public office because, once again, something had to be done, except this time we have to make the government accountable to us. The government should work for us, listen to us.

Madam Speaker, I end my first speech in the Legislative Assembly, but I would like to leave with a note of caring. If every decision we make in this House is made with thought and a sense of caring for all the individuals who make up this wonderful province, then we will come out of the next few years intact. My commitment is to care about my constituents and help them when they need it.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak, and I am truly honoured to be part of this Assembly.

MR. DUCHARME: Madam Speaker, it is with great pride and honour that I rise today to deliver my maiden speech as the member for the constituency of Bonnyville-Cold Lake, a constituency that our newly elected Speaker has known since birth. I will not mention when that was, only that he was born and raised in one of the most vibrant and exciting constituencies in all of Alberta, that of Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Madam Speaker, I would like to take a moment before I begin today so that I may pay my respects to the late Mr. George Normand. As many of you know, Mr. Normand was a six-time world champion chuck wagon driver. His skill at the reins will be sorely missed in future competitions, but his memory will not be forgotten, as later this year Mr. Normand will be inducted posthumously into the Alberta Sports Hall of Fame.

On a lighter congratulatory note, Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate you on your recent election. I would also like to congratulate all MLAs on their recent election to the Legislature. I'll look forward to working with all of you.

At the outset, Madam Speaker, I would like to commend and thank the constituents of Bonnyville-Cold Lake for their confidence and endorsement of my abilities to represent them in this Assembly. As a newly elected member of the Conservative government I pledge my continued support of the vision that Premier Ralph Klein has presented to Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Premier, for creating a province which is the envy of the country. Under your guidance our province has become a leader in terms of economy, diversity, and growth potential. I say this with confidence, Madam Speaker, because this government has kept its word. It continues to be committed to building an Alberta that benefits us all. As the hon. Lieutenant Governor expounded for us in the Speech from the Throne, Alberta is looking to the future, a future which is full of prosperity and growth.

I would like to highlight some key issues which show this government's success over the last four years. Included in these highlights is the fact that more Albertans are working than ever before. We have the lowest overall taxes in Canada. The budget is balanced, and the net debt will be paid off by the year 2005, 16 years ahead of schedule. Our students are outperforming many provinces and countries in academics, as proven by their results in recent international studies. Alberta has high quality, accessible health care and a government that listens to concerns of all citizens. Madam Speaker, this government has proven again and again it is dedicated to creating a province that is the best it can possibly be.

I am very proud of all areas in my constituency, and at this time I would like to share with the Assembly a brief description of Bonnyville-Cold Lake. My constituency covers in excess of 4,000 square miles of northeastern Alberta and is rich in natural resources, human resources, and industry not usually attributed to Alberta. The scenery is inspiring and the people some of the friendliest in the province. Madam Speaker, one should be very proud of where they come from, and I am no different.

Areas in my constituency date back almost 200 years, to the time when fur trading was at its peak. Madam Speaker, times have not changed in the Bonnyville area. We are still heavily dependent upon the local resources for our business, and these resources drive our local economies.

Madam Speaker, I will not go into details about the boom and bust years of the oil and gas industry and the effect upon the area. I will only say that Bonnyville-Cold Lake is looking to the future, a future that is increasingly bright with the support of this government.

4:10

Alberta is Canada's major supplier of energy resources, having 85 percent of Canada's natural gas reserves. Approximately 16 percent of the province's gross domestic product and more than half of its exported products are related to energy.

Madam Speaker, Bonnyville-Cold Lake is famous for its heavy oil sands, and with the help of the national task force on oil sands Bonnyville-Cold Lake is well prepared to produce 1.2 million barrels a day, nearly tripling the output of the 1980s.

[The Speaker in the Chair]

Agriculture, as with many areas in Alberta, is the backbone of the constituency. The agricultural side of Bonnyville-Cold Lake is a prosperous one, and with the increased effort into value-added products I can clearly see that agriculture is the future of Alberta.

