

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: Tuesday, December 9, 1997 **1:30 p.m.**

Date: 97/12/09

[The Speaker in the chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Today's prayer is taken from the Legislature of the Northwest Territories.

Let us pray.

Our Father, may Your spirit and guidance be in us as we work for the benefit of all of our people, for peace and justice in our land, and for constant recognition of the dignity and aspirations of those whom we serve.

Amen.

Please be seated.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs.

MR. HANCOCK: Yes, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce to this Legislature a very special guest, the U.S. consul general. Lisa Bobbie Schreiber Hughes, the newly appointed U.S. consul general, has recently arrived in Calgary to undertake her duties. I'd also like to take this opportunity to welcome her to Alberta and to wish her a most enjoyable two years in our province.

Alberta enjoys a very positive relationship with the U.S. consulate, which not only works diligently to manage issues on a day-to-day basis but strives to strengthen and enhance Alberta/U.S. relations. The U.S. is of course our most important trading partner. Two-way trade between the U.S. and Canada now reaches \$1 billion a day.

Miss Schreiber Hughes is accompanied today by Ms Kim Klassen. They are here today as they take a particular interest in Canadian unity issues. I would invite hon. members to join me in welcoming them to this Assembly. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery, and I would ask them to please rise.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

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

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of petitions. The first one is signed by 61 residents of Calgary-Buffalo urging the Legislative Assembly "to convert the Holy Cross Hospital into a facility to house the Homeless."

The second petition is signed by 71 Calgarians and those in other parts of Alberta as well concerned with the lack of long-term care beds in Alberta.

The next petition is one that explains and expresses a protest over hospital closure in the city of Calgary, signed by 118 Albertans.

Finally, one other petition signed by 259 constituents asks that the Lang house in the Cliff Bungalow-Mission community be designated provincially as an historical site.

Thanks very much.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I have two petitions that I'd like to present to the Assembly. The first, signed by

numerous residents throughout the Capital health region urges the government of Alberta to ensure that "all residents requiring long-term care are able to access this service in an equitable manner within the publicly funded system."

The second petition I have is signed by 35 residents of Edmonton urging the government of Alberta

to add the Truquant BR RIA diagnostic blood test for early detection of breast cancer recurrence to the schedule of medical benefits under the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. STRANG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table two petitions. One is on the aspect of taking school tax off the property tax. The other one is on the Calgary education declaration submitted from the town of Hinton and the town of Grande Cache.

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

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege today to present a petition containing over 8,000 signatures which is the result of a tragic circumstance in Red Deer this summer. The petition asks to make it illegal "for a person or persons to ride in the rear of any pick-up truck, or other open bed vehicle without secured seats and approved seatbelts."

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here signed by 24 people urging the Assembly to deinsure abortion and to "use community-based resources that are already in place . . . [for] positive alternatives to abortion."

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

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three petitions I'd like to submit this afternoon. The first is a petition signed by 170 people from various towns and villages across Alberta requesting an end to public funding for private schools.

The second is a petition signed by 86 Albertans, again from various rural communities across Alberta, asking for a freeze on public funding of private schools.

The final petition is a copy of a group of signatures from 2,162 people of southern Alberta asking for an environmental review on increasing livestock production and the proposed plant in Lethbridge.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your permission, I'd present two petitions this afternoon, the first from 188 citizens in Sherwood Park, Vegreville, Cold Lake, and Lamont asking that public funding for private schools be frozen, and the second from citizens in Irma, New Sarepta, and St. Paul asking for an end to public funding for private schools.

head: **Reading and Receiving Petitions**

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the two petitions that I tabled yesterday in the House be read and received. One states that the Legislative Assembly be encouraged

to freeze private school funding at \$1,815 a student. The other urges the Legislative Assembly to do away with private school funding altogether.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to freeze per pupil grants of public money to private schools at \$1,815 per funded student.

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to end any and all payments of public money to private schools from revenues collected by or for the Province of Alberta.

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

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I think there were three petitions that I would ask be now read and received.

THE CLERK:

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to reduce the \$25.00 application fee to access government records, to be more in line with the other provinces, as legislated under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act regulations.

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to ensure that all residents requiring long term care are able to access this service in an equitable manner within the publicly funded system.

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to ensure that all residents requiring long term care are able to access this service in an equitable manner within the publicly funded system.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, then followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask now that the petitions I presented yesterday be read and received.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to end any and all payments of public money to private schools from revenues collected by or for the Province of Alberta.

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to end any and all payments of public money to private schools from revenues collected by or for the Province of Alberta.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your permission, I'd ask that the three petitions I presented yesterday now be read and received.

THE CLERK:

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta, petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to limit the financial support of private schools at current levels (1996/1997) of per pupil funding.

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to freeze per pupil

grants of public money to private schools at \$1,815 per funded student.

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to end any and all payments of public money to private schools from revenues collected by or for the Province of Alberta.

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

1:40

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask that the two petitions I presented yesterday on funding for private schools be now read and received.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to freeze per pupil grants of public money to private schools at \$1,815 per funded student.

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to end any and all payments of public money to private schools from revenues collected by or for the Province of Alberta.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder, then the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

MS OLSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that the petitions I presented yesterday to freeze private school funding and to eliminate private school funding be now read and received.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to freeze per pupil grants of public money to private schools at \$1,815 per funded student.

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to end any and all payments of public money to private schools from revenues collected by or for the Province of Alberta.

MR. WHITE: With your permission, sir, I'd like the petitions that I presented yesterday pertaining to public funding of private schools to be read and received today.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to freeze per pupil grants of public money to private schools at \$1,815 per funded student.

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to end any and all payments of public money to private schools from revenues collected by or for the Province of Alberta.

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

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask at this time that the petitions I presented yesterday on private school funding be read and received.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to freeze per pupil

grants of public money to private schools at \$1,815 per funded student.

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to end any and all payments of public money to private schools from revenues collected by or for the Province of Alberta.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I would ask that the petitions that I tabled in the Assembly on December 8 pertaining to the public funding of private schools now be read and received.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to freeze per pupil grants of public money to private schools at \$1,815 per funded student.

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to end any and all payments of public money to private schools from revenues collected by or for the Province of Alberta.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the two petitions I presented yesterday now be read and received.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to freeze per pupil grants of public money to private schools at \$1,815 per funded student.

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to end any and all payments of public money to private schools from revenues collected by or for the Province of Alberta.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

MRS. PAUL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your permission I would like to have read and received the two petitions that I placed in the House yesterday.

Thank you.

THE CLERK:

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to freeze per pupil grants of public money to private schools at \$1,815 per funded student.

We the undersigned residents of Alberta petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to end any and all payments of public money to private schools from revenues collected by or for the Province of Alberta.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

THE SPEAKER: Hon. the Premier.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Just recently Albertans were involved through all constituencies in the province in a very interesting exercise. That exercise was really to identify the things that are important in this province, the culmination of which was the Growth Summit, co-chaired by Dr. Mike Percy,

who is dean of the school of management at the University of Alberta. Today I'm pleased to table the final report of the Alberta Growth Summit, and I would ask that members pay special attention to pages 7 through 19.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On your behalf as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Barrhead-Westlock constituency I am pleased to table the results of the response to the unity questionnaires from your Barrhead-Westlock constituents. Of the 400 constituents who responded to the questionnaire, 321 were generally supportive of the framework; 105 of those were students. Seventy-nine constituents responded that they were not supportive; 2 of those were students.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like also to present on behalf of the Member for Rocky Mountain House, who is currently representing us at the Kyoto conference in Japan, 343 completed unity survey questionnaires received from constituents of the Rocky Mountain House constituency. I might mention that given that the average number of responses received from a constituency was 250, Rocky Mountain House constituents have taken up the challenge and have been active in expressing their views and in helping shape their province. The results are summarized as follows: 72 percent yes, 17 percent no, 11 percent no opinion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table six copies of the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board 1996-97 annual report and the 22nd annual report of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer.

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

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have four tablings this afternoon. The first is a press release from the PARTY program in Red Deer, PARTY standing for prevent alcohol- and risk-related trauma in youth. These people do a tremendous job educating our youth as to the dangers regarding alcohol and particularly vehicle use. Their letter is in support of the petition I presented.

The second letter I want to table is also from the PARTY program, but this is from Calgary. They make reference to an 18-year-old in Calgary who also died last year and six brain-injured young people, injured from falling out of the rear of pickup trucks.

My third tabling is from the Red Deer city traffic service, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who also want to document their support of the petition which I presented earlier with respect to riding in the back of pickup trucks.

My fourth tabling and last one, Mr. Speaker, is a letter from the city of Red Deer indicating the city council's support for this initiative with respect to riding in the back of pickup trucks.

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

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings this afternoon. The first are memos from 146 citizens asking the

government to end public funding for private schools. The second are 96 letters from citizens opposing public funding for private schools.

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

MS OLSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table 71 letters from parents at Princeton elementary school opposed to any further funding for private schools.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table this afternoon four copies of the resolutions that were presented by the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties at their meeting in the city of Edmonton November 18 to 20. I would like to bring to the particular attention of this House resolution 31, which states that Albertans "do not favor a private health care system."

Thank you.

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

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table four copies of letters received from professionals working in the field of community rehab. These letters magnify the long-standing issue of inadequate government funding to support the provision of services to people with disabilities.

1:50

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table 163 submissions on the Dialogue on Unity.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

MRS. PAUL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to submit about 198 pieces from the unity dialogue as well. I would also like to table four copies of excerpts from the Longwoods International poll which was commissioned by Alberta Treasury.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings this afternoon. The first is a copy of a report submitted to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs on November 20. The report is of a unity consultation held in the constituency of Edmonton-Meadowlark and co-sponsored by the member for that riding, myself, and the Leader of the Official Opposition. It was well attended, and the summary has helped inform the debate.

Mr. Speaker, my second tabling is results of a survey which was circulated in the constituency of Edmonton-Glenora, receiving a couple of hundred responses. Amongst the survey results was an answer to the question: should there be a fall sitting of the Legislature? Ninety-five percent said yes, there should be.

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

MR. WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table with the House today a report on the unity debate filed by Mr. Bob Lickacz. It's a report of 24 citizens of Canada that have come together to review the situation as it currently stands and to make

recommendations to all Canadians, reduced down to a cogent two pages.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, pursuant to section 61(1) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, chapter F-18.5 of the 1994 *Statutes of Alberta*, I am pleased to table with the Assembly the annual report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. This report covers the activities of the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner covering the period April 1, 1996, to March 31, 1997. A copy of the report is being distributed to all members.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Deputy Speaker, would you kindly introduce our special guests in the Speaker's gallery?

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly a group of special guests who are officers of the Alberta-Northwest Territories Command of the Royal Canadian Legion. They are seated in your gallery. They are here because they are deeply concerned about Canadian unity and care about the debate that they're going to hear this afternoon. They are Mr. Tom Barton, president; Mr. Peter Teichrob, past president; Mr. Kerry Wittkopf, vice-chairman; Mr. Ron Rivard, executive director; Mr. Bert Sharp, past president; Mr. Hugh Green, past president. I'd ask them now to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MS BARRETT: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to members of the Assembly today 13 students from St. Michael school, located in the riding of Edmonton-Highlands. They are accompanied by two teachers, Mr. Lawrence Allarie and Mrs. Lorraine Schmaltz, and as well parents Mrs. Stella Gluwchynski and Mr. Terry Lester. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure this afternoon to introduce five visitors. They are Mr. and Mrs. Omerzu, who home school their children Kristen and Jeff. They have Taylor with them this afternoon as well. If they could please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MRS. O'NEILL: Mr. Speaker, with pleasure I would like to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly Aaron and Lynn Zelmer, who are seated in the members' gallery. Aaron assisted me in the Dialogue on Unity throughout the community. I would like to express appreciation to him. I'd ask them both to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MR. HLADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly two gentlemen who make advanced technologies work in this province: the president of Westaim, Kevin Jenkins, and the CFO of Westaim, Drew Fitch. If you could please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly four of my constituents. Three of these constituents had excellent questions for me over lunch. They are Tyson, Graedon, Carissa, and their mom, Janelda Cornfield. Please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

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

MR. MARZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today for me to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly two very special friends of mine as well as neighbours from my constituency, Mr. and Mrs. Brian and Merilyn Tetz. They were also very hard workers on my campaign, so please welcome them.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you're aware, a consultation process such as the one we just completed is a tremendous undertaking, and while all members of this House have worked very hard, today I am pleased to present three people who have made an enormous contribution to the My Canada Is public consultation. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly three individuals who are to be commended for their hard work and the long hours that they devoted to the process: Paul Whittaker from Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, who's worked on federal/provincial issues for many years, was the project manager; John McDonough, who was seconded for this project from Alberta Health, ran the research component of the project and designed the program that was used to code the responses; and Nancy MacDonald Lizotte, who's also from my department, has provided many long hours of assistance in organizing this process. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome and thanks of this House.

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

MS OLSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Joe Gillis, a constituent of Edmonton-Norwood. He's seated in the public gallery, and with your permission I would ask him to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. DOERKSEN: It's my privilege to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, six people, the first being Mrs. Dot Egan, who is largely responsible for the gathering of those over 8,000 signatures. It was her son that was tragically killed this summer. With her is her daughter Cari, and supporting them are people from the PARTY program: Patti Morris, Marlin Styner, Kim Gervais, and Mary Mann. I'd ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome, and Marlin can wave.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, in the Speaker's gallery today is a young man who's been sitting in the Speaker's gallery for upwards of five years and has served three Speakers of the

Alberta Legislative Assembly, the Hon. David Carter and the Hon. Stan Schumacher. I'd ask Moses Jung to stand as this may very well be one of the last days in which he will be attending to this particular Assembly. [interjections] That's my feeling exactly. I have to say with regrets that Mr. Jung has decided to leave and pursue a new career in the United States and will be departing shortly. We all want to wish him the very, very best. I would like you to know, Mr. Jung, that there'll be a tear on my face when you depart.

head: **Oral Question Period**

THE SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Private Health Services

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is pursuing private health care with determination. Last year they turned the Grace hospital over to HRG. Now the minister is selling the Holy Cross for use as a private hospital, and soon the minister will be defining core services, which will potentially create a whole new market for private health care at the expense of the public health care system. To the Premier: why would the Premier be selling the Holy Cross hospital for \$4 million just two years after his own government spent \$30 million to renovate it?

2:00

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the Calgary regional health authority set up a process to receive proposals for that particular site. The proposal, I understand, involves some health care, long-term care facilities. It involves some ophthalmology services. It involves some private residential accommodation. It is a mixed-use kind of thing. It was put through the community. There was a tremendous amount of input into the process, as I understand it. It is deemed by the Calgary regional health authority to be a good deal for everyone. It's a win/win situation.

MR. MITCHELL: It involves a \$26 million giveaway, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Premier direct his Minister of Health to set up an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly to undertake provincewide public hearings on the appropriate limits for private health care?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Health has indicated time and time again that as long as a facility or a practice doesn't violate the fundamental principles of the Canada Health Act, then there's no reason why it should not proceed. I have to stress that this government – this government in answer to the question, the principles – is committed to abiding by the principles of the Canada Health Act. It's as simple as that.

MR. MITCHELL: Will the Premier ensure that each of the 17 regional health authorities will not be allowed to define their own set of core services to be paid by medicare, thereby defining all those other services that they'll simply dump into the private health care system?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I haven't heard of anyone dumping anything into the so-called private health care system. You know, I would like to perhaps stress our commitment to public health in this province. It seems this day is a health day, and I will have a similar answer for education, if it becomes an education day.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it's been 173 days since we last convened as a Legislature. During that time we spent \$12 million a day on health services, or \$2.1 billion in 173 days. That is some indication of our commitment to public health.

THE SPEAKER: The second Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Regional Health Authorities

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking of commitments to health, the Premier made a solemn promise to Albertans in the March election campaign. He very clearly represented that if his party were re-elected, Albertans would be able to elect two-thirds of the members of their local regional health authority commencing the fall of 1998. Now, sometime this summer the Premier decided to postpone elections until at least 2001. My question to the Premier: why did you breach your promise to Albertans?

MR. KLEIN: We didn't breach a promise, Mr. Speaker; simply postponed a promise.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, why are Albertans smart enough to elect this government to spend \$13 billion tax dollars but not quite smart enough to elect people to the regional health authorities to spend \$2.2 billion?

MR. KLEIN: It has nothing to do with it. Mr. Speaker, I don't have the communications here right now. I'm sure that the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo has received information from people involved with the Calgary health authority, on the board, and perhaps even from the Capital regional health authority, saying: "Lookit; we're just in the middle of restructuring. We're coming along quite fine, thank you, and we need some more time as a board to bring everything relative to health in both of those regions into line." We wanted to make it consistent throughout the province so as a caucus, as a government we decided to postpone, not to cancel but to postpone the election of boards.

MR. DICKSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's just the point. Why have you chosen to ignore the views of all of those severely normal Albertans and listen only to your handpicked consultants and advisers?

MR. KLEIN: They are not handpicked consultants and advisers. They are volunteer members of hospital boards with a very serious responsibility, Mr. Speaker. I would like to remind and maybe ask him to answer this question publicly. Prior to the regionalization of hospital boards and the reduction of 200 boards to 17 regions, you know, most of those 200 authorities were appointed. Very, very few in this province were elected.

THE SPEAKER: Third Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

Drinking Water Quality

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last few months and as recently as last week public health authorities ordered individual communities in southern Alberta to boil their water. The source of the cryptosporidium and giardia organisms is uncertain. We don't know whether it came from the livestock,

the wildlife, or from some other source. My questions are to the Minister of Health. What are you doing to increase the confidence of southern Albertans that tap water is safe to drink?

MR. JONSON: With respect to events outlined in southern Alberta, first of all I think it's important to emphasize what the questioner has indicated, and that is that public health officials fulfilled their responsibility in southern Alberta and provided the warning to the citizens and also provided advice on how to cope with the situation. Also, Mr. Speaker, I've been in communication with the minister of environment and minister of agriculture, and we are looking into possible changes and modifications that may be necessary for water systems in that part of Alberta. Also, of course, the local government authorities are very much involved in this, and we are working to solve the problem. These events are regrettable, but they do occur, and I believe they've been acted upon expeditiously in this case.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to commend the people in southern Alberta and the public health authority for the work they've done, but I would like to ask the Minister of Health what he's doing to make sure that the maintenance and upkeep on the filtration systems in towns in southern Alberta are properly monitored and properly supervised.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, public health, through the regional health authority and Alberta Health, takes responsibility for monitoring the performance of our water systems in this province. They are working with, as I've indicated, the local government authorities involved and, to the extent that there is an impact or relationship, the department of environment and the department of agriculture, to see that the water supply will be safe in southern Alberta, as they do all across the province.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health if he would work with the minister of agriculture and the minister of environment and release the report that they have been completing on the quality of water in southern Alberta rather than postponing it.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I will certainly undertake to determine the status of the report. I'm sure and will commit that any results of that report which indicate that there is corrective action necessary - I do not anticipate this, but further cautions to be exercised will certainly be done.

2:10 Registry Services

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, a few years ago when the government was privatizing everything that wasn't nailed down, it boasted about how Albertans were going to benefit by privatizing registries. In fact that was propaganda. The reality is that we've got an inefficient system of registries. They seem to have a monopoly on gouging the public. What they do is fax forms to the government, and the public employees do the work, but the markup that consumers pay for this service ranges between 27 and 87 percent. My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who inherited this mess from her predecessor, and that is: how can this minister and this government justify markups on basic things like birth, marriage, death certificates of between 27 and 87 percent, gouging Albertans?