I would like to mention that in the local Bonnyville area our

ranchers are not of the common ilk. They do raise traditional animals such as cattle, pigs, and dairy cows, but Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned earlier, the people of my constituency are looking to the future. The future in this case includes specialty farms which raise animals such as elk, deer, buffalo, llamas, wild boar, and ostriches. The traditional ways of using the land are changing to meet demand and doing so with ease.

However, Mr. Speaker, the advances in consuming our natural resources must be tempered with our commitment to the environment. We must use our resources in a manner that is sustainable for the long term so our children and grandchildren will be able to experience the Alberta we often take for granted.

With the reliance upon heavy industry in the area – be it oil sands, agriculture, or forestry – we must not be negligent of our infrastructure. It is this infrastructure which is part and parcel of the industry that uses them. Our roads in rural Alberta are so heavily used by large vehicles that they are at times not safe to travel upon. We must not be negligent in our concerns over safety for the benefit of industry.

In the Bonnyville-Cold Lake area there are four aboriginal communities which I would like to name, with a purpose. They include the Fishing Lake Métis settlement, Elizabeth Métis settlement, Kehewin Cree Nation, and Cold Lake First Nations. Mr. Speaker, the reason I wish to name these particular areas is because of the work that I feel can be done in partnership with these communities. I would like to see all constituents from Bonnyville-Cold Lake join together to create a better place to live, and I would like to see a harmonious balance between all peoples regardless of their heritage. I feel that many hands and minds working together can create a sense of community spirit unmatched anywhere in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I have many aspirations. One of those is to better the life of my constituents, and I am sincerely dedicated to that cause. One instance that has shown many hands and hearts working together for a common purpose is the recent amalgamation of the tritown communities. In 1996 the former towns of Cold Lake, Grand Centre, and CFB Medley joined forces to create the new town of Cold Lake. The joining of these towns will eventually lead to the creation of Alberta's newest city and a stable, diverse, and optimistic economic future for all residents.

The constituency is not solely based upon natural resources. In fact, Mr. Speaker, Four Wing Cold Lake is one of the largest air force bases in all of Canada, and it is because of this base that we in Bonnyville-Cold Lake can call ourselves the best in the world at least in one aspect. In October of 1996 Captain Steve Nierlich and his team won the William Tell air-to-air combat against six U.S. air force contingents. This was the first time since the competition began in 1954 that a Canadian has won. Our top-gun fighter pilots are some of the best trained in the world, and I would like to congratulate all the members and families of Four Wing Cold Lake for their continued work at becoming the best and representing our country with honour and dignity.

Another town I would like to mention, Mr. Speaker, is that of Bonnyville. The natural beauty of my constituency is exemplified by this area. It is surrounded by lakes, creating a treasure trove of natural wonders. In fact, bird-watchers flock to Bonnyville's Jessie Lake every spring to spot the nearly 200 species that use the lake as a stopping ground on their migration route.

Our recreational facilities in all areas of Bonnyville-Cold Lake need to be updated according to the demands of people who are coming to the area for its natural wonders. Bonnyville is the first stop on the trans-Canada skidoo trail before going into northern

Alberta, and it is recreational possibilities such as this that need to be expanded. With the advent of ecotourism Bonnyville is a natural beginning, but we must put in place the mechanism to make it one.

I hope I have given all the members a view of my constituency that will entice them to the area, and I will guarantee you will enjoy yourself if you come. Besides, the fact you can see the world's largest pyrogy in Glendon and the marina at Cold Lake are reason enough to visit.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I would like to remind all members why we are here. We are here because the people of our constituencies voted us here. We are here to represent them and their needs. As members of the Alberta Legislature we have a tradition to uphold. We must work as diligently as possible to create a province we can all be proud of.

Thank you.

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

MR. CAO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak in the Legislative Assembly. I am very honoured and proud to be a newly elected Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, to be the first to represent the new constituency of Calgary-Fort. It is with deep conviction that I accept the trust bestowed upon me by the constituents of Calgary-Fort. I look forward to being a part of leading Alberta into the next century. The 21st century will, without doubt, be a century full of prosperity based upon sound public policy created in this Chamber.

I would like to take a moment to express my everlasting thanks to all those who made sacrifices and struggled throughout the hardships in order to build this country and this province. We must be grateful to these people, as they were responsible for the foundation we have today. Not only did they build this land; they were there to protect and nourish it for those of us who live in it today.

One of my reasons for wanting to become an MLA is that I believe in this province, in this country. I want all Albertans to be part of the continued development and success of this province. The role I now have allows me to directly contribute to Alberta on behalf of those who were here before me, those who are here with me and have given me the confidence in representing them, as well as those who will be here after me.

On behalf of both myself and my family there are numerous people that I would like to take this time to thank. This thank you extends to the voters of Calgary-Fort for coming out and participating in the democratic process of choosing your MLA. I pledge to you that I intend to serve the constituency of Calgary-Fort to the best of my ability. I encourage my constituents, regardless of political inclinations, to come to me with your concerns, to share your ideas, and to keep me informed of the issues that you want me to address in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

I would like to pass along a message to the other candidates. To you I say: you have given me a challenge which I worked and will continue to work hard to achieve. I want to listen to your ideas. Your ideas are meaningful and acceptable to Albertans, to Calgary-Fort residents. You can count on my support. Let's work together to continue building our country that was started so long ago.

4:20

I would like to thank my supporters and volunteers throughout the nomination and campaign processes. You are the gems of my personal treasures. A word of thanks to my campaign manage-

ment team, led by Jerry and Eleanor Art, and the Progressive Conservative organization: you are my success. To our Premier Ralph Klein and to Ralph's team: you are my pillars of strength, a set of pillars built on a rock-solid foundation of successes and achievement for Alberta during the previous four years.

During the election campaign there was a great misunderstanding about some of my long past actions. Under very unfortunate and trying circumstances I did what I had to do. I extend my apologies to those who felt emotionally hurt therefrom. I was given no better choice, and that was never my intention. Regardless of how this publicity was initiated, I want to thank the media for its high quality of professionalism.

On a personal note I want to tell my wife, Kim, and our sons, William, Winston, and Ulysses, how much I appreciate them. Together, through a lot of hard work, we have created a new chapter in our family life story. We are ever close together, and I love them.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we all have a purpose in life. We all experience stages of growth throughout our lives. These stages vary from person to person, but what remains constant is that we all work toward the achievement of our motivation and our desires. Our learning experiences are not always positive, and we are sometimes faced with hardship. We learn from those difficult times, whatever they may be. We gain strength and wisdom. They are the keys to our accomplishments. It is only in Canada, more specifically in Alberta, where we have a great land of freedom with laws and orders, with sound democratic political processes along with respect for human rights, which in turn allow human endeavours to flourish.

When we are young, our lives are full of trials and tribulations. We are very much focused on our little world, a world in which we must develop and continue to improve ourselves as individuals. I remember that in my very much younger days my family had a very unfortunate experience of war in which our home was destroyed. In the midst of all this tragedy I was concerned about the loss of my guitar. That is what I mean when I say that in childhood we have a small circle, our own little world if you will, one that does not usually go much beyond ourselves. At this point in life I find this story amusing because I know that if I were forced to relive that awful experience, I would focus on the all-encompassing picture and not on the loss of only one small item.

That is all part of the growing process. Upon reaching adulthood, our little world expands and our focus shifts to families, friends, and relatives. We develop the sense of wanting to help and to protect. As the maturing process continues, that circle expands further, beyond our families. We now feel a sense of community, the desire to contribute to the well-being of society. I am in the first stage of the cycle, and I have chosen to serve the public interest. I cannot think of a more appropriate avenue in which to pursue the advocacy of public interest than being an MLA. I would like to share with you now more about my motivation in seeking public office as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for Calgary-Fort. As I mentioned earlier, I believe a person's life should have a purpose. I was raised in a family and culture that felt very strongly about that last statement. I believe that my purpose is to serve the people of my constituency.