MS EVANS: Mr. Speaker, very recently while we reviewed a

consultant's report on the profitability and viability of registry agents, we learned that we needed to go beyond the borders of Alberta and checked across provinces to find out in fact just exactly what our capped fees were in relation to other provincial governments. There is an advantage to being a part of Alberta registries, because our prices average on capped fees 30 percent less than they do anywhere else in Canada.

MS BARRETT: This is the first I've heard that taxpayers are responsible for the profit levels of private agencies. This must be a new policy.

Mr. Speaker, since the government workers do all the work, the public employees do all the work, and all the private registries do is fax out forms and mark up the costs up to 87 percent, will this government now agree to allow people to go to public registries so they can save that money and they aren't being gouged for supporting the profits of the private registries?

THE SPEAKER: Premier? Did you . . .

MR. KLEIN: I'll have the hon. minister supplement, but surely the hon. leader of the New Democrats doesn't want to go back to the old system. I recall going for a driver's licence to the motor vehicles branch. I mean, this was a one-day exercise if you were lucky. You know, people were fortunate not to have to bring their sleeping bags. Mr. Speaker, under that system you weren't treated as a human being. You were treated as a number: "Take a number. Go have a seat."

Under the system today you can walk into a registry. Someone will say: "Oh, Mr. Klein, how nice to see you. Could you just wait a minute? Please have a seat. Would you like to have a cup of coffee?" You're treated like a human being.

Mr. Speaker, there is more than dollars and cents involved in this. It's a matter of providing good service and treating people like human beings.

MS BARRETT: Oh, Mr. Speaker, you know you've hit a nerve when the Premier wants to answer a ministerial question.

Okay. If he's so smart, if he knows it all, then how about this, Mr. Premier? How about we allow Albertans to choose whether or not they deal with these private, for-profit, gouging registries, which also make you queue up by the way, or allow Albertans the choice of sending their applications for birth, death, and marriage certificates directly to the vital statistics office? How about a little competition here?

MR. KLEIN: This is a good example of a two-tiered system.

Mr. Speaker, I'll have the hon. minister supplement.

MS EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier has certainly said it all. There is a 97 percent customer satisfaction out there with registry agents in the group that the ND opposition wants to provide. May I add further that I'm sure we're going to get a plethora of mail from those 229 registry agents who have been out there working on behalf of the public and really believe that they're providing a viable service but at a very distinctly advantaged cost to Albertans.

THE SPEAKER: And to all of you, my only hope is that when I have to queue up for my death certificate, I'll be able to stand.

The hon. Member for Calgary-West, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Education Policy

MS KRYCZKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The declaration and report tabled yesterday indicated that the Calgary board of education is unable to provide a quality education to their students. On every front the Calgary board is clearly stating that the education system is in crisis. My question is to the Premier: is it just the Calgary public board that is in a state of crisis, or is this a provincial situation?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the education system in this province is not in crisis, and I think it's time the people across the way had a reality check. The hon. minister yesterday alluded to the outstanding results of achievement tests and diploma exams that show that students continue to do very, very well in this province. Results from national and international testing demonstrate that Alberta students are among the best in the world. Among the best in the world.

The Liberals are so intent on going around this province talking about what is wrong with the education system that they really haven't taken the time to examine what is right, and what is right is occurring right here in this city. I find it astounding, where the Liberals have their base, that they would be criticizing what is touted to be one of the best education systems in the country, perhaps in North America, perhaps in the world.

Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago I had Steve Ramsankar in from Alex Taylor school. Yesterday the Liberals alluded to the lack of care for inner city students, nutrition programs. You know, Steve Ramsankar came to my office, and he said: I am so very, very proud of what my teachers have done, what my students have done, what the community has done to really care for people and to educate people.

We see examples throughout this province of people being innovative, of people finding new and better and more effective and more efficient ways of doing things. Mr. Speaker, I only see one board in this province – one board – working to rule. The others are working in the interest of the kids.

MS KRYCZKA: My second question is also to the Premier. The Calgary board of education has posted an operating deficit. Is this an indication that all school jurisdictions are not getting enough money?

MR. KLEIN: As a matter of fact a number of school districts in this province, amazingly enough, posted surpluses. You know, I look at the St. Paul education regional district, the Bonnyville school district. There are a number of examples of school boards that actually posted surpluses and, by the way, are reinvesting those surpluses in the education of their children. They have no problems whatsoever. Mr. Speaker, there are, and the documentation is there. [interjections] Right. You don't believe me?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. KLEIN: Will the hon. member believe me when I tell them about the good things going on here in the city of Edmonton, or is he going to criticize a person like Emery Dosdall, the superintendent of the Edmonton public, who travels the world, who was on the last Team Canada mission along with his colleague from the Edmonton Catholic, selling the Edmonton system, selling it with a tremendous amount of pride, saying: "Come to Edmonton. Participate in our education system, because it's one of the best in the world"?

These people are out there saying it's the worst. How can they say that? How can they possibly say that and criticize and undermine the tremendous commitment to education that takes place in this city, which is represented mostly, unfortunately, by Liberals? [interjections]

2:20

THE SPEAKER: Okay. Boy. Hon. Member for Calgary-West, talk about a group participation question. Those first two were. The third one, please. Briefly.

MS KRYCZKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second supplemental also is to the Premier. Given the degree of concern that Albertans are expressing, how can we continue to assure them that we support and provide a quality public education system?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, when I tabled earlier today the Alberta Growth Summit report, I asked all members of the Legislature, but I'll make it quite specific to the opposition Liberals, to turn to pages 7 through 19. Those pages talk about people development, which rose to the top of the priority list, people development meaning this thing, diaper through K, K through 12, postsecondary education – university, colleges, technical institutions – and lifelong learning, skills upgrading, and job retraining. I'll say it publicly, and I'll say it to the Liberals, and I'll say it again and again. This government has identified people development – i.e., education in all of its forms – as the number one priority of this government.

Sexual Assault of Psychiatric Patient

MRS. SLOAN: Patients involuntarily detained in psychiatric facilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse. Therefore, there is a greater responsibility on the custodian to ensure that these patients are protected. In September of this year a 27-year-old woman, a patient of Alberta Hospital, was forced to have sex with a hospital employee. Despite compelling evidence that prompted the firing of the employee, officials at Alberta Hospital refused to notify the police at the time of the incidents. Further, the Minister of Health recently condoned these actions by indicating in correspondence that an internal and external review conducted solely by his department was sufficient. My questions are to the Minister of Health. Are you as a minister of the Crown not abdicating your oath and further perpetuating patient abuse when you do not clearly instruct your appointed boards to refer such matters to the police immediately?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, it is my clear understanding that the officials at Alberta Hospital Ponoka followed proper procedures. The parents were involved. They were advised of their procedures relative to laying charges with the police, which is the way such things are done.

Secondly, with respect to the reference to Alberta Health doing the investigation, this was not the case. There was a third party involved in doing the review of the entire case. A very comprehensive report was provided which found that as wrong or as difficult as this type of situation is, the matter had been addressed properly by hospital officials.

MRS. SLOAN: Since when does a psychiatrist take the place of a police officer in investigating a criminal offence? Why did you cover it up? Did it have anything to do with the fact that the patient was a woman, or was it because it occurred in your constituency?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, when I was made aware of this particular event having occurred, which was promptly after the incident, I followed up. I have made my own inquiries, made the appropriate inquiry, and got the overall report on the matter. As I've indicated to you, this was thoroughly reviewed, thoroughly investigated. It is taken as a very serious matter by myself and by my department. As I indicated, it is a very, very regrettable incident, but the matter was deemed to have been handled appropriately.

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What happened to this woman was unacceptable. She had to report it to the police. She had to go when she got out.

If you're so committed and you've done your job, table in this Assembly the policy that shows Albertans that your regional health authorities and mental health boards know the proper procedures for reporting a criminal offence.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I certainly would be prepared to provide the members of the Assembly with the policies and protocols which apply in serious matters of this type, yes.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glen-garry.

Maple Leaf Foods Inc.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past few months we have watched the Maple Leaf packing plant saga unfold. We watched intently as the union and management went through the negotiation process and consequently a strike vote, all without contravening the union contract. Then we waited to see if the union would exercise their strike mandate under the threat of closure by the company. The rest of course is history. To the Minister of Labour: can the minister assure this House that everything that could be done was done to keep the Maple Leaf plant, located in my constituency, open, to keep it from closing?

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the member's question is timely, and I'm glad to take it. On December 15, 1996, the collective agreement expired. There were 10 days of bargaining between that time and June 3 and 4. On June 5 they applied for mediation. The province, by legislation, appointed a mediator. The mediator released his recommendations for settlement, which I'll table, and it makes very, very intriguing reading.

The task of the mediator in fashioning suitable recommendations to settle a collective agreement is always daunting. In this case, it is particularly difficult because of the notoriously long and troubled labour relations history. Collective bargaining is difficult at the best of the times but here it is doubly so for historical reasons, the acrimony which continues to plague the parties and the overriding uncertainty of the times.

Given all of this, my inclination was not to make recommendations. But, if the parties continue in their present path, no agreement is possible. I have, therefore, decided to provide the parties with recommendations in an attempt to avert another lengthy labour dispute.

Mr. Speaker, this was for the benefit of both parties. It was tabled with them, and it was read. I'll just conclude.

The parties are at a new crossroads in their relationship.

They can go forward to forge a new and enduring partnership or they can cling to their positions to the ultimate detriment of both.

I urge the parties to move forward by accepting these recommendations.

The union then rejected the mediator's recommendations. Maple Leaf grudgingly accepted the mediator's recommendations and asked the LRB to conduct the vote. Then, Mr. Speaker, the Labour minister invited both parties to attend a meeting on August 5. Sixty percent . . .

MR. YANKOWSKY: To the same minister: can the minister assure this House that the way this dispute was handled was consistent with how the government handles labour disputes in general?