Calgary-Fort is a large constituency with industrial parks and residential areas. I reflect upon my new role, my new job as being twofold: I am the representative of the residents who reside in the area; I am also the facilitator between many differing views held by those residents. I have talked with people who are

concerned about health care, education, jobs, and I have also talked to businesses. They are concerned about development and profit. I want to bring these two sides together to achieve prosperity. I do not mean prosperity in terms of money only. I see prosperity in terms of quality of life. We live in a society where we are caught up in the race for the highest monetary reward, and in turn we leave behind the quality of our lives.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all accept the fact that we must find jobs to support ourselves. What I'm talking about here is enjoying life and working for a living. It is important that we work together to strike the balance, to give people the chance to flourish and, most importantly, participate in their own lives. I want to see the empowerment of the individual. I want to see the individual prosper and achieve personal growth. That is my vision of living in Alberta.

Government can help in this area, and certainly this government intends to. In the throne speech earlier this week it was made very clear that we will continue to meet the four cornerstones of our mandate which was set in the session of the Legislature in 1993.

On March 11, 1997, the people of Alberta sent another clear message. They want this government to continue putting our fiscal house in order, creating a climate for job growth, streamlining government, and, most importantly, listening to Albertans. This is exactly what we intend to do.

Our unemployment rate is the lowest in Canada. We are looking forward to having our province lead the nation in economic growth and jobs. As was said in the throne speech, "Albertans know that their province is a work in progress."

In keeping with the mandate of consulting with Albertans, we are anxiously waiting for the Alberta Growth Summit later this year. This will be an excellent opportunity for Albertans to continue to express their ideas and concerns. This summit will see representatives from all areas – municipalities, health, education, labour, business, general public – meet for discussions.

We will move forward from fiscal management and bring forth for consideration a law to place a cap on corporate and personal tax rates unless and until Albertans vote to increase these taxes through referendum.

Investment into research and development of various areas will continue, thus leading to new products and services for us to use and to sell abroad.

Our government will also carry on participation in the Team Canada trade mission as well as working with the Alberta Tourism Partnership to encourage visitors from all over the world to experience the beauty of our province.

Agriculturally this government will proceed with plans to promote Alberta products and increase the prosperity of Alberta's farmers.

4:30

In referring back to the throne speech with regard to energy, there are plans to

consult with the industry on integrating the management of information among them, on streamlining business rules, and maintaining Alberta's pre-eminence in energy-related research and technology without direct subsidies from government.

This is only a sketch of what is intended for this industry.

Another area of importance for this government is education. Education is the key to the future of our society. I'm concerned about education at all levels, from elementary through postsecondary. I believe that more assistance is needed for apprenticeship programs. The enhancement of training for new high-tech positions should be a priority.

This government has always said that it will strive for the highest quality, the most accessible and sustainable health care. I will do my best to contribute to the achievement of this goal.

In our society today, in my constituency and the constituencies of my colleagues, there are those who are unable to adequately support themselves and their families. This concerns all of us. This genuine concern, combined with the children's service initiative program, the early intervention program, as well as other efforts, will achieve a result in which those who find themselves in this unfortunate situation will be able to live healthier and more productive lives.

With all that said, Mr. Speaker, I must also concentrate on providing Albertans with safe communities in which to live and work. Keeping this in mind, I am committing to achieving a further reduction in crime of any kind. All too often the attention is focused on those who have committed the crime. This must stop. It is time that a government implemented legislation that is aimed at helping the victims of crime. That is what this government intends to do.