2:30

MR. SMITH: Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for your indulgence. During this time this particular union, the UFCW, was in a labour dispute in a place just outside of Calgary called High River with a plant called Cargill. That particular labour dispute was settled after a short strike without the help of a mediator.

Mr. Speaker, there also was a nine-week strike between the UFCW and Safeway. That strike was ultimately settled. There was again provincial mediation involved, and there was again compromise by both sides.

Then when we went into the Maple Leaf situation, the decision of the province in the way the situation was handled was entirely consistent. Edmonton, High River, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Manyberries, Medicine Hat: it's a consistent, overarching framework of legislation that works effectively in this province, Mr. Speaker.

I can only say that I'm very sorry to see those people on the picket line and not to have jobs.

MR. YANKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second supplementary is to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. Would the minister please indicate what future plans he has for the now vacant site?

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to comment additionally by saying that I know the hon. member has done everything in his power to try to mediate the situation. Unfortunately, the outcome was not what we had desired, and some 950 jobs left the site.

When the site becomes vacant – and Maple Leaf still has a lease on it – we will be looking at marketing the site. I do understand that the city of Edmonton is short of serviced industrial land. This is a 46-acre site of serviced land. I've already met with the mayor on this matter. We will be setting up communications with Economic Development Edmonton as well as working within the government with the Economic Development department. I would like at this time to ask the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview to take an active role in this whole process because we both want to see . . .

MRS. SOETAERT: Oh, good. Set up a task force.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Not a task force, but we both want to see the maximum number of jobs returned to this site for the citizens of Edmonton. I look for his support.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry, followed by the hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

Long-term Care

MR. BONNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Calgary's seniors and their families have seen waiting lists for long-term care beds almost double from 223 in 1993 to 385 this year. Edmonton seniors and their families worry as waiting lists have grown from 288 two years ago to 464 this year. Because of this government's lack of support for long-term care in rural Alberta, the only choice left to seniors in Nanton, for instance, is to leave their community and be put on a waiting list for nursing homes in High River, Vulcan, and Claresholm. Even the Member for Highwood says: there's no doubt about it; we could use more. To the Minister of Health: why does this government's long-term care policy continue to take seniors away from their spouses, family, friends, and community?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that all across this country and particularly in this province, where we have an increasing population of seniors both through the natural aging process and also because seniors from east and west of us find it very attractive to live in Alberta, we do have increased demands in terms of long-term care. As I indicated very recently, we are placing priority on the needs of our long-term care population in the year ahead. I have announced an overall review for looking at both short-term and long-term action to plan for this need within the system.

Now, I would, however, Mr. Speaker, like to point out that within the health care system – you can use Edmonton as an example – the regional health authorities are opening new facilities. We've had excellent co-operation from the voluntary sector too. I would refer in Edmonton to the very successful and innovative CHOICE program. I participated in the opening of the third centre, which provides support for people living in their own homes but provides health care and support services at a community centre. In Edmonton, as I understand it, that particular set of facilities is not yet at capacity in terms of residents. There is the same effort in communities all across this province.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly acknowledge that there is a need in many areas for additional long-term care places, but the system is responding. We are coming up with more and innovative ways of serving the seniors in terms of their residency, and that is a priority for us.

MR. BONNER: Again, to the Minister of Health: given that at the start of this year 442 seniors were waiting for home care in Calgary alone, some for as long as 15 months, how can this government say that it is providing adequate resources for home care?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I have acknowledged that we do have a challenge, as do provinces all across this country, in moving as quickly as possible to meet the needs of our aging population, but with respect to home care, I'd just like to emphasize that even during that period of time when it was necessary to make budget reductions in this province for the overall fiscal health of the province, the amount of money going into home care in the health budget increased. Increased. It has continued to be an increasingly important part of our overall health care system in this province.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, just to supplement on that very point, it seems to me the Liberals are a little bit cross threaded on their messages today. At the opening of question period the hon.

leader of the Liberal opposition was very, very critical of future uses for the old Holy Cross site. Well, one of the those future uses is for long-term care, very significant long-term care. Now, how can he be opposed to something that will help alleviate the problem the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenarry alludes to?

MR. BONNER: To the Premier: if this government can come up with \$130 million in immediate relief for billion-dollar Al-Pac companies, why is there no similar relief for seniors who built this province and who are still waiting for decent long-term care?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, again they have a complete lack of understanding. You talk about mixed messages. How they can equate Al-Pac, which is a pulp mill, to a long-term health care centre, I don't know. Only the Liberals can sort of figure that out. But I'll tell you what: \$260 million cash in hand properly invested over the same period of time would equate to another \$280 million. That's what we're getting. We're not losing anything.

I would reiterate that the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition said in his opening question today that he was opposed to the creation of a long-term care centre in the city of Calgary. You know, they can't get their messages straight.

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

THE SPEAKER: Duly noted.

The hon. Member for Red Deer-South, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Pickup Truck Safety

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question will reference the petition I presented earlier to the Assembly as well as the letters that I tabled in support. Over 8,000 Albertans signified by their signature that they agreed with the petition whereby the request is to urge the government of Alberta

to make it an illegal act for a person or persons to ride in the rear of any pick-up truck, or any other open bed vehicle without secured seats and approved seatbelts.

To the Minister of Transportation and Utilities: will the minister please advise us if he is considering this traffic safety initiative?

2:40

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you to the hon. Member for Red-Deer South. First of all, I'd like to offer condolences to Mrs. Egan from the Premier, from myself, and our colleagues on this terrible tragedy.

This is an example of the difficulties that are created when there is an accident on our highways, when there is a fatality on our highways, one that really we have great concern for and one that we are working to address. This particular instance of riding in the back of pickups is something that we are considering and that is under review by the traffic safety initiative. The issue, of course, is one of: should or should not people be allowed to ride in the back of pickups? At the present time there is a complete review that is being conducted. There has been a recommendation that this particular element be studied, and indeed the recommendation at this time is that people should not be allowed to ride in the back of pickup trucks.

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Are there any additional things that we can do to prevent similar tragedies from happening in the future?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: There's a very comprehensive review of the whole traffic safety initiative. There are a lot of initiatives, including the drinking and driving initiative for example, the whole issue of speeding, the whole issue again of road design. All of those are under review at the present time. Certainly they are. There's consideration. With that in mind we've structured 30 stakeholder groups to bring forward recommendations. The 30 stakeholder groups have brought the recommendations to the committee. We're still reviewing. It will be coming to SPC ultimately to be dealt with in the form of legislation when it's been completed.

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you for that response. Mr. Speaker, I have no further questions.

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

Health Care System

MRS. PAUL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the past two years this government has been telling Albertans not to worry about health care, that it is well on the way to being fixed. Well, if there is one thing that this government is famous for in health care, it is planning to be wrong. A series of internal polls conducted for Alberta Treasury by Longwoods International and paid for by taxpayers reveals that Albertans still believe that our health care system is broken due to the government's callous and unplanned cuts. I tabled those excerpts in the House today. To the Minister of Health: how do you explain the fact that 51 percent of Albertans surveyed in the Longwoods poll believe that there is a serious problem with our health care system? What do Albertans know that you don't know?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I think we have always acknowledged, certainly with respect to reinvestment in public services, that education and health are at the top of the list as far as Albertans' preferences are concerned. We have acknowledged that, and there is certainly indication that those factors, which were focused on at the Growth Summit, will be considered as we have funds to reinvest in the services of health and education in this province.

MRS. PAUL: My second question to the same minister: how can you claim that the Action on Health initiative has patched up the numerous holes your government created in health care when only 5 percent of Albertans in the Longwoods poll believed that the government is doing a good job in health care and 46 percent believed that the health care system is severely underfunded in all areas?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, in the very extensive survey that we do annually as part of Alberta Health's business plan and reporting on the system – and I think the views of the total population are important, but I think particularly important are the views of those people who actually access and use the health care system in this province – if I recall correctly, the satisfaction was very positive, very high, and it was expressed in this comprehensive poll that we took, at the level of 86 percent in this province.

MRS. PAUL: My last question is to the Premier. If the government actually believes that the problem areas in health care have been addressed, will you commit to tabling later today in this

Legislative Assembly the November 1997 Longwoods' poll, which is now sitting on the Provincial Treasurer's desk?

MR. KLEIN: Well, I'm sort of looking at the Provincial Treasurer's desk, and I just don't see the poll here. Mr. Speaker, there are polls after polls after polls. I saw a poll that was conducted on March 11, and that indicated to this government at least that the majority of the people in this province were quite satisfied with the way this province was being run, including its health care system.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, and if there's time, then the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

Grain Transportation

MR. DUCHARME: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, grain producers in my constituency are very concerned about the lack of grain railcar transportation. The elevators are full, yet there are few or no railcars. This is a recurring problem year after year after year. Cars are often allocated to elevators without grain while others sit idle on sidings, empty for days or weeks. These farmers have financial obligations to meet by year-end. It's terribly frustrating and stressful for them to see this inefficiency, because they know that it is the farmers that have to absorb the costs of this inefficiency. To the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development: what can you do in policy to help these farmers transport their grain to market?

MR. STELMACH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we are doing is pursuing a further policy of marketing choice, allowing farmers to either sell their grain traditionally through the Canadian Wheat Board or sell their grain to local buyers, that will add value to the grain. One of the problems we have is that wheat has not moved up the value chain in this province, and as a result, we're losing tremendous value. Quite frankly, by allowing farmers marketing choice, we will no longer be depending on the Vancouver port for a price.

MR. DUCHARME: Mr. Speaker, what is the Alberta government along with the federal government doing to push for a complete overhaul of the grain export system?

MR. STELMACH: Mr. Speaker, this July when the provincial agriculture ministers and the federal minister of agriculture met in Trois-Rivières, we fought hard to put transportation on the agenda. To the credit of the Hon. Lyle Vanclief, the federal minister of agriculture, he listened and he did respond. He called a meeting of ministers: the Minister of Transport, Dave Collenette, and also the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, the Hon. Ralph Goodale. The problem we're facing is that there is legislation under three ministers, and it's going to take collaboration to get that process going between the producers, the Canadian Wheat Board, the grain buyers, grain companies, railways, and port handlers.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker if I could supplement further on the excellent work that the agricultural ministers have been doing. The western provincial ministers of transportation have been meeting. They asked the federal minister to meet with them as well, and that subsequently happened in November. At that time, the western ministers stressed that there is indeed an acute

danger of the reoccurrence of the terrible situation that the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake had alluded to earlier. Indeed it is happening. The ministers stressed to the federal minister at that time that some actions could be taken, and taken immediately, to deal with the threat of the danger of the situation that was arising. We were advised at that time that nothing could be done until an eminent person was chosen to head up the review. From our position we felt and still feel very strongly that there could be a lot of preparatory work done before this eminent person is selected. Now, to date we were assured that that eminent person would be selected very shortly. This is two months later and still no selection. We can't even pick the person to head the committee in any discreet time. In the meantime the farmers are out there with product in their bins, product in the elevators, and bills to pay.

MR. DUCHARME: Thank you to the ministers. I have no further supplemental.

head:

Members' Statements

2:50

THE SPEAKER: We'll proceed today with three members' statements. The first will be from the hon. Member for St. Albert, then followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, and then followed by the hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod. The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Holiday Generosity

MRS. O'NEILL: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise today during this special session of the Legislature to highlight the spirit of giving which surfaces and shines so brightly at this time of year. I wish to speak to the tremendous goodwill, the hard work, and the selfless endeavours undertaken by the many residents of my constituency of St. Albert and indeed to so many Albertans around the province during this Advent and preparation time for celebrating Christmas and Hanukkah.

The event we are engaged in preparing for is particularly lightened by the actions of some junior high students in St. Albert. For the past 11 years the school community of Elmer Gish school has collected used toys, washed and spruced up these previously loved toys and sent them on of course to the Bissell Centre. Likewise, the students of V.J. Maloney junior high have become the gathering centre for good toys in need of fixing. Then they send them on to the Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired, who do the restoration over the year and then present them to Edmonton city centres and to children in need in northern Alberta.

Time doesn't permit me to mention all, but I'll conclude by acknowledging the Kinettes of St. Albert and the Christmas Bureau of Edmonton, who gather the resources and focus the goodwill of so many people in our communities on giving to those who cannot afford to celebrate the holidays with food and gifts. I'd like to say thank you on behalf of all the people in my constituency for the goodness and the goodwill expressed by so many Albertans.

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

Human Rights and Violence against Women

MS BLAKEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Three days ago we observed the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women, more commonly known as December 6, the anniversary of the murder of 14 women at École Polytech-

nique. Tomorrow is December 10, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, otherwise known as International Human Rights Day, celebrating the 1948 universal declaration of human rights.

In Alberta we need to be reminded of these two important days and the issues they raise, because in Alberta, despite our many material riches, we do not have a good track record on these people issues. In Alberta we have witnessed the death of two women and the extreme torture of another woman in the last four months. We the Legislature, the government, the justice system, and all other agencies who are charged with protecting women from violence did not prevent their deaths or injury. I for one do not want any more talk, any more task forces, any more studies, any more delay. I want legislation. I want commitment. I want action.

We fare no better with human rights in Alberta. Alberta has gone from an independent, arm's-length commission to a secretariat. With human rights recently being amalgamated under the citizenship branch, the disappearance is complete, from a full-fledged independent commission to a desk. And to whom do we look for leadership? To a Premier who indicated that Tiananmen Square was a distant memory and shouldn't stand in the way of economic trade with China, to a Premier who would meet only with appointed officials and not with democratically elected members. If ever we needed an independent Human Rights Commission, it is now. This province is about people, not just natural resources and \$2 billion surpluses. We are failing women and those needing protection.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

International Volleyball Tournament

MR. BRODA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize and congratulate coach Rick Sereda and all of the team members on the Thorhild boys Bulldog volleyball team, who just recently returned from Cuba after playing in a 16-team tournament and placing second to the upcoming members of the Cuban national team. I'd also like to recognize Devon, Alberta, for entering a team in Cuba. This tournament was organized by Canada/Cuba culture tours.

Our boys not only enjoyed playing but also realized how fortunate we are as Albertans, as Canadians. The Cuban players lacked uniforms, running shoes, and those often had holes or were torn. The playing surface was rough, the buildings in poor condition. Our players left most of their clothing and runners behind for the Cuban players.

Mr. Speaker, as we talk about unity in Canada, let's stop and recognize how fortunate we are. Let's keep it that way.

Thank you.

Presentation of Plaques

THE SPEAKER: Before dealing with the points of order that we have before the Assembly today, I'd like to just pause for a minute or so and ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in honouring an event. During the spring sitting of this Assembly we made note of an historic event that occurred in this House on April 23, 1997. That evening was the first time in the history of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta that the presiding officer and the table officers were all women.

To commemorate that occasion, I would like all members of the Assembly to join with me in a presentation to the participants of

that historic event. I would ask that the Deputy Chairman of Committees, Mrs. Judy Gordon; the Clerk Assistant, Louise Kamuchik; and the Parliamentary Counsel, Ms Shannon Dean, come forward and stand to my right. I would ask that the senior pages come forward with the presentation items and stand to my left.

What we have is a plaque to commemorate this very historic event. What it says is: Women at the Table, April 23, 1997. It's a picture of the three of them and from that day also a copy of the Votes and Proceedings. I would ask page Joel Scheuerman to present one to Mrs. Gordon. I would ask page Kathy Hagedorn to present one to Mrs. Kamuchik. I would ask page Melanie Ramsum to present one to Ms Dean. Hon. members, there's also one additional copy of this commemorative plaque, and we will display it on an interim basis in the members' lounge, pending the identification of a more suitable location in the Legislative Assembly for the history of the province of Alberta. So congratulations to all three, and thank you all very much. [applause]

Now, hon. Government House Leader, a point of order?

Point of Order Abusive Language

MR. HAVELOCK: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under Standing Order 23(h),(i), and (j). Unfortunately I do not have the Blues, so I am trying to recollect what was stated. I believe that during her questioning of the Minister of Health, the Member for Edmonton-Riverview referred to a particular instance which was recently viewed by the Minister of Health. I believe she suggested that the minister had covered up the incident because either it had occurred in his riding or ultimately because the injured party was a woman. Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j) clearly covers this type of instance. In fact, having had some recent experience in withdrawing remarks, I suggest that the member demonstrate some leadership qualities and either publicly apologize and withdraw the remark or ultimately under Standing Orders you request that she do so.

3:00

MRS. SLOAN: A woman was sexually assaulted not once but twice, and a minister of the Crown did not act.

THE SPEAKER: The issue here is the point of order. The point of order. Speak on the point of order.

MRS. SLOAN: All right. The issue sparking debate had nothing to do with the references made by myself with respect to gender or constituency. The issue sparking debate had to do with the inaction and abdication of responsibility by a minister of this government.

THE SPEAKER: Opposition House Leader.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government House Leader refers to subsections (h), (i), and (j) under Standing Order 23. I'm not sure exactly which one he's referring to, but in no way can I find any section in Standing Orders that would cover the question that was fairly put to the minister, a question that was very appropriate. If the Minister of Health chose to take offence at the suggestion, then I suggest that his opportunity to defend himself and to explain his defence would have been in the answer to his question. He chose instead to deflect it.

When the Government House Leader stood on a point of order, I was wondering whether he was aware of some rule governing

question period that I wasn't aware of, and apparently he isn't. I would suggest that as Attorney General and Minister of Justice for this province perhaps he should be looking at how the justice system reacted to the incident that happened in Ponoka and what exactly . . .

THE SPEAKER: Hon. member.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, I would submit that there is no point of order, just an incredibly sensitive question put to the government and answered in a relatively insensitive way.

MR. HAVELOCK: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to read 23(h), (i), and (j). "Makes allegations against another member." Clearly, the allegation was of a cover-up which the member alleged that the minister had perpetrated. "Imputes false or unavowed motives to another member." She mentioned the fact that the event took place in his riding, and therefore that's why he allegedly covered the incident up. "Uses abusive or insulting language." I can think of really no other language which could be more abusive or insulting than, quite frankly, suggesting a minister of the Crown covers up an event in his riding.

If this is not covered by the Standing Orders, then quite frankly 23(h), (i), (j) are totally useless. I think it's a clear breach of that Standing Order.

THE SPEAKER: Well, we do not have the official *Hansard* yet. However, we have something that's unofficial, and as best as we can determine, pending a further review of this, the Member for Edmonton-Riverview said the following:

Since when does a psychiatrist take the place of a police officer investigating a criminal offence? Why did you cover it up? Did it have anything to do with the fact that the patient was a woman, or was it because it occurred in your constituency?

Having heard the statements put forward by the hon. Government House Leader, my assessment at this point in time basically deals with the phrase "Why did you cover it up?" Is this correct?

MR. HAVELOCK: Well, it relates to "Why did you cover it up?" and also the allegation leading from that, that this alleged cover-up took place because the victim was either a woman or alternately because the event occurred in his riding. So I think you need to read those statements together, Mr. Speaker, to arrive at the conclusion that 23(h), (i), and (j) have been breached.

THE SPEAKER: The only point, hon. Government House Leader, is that the conclusion that I will reach, though, will be the result of a petition from an hon. member to ask for a review on the point of order. So I want to make it very clear in my own mind that I understand exactly what argument is being put forward on this point of order. You're saying the whole thing.

Anything further to add, Opposition House Leader? Member?