Mr. Speaker, there is a saying that humans can plan all plans, but success depends on the Almighty's will. For this I thank the Almighty, and I pledge to you here today that my commitment to the people of Alberta and to the people of my constituency is a strong one. As the representative of Calgary-Fort I have an obligation to aggressively represent the personal and community perspective, to be an open, efficient, constructive link between my constituency and the government. I would also like to mention that I am committed to the preservation of quality of life in all the communities in Calgary-Fort. I am obligated to the rational expansion of only environmentally friendly industries in the area. I am equally committed to ensuring integrity of the inner-city communities.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that by ensuring our provincial government is financially responsible, we can ensure that Alberta will remain the province with the lowest unemployment rate. I pledge to foster an atmosphere to stimulate the creation of rewarding career positions for our highly qualified yet underemployed citizens, to create employment opportunities for the youth.

I am also aware of the importance of care for seniors. It is my belief that Albertans must reinvest in seniors' programs and benefits. These should be programs that will not erode the lifestyles of seniors, programs that will help to soften the areas of hardship.

On the subject of sociopolitical inclination I'm both conservative and progressive. I believe progress is made from past experiences, and I believe in personal freedom, empowerment of the individual. I do not accept dictatorship of a minority nor do I accept dictatorship of a majority by using legislation that imposes on people's normal lives. We cannot help the poor by destroying the rich. We cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. As for social interaction my view is: question not what others did; first question what you did.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to leave you with the following. I pray to the Almighty to grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things that we can, and the wisdom to know the difference. I pray to the Almighty to bless us all and guide me in my work as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta and the constituency of Calgary-Fort.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview,

followed by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I offer my belated congratulations on your election. As a newly elected MLA and member of Her Majesty's opposition I look forward to your guidance and counsel as we conduct the business of this Assembly.

It is with pride and a strong sense of responsibility that I rise to make my maiden speech to this Assembly. To begin, I must pay tribute to the constituents of Edmonton-Riverview who have entrusted to me the privilege and responsibility of representing a newly created constituency in this Legislature, comprised of pieces of six other constituencies: McClung, Meadowlark, Glenora, Strathcona, Rutherford, and Whitemud. Edmonton-Riverview is unique both geographically as well as demographically. In my recent conversations with constituents they have spoken passionately about current issues and the kind of representation and government they envision for Alberta in 1997 and beyond. I would like to return to this topic later in my speech.

I would also like to pay tribute to registered nurses and in particular the Staff Nurses Associations of Alberta and the National Federation of Nurses' Unions. It was in this profession that I was first privileged to serve in an elected office and learn the skills that have enabled me to serve as a Member of this Legislative Assembly. I would also like to pay tribute to four women – my mother, Evelyn Brears; my grandmothers, Elaine Pike and Emily Brears; and aunt Mary Davis – who collectively in their lifetimes instilled in me a strong sense of self-worth, a compassion for others, and the determination to challenge myself and others to make this world a better place.

Margaret Mead said: never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. This quote is particularly meaningful to me because it symbolizes what I have found to be true in my own life. Each of us has a different perspective on the world, its events, and the issues of the day.

During the 1995 Canadian Governor-General's study conference I had the privilege of visiting and learning from the many different constituencies of Nova Scotia with a group of 16 other Canadians, all possessing very diverse backgrounds. The conference theme was the employer/employee relationship: building better relationships for a better Canada. For a total of 18 days we met with employers and employees of a carpet plant, pulp mill, coal mine, fish plant, the Eskasoni Indian reserve, a pewter company, an airplane engine manufacturer, to name only a few, to examine the issues employers and employees face and the strategies they had identified to address them. What I learned from this experience is that Canadian society at a microlevel is comprised of interwoven threads of relationships. These relationships, formed at the community, business, labour, and government levels at a macrolevel, determine the values and objectives of our nation. To what degree we in this province and in this Legislature work to build functional relationships will ultimately determine our community's ability to change, grow, adapt, and prosper.

As I viewed and listened to the themes of the Speech from the Throne, I drew the following conclusions. For this government today growth and prosperity, an exciting future, investment in research, and an international presence appear to be priorities. In reality, speeches, policies, budgets, and government platforms mean nothing if they are not connected to people: people with real problems, people with good ideas, people with dreams for the future.