I'm going to review this matter when the *Hansard* actually comes out, because I believe that this is a rather interesting series of statements. One of the interesting things – if hon. members would take a look at section 490 in *Beauchesne*, the phrase "cover-up" has been ruled parliamentary on occasion, and it's clearly identified in the document, 490. However, in this Assembly of Alberta previous Speakers have ruled the phrase "cover-up" to be most inappropriate and said so on December 10 of 1990, March 25 of 1992, February 11 of 1993, and May 4 of 1994. The circumstances will dictate the result of the point of order. So I'm going to defer dealing with this pending a complete

review of the official *Hansard* of this Assembly, and we'll deal with it tomorrow.

Official Opposition House Leader, a point of order.

Point of Order Allegations against Members

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's unfortunate that I have to rise in the Assembly and do a point of order, particularly during this special session, but during question period in response to a question put to the Premier, the Premier indicated that the Leader of the Official Opposition said that he was opposed to the sale of a building in Calgary for the purpose of turning it into a long-term care centre. That clearly offends section 23(h), which speaks of making allegations against another member. It could also be construed to offend subsection (i) in regard to imputing false or unavowed motives.

There was nothing in the Leader of the Official Opposition's question that suggested he was opposed to more long-term care beds in Calgary or elsewhere, where they're needed in this province, Mr. Speaker, and for the Premier to make that suggestion on the record, in *Hansard*, in front of the TV cameras leads me to question his judgment in terms of politicizing a response to a very serious concern. The fact of the matter is that what the Official Opposition leader is opposed to is a donation of a tax-funded asset to a private interest for a profit, which is the only way you can describe what's happening to that particular hospital site. So there was nothing in the Leader of the Official Opposition's question that suggested he was opposed to the transfer of that building to an alternate use, in this case being for long-term care beds, or that there weren't more long-term care beds needed in the province.

I would hope that the Premier would have an opportunity to check *Hansard* and come back into the House tomorrow and set the record straight, retract the remark, and make it clear to all Albertans that the Official Opposition's position is clear. We believe we need more long-term care beds in this province.

MR. HAVELOCK: Mr. Speaker, I find it absolutely amazing that the member would first argue the previous point of order had nothing to do with 23(h), (i), and (j), yet this one falls within its parameters.

The Premier in making his comments came to that conclusion based on his interpretation of the facts and based on his interpretation of the Leader of the Opposition's previous statements. It may well not have been related to the question that was raised; nevertheless, the Premier was putting together what he thought had been said previously in trying to respond to the question and, again, his interpretation of the facts surrounding the matter. As such, it should be regarded simply as differing opinions regarding the position of the Leader of the Opposition.

I also find it quite remarkable, Mr. Speaker, for the Opposition House Leader to raise this as a point of order when in the House daily the opposition trots out its misguided interpretation of government policy and the statements of this government.

MR. SAPERS: Can I do a point of order?

THE SPEAKER: No. I don't think we really need a point of order on a point of order.

Having heard the petition brought forward by the Official Opposition House Leader and having heard his petition based on 23(h) and (i) and his greater explanation of the position of his leader and his colleague and then having heard the submission made by the Government House Leader, I think the conclusion

artwork is very instructive, Mr. Speaker, in that it pictorially displays the beliefs, the hopes, and the aspirations of these young people for our country.

This all-inclusive approach in terms of the town halls, E-mail messages, meeting and talking with people in my constituency office, and the use of alternate media was very important, and it had to be done. We had to make sure that as members of the Legislature we did not repeat the mistakes of past consultations. We had to make sure that this was seen truly as an opportunity for every man, woman, and child in this province who cared to express an opinion to have an opportunity to do that.

Now, what ultimately doomed the Meech Lake accord and which led to the breakdown of the fragile consensus that surrounded the next attempt, the Charlottetown accord, is that governments failed to recognize that nation building and constitution making are not the sole responsibilities of politicians and that they cannot be dictated by first ministers alone. Discussions on how we will choose to relate to one another must be broadly based and held in the open. Constitutions define the essential character of a nation and as such must arise from the heartfelt desires of its people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what did I learn during these consultations, and what did the people bring to the table? What they said is that overall they liked the intent of the Calgary declaration, that they wanted to support anything that would get this issue dealt with, but they did have some concerns. They had some definitional problems. People in my constituency spoke of their concerns regarding the definition of the words "status," "equality," "unique," "gift." For some people these were trigger words. Other people just wanted to make sure that we were all on the same page, that they knew what those words meant.

Other members in my constituency felt that the declaration was short on meeting the concerns of Canada's First Nations. Other people felt that it was very difficult to reconcile the expression of uniqueness with the expression of equality. But what was very interesting to me is that in the discussions that I was a party to, we seemed to be able to build a consensus. I think that consensus came through most clearly when one participant said: you know, I have three children. Of course, that got my attention as I have three children as well. They said: "I have three children, and all of these three children are unique, but you know, I try to treat all of these children with equality. All of these children are equal in the status of my family." That helped me understand that these are not opposite notions, that there is a way to reconcile uniqueness and equality.

Now, the declaration was also seen as something to aspire to. This declaration is not a statement of absolute truth. This declaration instead is a statement of ideals that needs to be pursued and needs to be pursued with vigour by each and every one of us in our work here and in our work in our constituencies. It became very clear to me how important it must be to pursue these ideals of tolerance and equality and of shared values because of a couple of the submissions that I received. These submissions indicated to me that we have much work to do, not just about Quebec's place in Canada, not just about Alberta's place in Canada but about our overall attitude about one another.

One of the more frightening submissions that I received – and this is from an individual who asked me to please include his comments on the record in the constitutional debate – said in the answer to question 6 on the householder: being Canadian to me means being free and white; unfortunately this is changing. I read that, Mr. Speaker, and it sent a shiver down my spine. That's on

the record – I made that obligation to my constituent that I'd put that on the record – but I also want to put on the record that does not reflect my Canada. That tells me that we all have much more to do. Luckily, that kind of a comment was in the minority. In fact, there were only two submissions that reflected that kind of attitude.

Many, many more, the vast majority, well over three-quarters, had sentiments such as the following, also in answer to question 6: Canada is a model for the world in terms of its cultural and political diversity, of which I am proud; we cannot fail the world and ourselves for this reason. That sentiment, Mr. Speaker, I believe is far more powerful and far more representative of the people in Edmonton-Glenora.

3:20

Now, Mr. Speaker, when I finished the consultation in my constituency, I helped produce a report. I tabled four copies earlier. In that report we summarized our conclusions as follows:

There was wide agreement that the seven elements discussed provided a framework for a united Canada. This was tempered by concern that the citizens of Quebec might see this as another attempt to force an agreement on them. It was felt that the media and politicians of Quebec may [in fact] try to foster this feeling. There was also a concern that the entire exercise was simply a framework for the provinces to gain additional powers at the expense of the federal government.

On that point, Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't say that many, many people came up to me and made a point of saying to me: "Whatever you do, when you're talking about the relationship between the governments of Canada, the federal government and the provinces and the provinces with one another, do not give away the strength and the necessity for a strong central government in this nation." "Particularly" – and this is reflected in student submissions as well as in our roundtable discussions – "do not weaken the federal government's role when it comes to the provision of human services and particularly medicare."

Mr. Speaker, one thing that was made perfectly clear to me during this round of consultations is that if you scratch a Canadian, they bleed medicare. This is something that has to be protected almost above all other of our institutions, because it is something that truly binds us together and that helps define us as Canadians.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to just read into the record a submission made by a grade 8 student. In answering the question on what Canada means, he said:

Canada is a place where I feel safe to sleep at night. I don't have to worry about bombs blowing houses and buildings apart. We have freedom of speech, which many countries don't have, and in those countries you say the wrong thing and they kill you. I'm thankful for the education, health care, and job opportunities we have. Without that, we would just be another country in poverty. I can't imagine living anywhere else, because in my mind this is as good as it gets.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Labour.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm privileged and moved to represent Calgary-Varsity and bring their views forward during this session on national unity. I would like to thank the over 500 constituents who provided valuable contributions. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the role played by volunteers, particularly Jennifer Diakiw and Judy Wish, who organized our forum on unity.

Mr. Speaker, Calgary-Varsity clearly supports the Calgary

declaration. Calgary-Varsity is committed to Canada. Canada is a place where every individual can contribute their talents, their resources, and their ideals to a single country. The future of this country will be determined by Canadian individuals, not by a single province, and that is why this consultation process has been so important and necessary. People in Calgary-Varsity believe that this declaration represents the start of a dialogue on national unity. In the words of one of my constituents: I support the words; now let's put the words into deeds.

[Mrs. Gordon in the chair]

Madam Speaker, many of my constituents appreciated the leadership of this government in reopening the dialogue. They also appreciate that this discussion transcends partisan politics. Again, to quote: "It is very encouraging to see Ralph Klein, Grant Mitchell and Pam Barrett united in their effort."

Calgary-Varsity had some important points to make. The most significant aspect of the Calgary declaration for my constituents is equality both of individuals and of the provinces. I cannot state it any better than the constituent who wrote, "Canada is a country composed of ten equal provinces in which all citizens have equal rights and opportunities."

Calgary-Varsity often raised the issue of individual and minority rights both in Quebec and in Canada. Again, I cannot state it any better than the constituent who wrote:

Protecting the French language in Quebec should not include the oppression of other languages. For example, you should be able to advertise in any language you want.

Madam Speaker, constituents in Calgary-Varsity clearly expect that

any powers conferred on Quebec must be conferred on all other provinces; Quebec must not enjoy a preferred status at the expense of the rest of Canada.

Madam Speaker, Calgary-Varsity believes that Senate reform is necessary to ensure equality among provinces. As one writer put it, "By equality, do you agree that Nova Scotia and New Brunswick should have more Senators than Alberta and B.C.?"

Section 5. The issue of Quebec's unique character is one that provoked the most passionate debate in Calgary-Varsity. Not only was it passionate, but it slices through Calgary-Varsity just like the Crowchild Trail. On the one hand, you have people saying, "Face it, Quebec is definitely a distinct society." Others argued, "Quebec is no more unique than Alberta with its diversity of cultures." Madam Speaker, who decides? As difficult as it may be, this is a decision that must be made by every Albertan, that must be made by every Canadian.

Madam Speaker, Calgary-Varsity feels that any discussion regarding national unity should address the consequences of separation. It has to be made clear what Canadians can expect from Quebec and what Quebec should expect from the rest of Canada. To use a constituent's own words:

I think we need to reassure [Quebeckers] that we respect their right to maintain their language, their culture, and their civil law. At the same time, I think we need to clarify the consequences of separation and the problems that would need to be addressed in attempting such a move.

Many of my constituents wanted to address issues not related to the Constitution. These issues were about making our current system better. Three main points were: one, a need to clarify the relationship between the various levels of government; two, a need to reassess the transfer payment system; and three, a need to reduce barriers between our provinces.

Madam Speaker, the people of Calgary-Varsity support the

Calgary declaration. Therefore I will support it. Today I have referred repeatedly to comments contained in many letters, questionnaire responses, phone calls, faxes, and E-mails. Each of them described what "My Canada is." They want a Canada where an individual's rights are respected and where no one's rights are elevated above another's. The views are summarized by one person who wrote about the declaration, "If it caters to equality, then it reflects the interests of Albertans and all other Canadians."

Let me conclude by saying the words of a man I deeply respect, a true Canadian. Monsignor Athol Murray was my teacher. He was born in Ontario, educated in Quebec, and taught on the prairies. I believe that his words not only guide us but inspire us to work together to achieve a Canada that reflects the greatness that lies within each of us. He said:

Chart your course and the courses of your children. These children of yours are going to be individuals of self-determination, not state determination. I say to you, if that is achieved, then Canada will have self-transcendence on the most sublime level. The greatest country the world has ever seen.

Madame la Présidente, c'est clair et facile pour moi à dire: je suis Canadien. Je suis fier d'être un citoyen de l'Alberta. À ce moment, c'est plus difficile à dire au Québec: je suis Canadien; je suis Québécois. J'espère que la déclaration de Calgary rend ceci plus facile et clair à dire de la part du Québec.

Madame la Présidente, it is easy for me to say: I am Canadian; I am proud to be a citizen of Alberta. At this moment it is more difficult to say in Quebec: I am Canadian; I am a Quebecker. I hope that the Calgary declaration makes it easier and clearer for Quebeckers to make this statement.

Thank you.

3:30

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

MR. CAO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is an honour for me to represent my constituency of Calgary-Fort to speak on the subject of the unity of Canada. It is a very fortunate time that we are approaching, the new millennium, living in a blessed province in a great country. Before I joined the work in the Assembly of Alberta, I had spent time in many parts of the world – places in Asia, Europe, Australia, and North America – but none can beat Canada and especially Alberta.

Not only is our economy resilient and doing well; our people have the tradition of compassion and care for one another. Tolerance, acceptance, and respect for differences and the strong spirit of volunteerism are the traits of Albertans and Canadians in general. We are well known around the world as Canadians. We are now truly living in the global village that others outside Canada are dreaming about. We can aspire to become an example for the future of humanity.

No Canadian doubts that the unity of our country is being threatened, but the urgency of the fact has not yet been recognized by the majority. However, as elected members we are required to take on the leadership role and help chart out the course for those we represent. Living in Alberta at the moment, we are very fortunate. We have the ability and the resources to lead the search for a solution. We have three choices: make things happen, watch things happen, or wonder what happened. We have chosen the challenging choice: the leadership role. We want to make things happen. The Calgary declaration is now a part of our nation's history. I congratulate the Premier and the two leaders of the opposition on this matter.

I want to thank the people who helped me to process the questionnaire returns, to organize the town hall meetings: Sandy Wilson, Tish Grusing, Marie Martin, and especially Sheila Cooper, who chaired all the meetings. I also want to thank my constituents who returned the questionnaires and attended the meetings, especially Roger Richard and Ray Muscato, who were born and grew up in Quebec, and Ed Spiteri, Kim Hoang, and Chau Truong. They brought valuable perspectives. My thanks are also extended to my relatives now living in Quebec, especially my learned uncle Dan Nguyen Cao, who gave me the historical perspective.

Some of my constituents debated that the Calgary declaration contained contradictions: unity, diversity; uniqueness, equality; centralization, decentralization. Some debated that the deficiency in the Calgary declaration was that current practices do not match the statement in the declaration. Different relationships exist between the federal government and the provincial governments. Different provincial rules and regulations apply to Canadians. Some pointed out that this unity issue existed even before the formation of our Canadian federation and of our province. Some even attempted to interpret the statements of the Calgary declaration as support of the current local issues. I also heard extreme voices from both ends of the spectrum. But the general consensus is that Canadians have a lot of common ground. The common living activities and needs, which should strengthen this common ground, are a foundation for unity.

We should emphasize the major similarities rather than the minor differences. The Calgary declaration drew me into reading on Canadian constitutional matters, the development of the federal and provincial relationships. I even visited Kingston, the seat of Canada's first parliament, visited the home and the tomb of the first Prime Minister of Canada. There was never a single straightforward issue with a simple solution. However, Canadian leadership, both federal and provincial, has always navigated the nation successfully through difficult times.

In my view, Canada is a federation of provinces. We have the challenging and interesting task of maintaining the two-dimensional balance. The vertical balance is between the federal and provincial jurisdictions; the horizontal balance is among and across provinces. Canadians are also faced with two tasks at the same time: nation building and province building. As leaders we have to balance the two efforts.

I want to share my view with Canadians at large. Let us recognize, understand, and accept the history and the reality of French-related culture. We cannot ignore it or legislate it away. Quebec French culture has been a strong part of Canada since the beginning and even before Confederation. Let us seek out and maintain dialogue with the majority of Canadians living in Quebec, who want to be part of Canada, and accept the dominant French culture in Quebec. We should also ask ourselves a question: is promotion of French culture in Quebec a threat to our province, or is it an asset making Canada different from other nations?

I also want to share a view with new Canadians. The contribution of new Canadians to the recent successful effort of keeping Canada together has been well known in Quebec. Canada needs new Canadians. However, once we have decided to come to Canada, we should as a first priority contribute to building this nation. The nations on the American continent were successfully established by people who aspired to create a new type of nation, better and different than where they had originally come from. There was also an outdated attitude, that one came to Canada to make a good living, saved, and later went back to the old country. The recent trend, replicating from the old lands and recreating separate islands of nationality groups within the new country, should be questioned. The attitude and the behaviour as such could become the seeds of isolation and disunity.

I also want to share my view with my fellow Canadians living in Quebec. On peut toujours apprendre du passé, mais ne vivons plus dans le passé. Demandez-vous même ce que c'est le présent? La culture Canadienne-Française du Québec est maintenant précisée et reconnue dans la Constitution du Canada. La province de Québec possède tous les pouvoirs démocratiques dont elle a besoin pour se gouverner sans porter atteinte ni aux autres provinces, ni aux droits de l'homme. Comme Canadienne, comme une partie du Canada, la culture Québécoise est respectée et réjouie, protégée et propagée par tout le Canada, ayant une plus grande population et une plus grande superficie. Séparé du Canada, le Québec sera une petite enclave qui deviendra encore plus petite devant l'immense, puissante Amérique du Nord, qui s'accroît de jour en jour. L'union fait la force. L'isolement et la séparation sont la source de la faiblesse.

[Translation] Let's learn from the past but not live in the past. Ask yourself what the present is like. Quebec French culture is now specified and recognized in the Constitution of Canada. Quebec province has all the democratic powers it needs to manage the province without infringing on other provinces and human rights. Being Canadian, a part of Canada, the Quebec culture will be respected and enjoyed, protected and propagated by the whole of Canada with a larger population and a larger size. Otherwise Quebec will become a small enclave which gets smaller in relation to the much larger and ever growing North America. There are many more Canadians who can speak French outside Quebec than before, and the number is growing. In joining and growing, we find strength. In protecting and separating, we find weakness. [as submitted]

In joining and growing, we find strength. In protecting and separating, we find weakness. Statistics Canada indicated that we now have over a hundred heritages. No doubt the multiheritage individuals or population are becoming characteristic of Canada. Joining with the native aboriginal people to build the nation, we came to Canada from all corners of the world: from western and eastern Europe, from Asia, the Middle East, Africa. People from eastern Europe, especially from the Ukraine, undoubtedly endured hardship in the early days developing the land we're living on.

People from Asia also endured hardship contributing to the nation-building effort. This is the year, the 100th anniversary of the first arrival of people from India. People from Asia helped to build the railroad. I feel a personal urge to speak all the languages of the people who helped build this nation, but my limited language ability cannot express this view.

[remarks in Chinese Mandarin] Canada is the best country in the world. Since 1867 Canadians of Chinese heritage have worked to help build this great nation. In the future Canadians of Chinese heritage will help build a better nation. [as submitted]

[remarks in Vietnamese] When we eat fruit, we think of the growers. When we drink water, we think of the sources. Canadians of Vietnamese heritage always are grateful to the nation builders and are very proud of opportunities to contribute in the upkeep and continuous development of our nation Canada. [as submitted]

To conclude, Madam Speaker, I want to say something to the separatist leaders. Oui, je suis pour la séparation, mais c'est la séparation des chefs séparatistes du peuple Canadien, qui aime le Canada. Yes, I am for separation, but separating the separatist leaders from the Canadians who love Canada.

Thank you very much.

3:40

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

MR. GIBBONS: Thank you, Madam Speaker and fellow members of the Legislature. I am very proud to stand in this Assembly to

represent the constituents of Edmonton-Manning on the subject of Canadian unity. I want to declare to you my bias on the values that hold this country together. I do not want to see this country destroyed. With all my heart I want to see Canada remain unified and strong.