4:40

In my discussions with the constituents of Edmonton-Riverview I encountered a healthy skepticism for government. I talked with many who expressed concern about a government that puts the bottom line before the well-being and safety of the people they serve. The Alberta we heard about in the Speech from the Throne and in the government's upcoming budget is said to be on the verge of great prosperity. I am troubled however, as are the constituents of Edmonton-Riverview, by Alberta's rapid decline in human terms.

Social statistics like Alberta's life expectancy and infant mortality rates have seen little improvement in the past five years. Births to teenage mothers are 60 percent higher than the national average. Prison populations are 50 percent higher per capita than the national average. Almost two-thirds of children living in female-led single-parent homes in this province live in poverty. Five percent of Albertans are problem gamblers, with the total admissions of clients with gambling addictions doubling between '94 and '96. In the city of Edmonton 43,000 children in 17 schools require hot lunch programs to ensure their only nutritional meal per day. During the summer months these children and the children to which hot lunch programs are now provided are left to their own resources to satisfy their hunger. Five-year-old children living in families on social assistance in 1996 were restricted from attending kindergarten unless their family could come up with the \$77 fee to provide for their entrance. Is this the same Alberta that was spoken about in the Speech from the Throne or an invisible one, one quietly and subtly silenced for fear they might tarnish the prospects of our prosperous future? These statistics, lest we forget, are people, and this Legislative Assembly is responsible and will be judged historically on our ability to advocate and represent these constituents as well.

The topic of education was also raised frequently at the doors and in the forums held in Edmonton-Riverview. Public education, the adequacy of its funding, and the infrastructure and instructional supports are fundamental priorities for constituents in my riding. The philosophy of the current government appears to be that education is nothing more than a means to getting a job. It must be more than that. We want our children to be educated, not trained, to be citizens who are among those who know what's going on, not among those who have to be told what's going on. If we destroy public education by underfunding, the well off will be educated; the less well off will be trained. This in the long term will create a society in Alberta that is less astute and able to assess the facts, debate the issues, and make informed decisions. It will also lead to a society that is less tolerant, compassionate, and free.

Health care, a sector near and dear to me, is also an issue near and dear to the constituents of Edmonton-Riverview. Astutely my constituents know that the root problem today, after the past four years of government, is a problem that is rooted in funding cuts and regionalization. The system today is underfunded and starkly lacking in accountability and responsiveness. This sentiment is not isolated to only my constituents, for it was a matter that the government's own Provincial Health Council addressed in its first report. Why, I wonder, were the recommendations from this council not expounded upon in the Speech from the Throne? Privatizing our health care system inside or outside the Canada Health Act will lead to the erosion of our province's and our country's greatest asset. It has been said so many times by so many Albertans – nurses, physicians, ethicists, and economists – yet this government naively and arrogantly continues to pursue this course. The quote by John Nesbitt that we are drowning in information but starved for knowledge so beautifully describes this government's approach to restructuring Alberta's public programs.

Before I leave the topic of health care, I cannot refrain from paying tribute to the thousands of dedicated and highly skilled health care professionals that have left our province due to this government's changes and to those who continue to work in a strained system. Their dedication, commitment, and contributions do not go unnoted by this member.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, my vision for Alberta holds the following elements: a government that promotes by its actions and example the benefits of functional and respectful relationships, a balance of fiscal and social responsibility; a compassionate, competitive government that at its roots promotes inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness and emphasis and support of Alberta's greatest resource, the collective and individual human resource, and a recognition and emphasis of our cultural diversity.

For much of my professional career I have worked hard to challenge shortsighted ideas and to stand up for those who have given me their trust. My goal in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, will be to continue to uphold this practice.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, there is a motion to adjourn the debate. All those in favour of adjourning the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? The motion's carried.

[At 4:48 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]