Of all the world's countries Canada is one of the very few to officially recognize its founders in its initial stages of development while still under colonial rule. In 1760 the capitulation documents indicated a pronounced British recognition of and support for a continuance of French religious culture. In that era religions formed the framework of communal life, education, and culture. Against the convention of the day, the Catholic religious practices and community involvement were encouraged to continue under British rule after occupation. In 1763 the Treaty of Paris formalized this act by further reinforcing that recognition. What is so very significant is that this constitutionally affecting document respecting the special conditions of the French culture in Canada under British rule was a collaboration by leaders of three major world powers: the King of England, the King of France, and the King of Spain.

Canada's constitutional beginnings began in Paris and were sanctioned by international leaders. These documents and their implications are continued in our present-day Constitution. The path to our present national understanding has many pauses for reflection and insightful input. This is what makes Canada truly distinct from other countries. We of all countries on Earth respect and acknowledge our founding cultures of aboriginal, French, and British and celebrate our many more recent immigrants. If one were to ask anyone anywhere in the world their opinion of Canada, what tops their list are statements of words such as fairness to all, openness, antidiscrimination, democratic, future for immigrants, haven for refugees.

For the past 30-plus years Canada has been discussing national uniqueness, this special status, but all the while fully recognizing it. It's like two old friends both arguing that one is more wrong than the other. As Canadians we are the envy of most other countries because of our personal security, our economic prosperity, our individual freedoms, our health, education, and social programs. These have been made possible by the strength and diversity of Canadian federalism. The Canadian experience has been an undeniable success, and Albertans have told us that any changes to the national structure must be directed toward preserving and enhancing a strong sense of nationhood, not dividing it.

Albertans such as myself are concerned with Confederation and Canadian unity. I'm a fourth-generation Albertan, with all four great-grandparents settling in the Edmonton region prior to Alberta becoming a province. My constituents in northeast Edmonton truly do come from a broad spectrum of multiculturalism and pride themselves on cultural accomplishments. Multiculturalism is about communal involvement and community participation. Albertans have shown that they are patriotic Canadians who want a strong, united country. Albertans have a strong desire to protect the unique benefits that they enjoy as Albertans.

As I represent my constituents, I find that after reviewing the questionnaires, this becomes somewhat of a complex problem. Most of my constituents provided me with an argument that explains or defends the rationale for why Canada should stay together. The views given by many come from their sense of patriotic sentiment to federalism and the protection of western provincial rights or maybe just Albertans' rights. The views that I read in the questionnaires sent back to me was a very strong yes, an overwhelming yes, for number 1. The views of different constituents were in support of different numbers. For example,

they would support all, support 1, 2, 3, and 6, support 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7, et cetera, or secondly, strongly not support number 4 or especially number 5.

Some have stated in their comments that Ontario and Quebec have always dictated the country's policies. Others said: why does the federal government give so much money to Quebec? One said: I fought to be Canadian. Another said: I fought to keep the country free as a democracy. But many have said that an issue as important as this shouldn't have been sent out as a junk-mail item. Very few were not proud to be Canadian and gave great explanation as to what Canadians are.

Forces such as Quebec nationalism and regional disenchantment if left unchecked pose a threat to the future of a strong and united Canada. By the Calgary accord proposal and the provincial politicians consulting with their electorate, I believe that as Canadians we would be eager to examine ways in which the genuine and valid aspirations of different parts of the country could be reconciled with the needs of the country as a whole. Hence, all proposals for change must be assessed on the basis of the overall impact on the ultimate survival of Canada.

My experience with the unique difference in our country started in high school when I was one of 25 Alberta students able to travel across this great country by rail to Montreal on a student exchange. Many of us were from the rural area, myself a farm kid, and we found this experience fantastic. I lived with a French-Canadian family on the east side of Montreal, toured Montreal and Quebec City with great enthusiasm. In turn we hosted the Quebec students in Alberta. I have since lost contact with these students but have taken numerous trips to Montreal, and I firmly believe that Montreal is still a very real and vibrant part of our country.

If we are able to educate each other to the differences in our country, my belief is that we must educate our youth now. If we don't, we will still be listening to the media and politicians giving their political rhetoric another 30 years from now. This view was constantly emphasized to me in the two town hall meetings which I was involved in. The great opportunity of developing a value statement along with the Premier's seven principles is that we have the chance to make a clear statement about what we believe Canadians' values are. It can become the basis of the case the federalists can make to the people of Quebec. If a federalist government can be elected in Quebec in the next provincial election, then the possibility for real reform in this country to make it work better exists.

In all these discussions it is important that we keep in mind who we're talking to. We're not talking to the government of Quebec; we are talking to the people of Quebec. What we have to fashion in this process is the means of communicating directly with the people of Quebec and a determination not to react to the statements made by a Quebec government designed only to inflame emotions and push the unity process off the rails.

My hope is that we are able to determine a resolution that will reflect the values of Albertans as Canadians and embrace Quebecers in a positive way. If we pass the seven principles or part of the principles, then that resolution becomes the basis for communicating with Quebecers and the rest of Canadians about those values that hold us together and about these things that make the country so very special.

I'd like to thank Premier Klein and Grant Mitchell, Leader of the Opposition, and Pam Barret for working together in cooperation in this process. Madam Speaker, my vote is yes.

I would like to table 248 responses assimilated from Edmonton-Manning and the responses given to the people who attended the unity forum sponsored by myself, MLA Julius Yankowsky, and MP Peter Goldring at this time.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

3:50

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

MR. MELCHIN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a privilege for me to rise today in the Legislature to speak on behalf of the constituents of Calgary-North West. I think we all feel very much the same when we get up and speak about Canada. None of us would be here if we didn't love this great country of ours. None of us would be putting in the time and the effort if we didn't have a great feeling about the freedoms and the tremendous things we're afforded, the privileges, by living in Canada.

I'd like to quote one of my constituents from the questionnaire here. He says:

I believe it's always easier to take something apart than put something together. We therefore need to value our confederation as one country, respecting all its parts but respecting its whole most of all.

I think that's very true. As we debate and look at the issues with regards to the Calgary declaration, it is much easier for us to sit back and do nothing than to take the time to put it together and make sure that it's left together.

I applaud the efforts of our Premiers, our colleagues, and especially all the Albertans who have taken part in this process. I have been most appreciative of the tremendous comments and the time and the efforts of my constituents as they've given diligent thought to the issues related to those seven elements in the Calgary declaration.

I guess what I'd like to say in preference, though, is that originally Canada was a union of two nations, or peoples, of the French and English cultures. We did start from a difference, recognizing that we were different in law, in language, and in culture. Today we've grown from that early start of Canada, and even in that context we have much to do and continue to build upon that union formed many years ago.

In thanks to my constituents, I'd like to speak to the process, the involvement that we've had in our constituency of Calgary-North West. We received over 543 responses from the My Canada Is declaration, from a brochure that I mailed out to all of the constituents of Calgary-North West, plus a number of telephone calls that we had organized at random to assess that the responses coming back through the unity questionnaire were representative of maybe the broader population.

I'd like to speak a little bit more of that overall feeling that came back. I was quite amazed, actually, that out of those 543 responses, 85 percent of my constituents supported the overall framework. I was surprised to see that level of support yet even within the 85 percent overall.

I certainly will be supporting the Calgary declaration. My constituents have spoken fairly clearly on this matter, yet there was great reservation, as everybody suggested, with element 5. Though there might have been a very small percentage that had some good comments in relation to the other elements 1 through 4 and 6 and 7, the major concern came in element 5 with regards to the uniqueness and all those attributes related to uniqueness. Forty-six percent of respondents in my constituency had reservations with regards to this one element. Though the overwhelming percentage was in favour, a very large percentage expressed options and different things that we might consider.

I'd like to take the balance of my time to literally just convey the comments of my constituents with regards to this process of My Canada Is. I thought I'd start first about the issue of how

everybody feels about Canada, just like I do. One says:

In our travels (business and pleasure) to other countries, and experiences with other cultures, we consider ourselves extremely fortunate to be Canadians. Those foreigners who know of Canada praise it, and those who are less familiar generally don't have negative views. We have been asked on several occasions how is even a debate on Quebec separation possible? Why are we even considering breaking up such a wonderful country? I couldn't provide an answer.

Another constituent says:

I honestly can't think of a place I would rather live than Canada. It isn't utopia, but when I travel or read the paper, it's pretty clear that Canada is as close as it gets. A lot of this feeling comes from the freedom that I've enjoyed all my life. It comes from knowing that my daughter can grow up to be the Prime Minister or a teacher or a day care worker or a lawyer or . . . Well, you name it. She isn't seriously limited by any external constraints imposed by Canadian society, and in this regard things are improving all the time. It means that my wife and I can travel freely across the country without significant fear for our health and safety.

Another constituent says:

I was born and brought up in India, a country with 14 regional languages and over 1,000 dialects. I can relate to diversity. Here in Canada we happen to have only two languages. We must learn to get along.

Still other constituents:

To be a Canadian is a blessed privilege only understood by our most recent immigrants. Our every moment of every day is likely better than even the best moments of any day of people in other countries. We are the luckiest humans on Earth, but have a hard time recognizing our own success and living standards, as significant as they are.

I love this country. My parents were immigrants from Austria-Hungary. They taught me to be grateful and proud to be a Canadian.

I could go on quoting constituent after constituent when they talked within the framework of My Canada Is, of the praise and the love that they have for this great land that we enjoy and even the wish that it remain a united Canada. It's certainly within the context that Quebec is part of this great country.

In a debate I think it's important to reflect also the issues relating to concerns on element 5. I would like to take some time to raise those issues as brought forward by my constituents in their own words:

Can the government of Quebec demand, in its role as "protector," that French be used as a working language in Alberta in all business, large and small, in all municipalities, large and small, and in the Legislature of this province? What will be the cost factor involved?

Can the Government of Quebec demand in its role as "protector" that the civil law of Quebec be used for Francophones living outside Quebec?

Another might say, "Surely, there is a misprint and it does not read 'within Canada'" – in other words, protecting within Canada – "when it should have read 'within Quebec'." Here it's expressed that Quebec is to protect itself "within Canada." How does it see that those issues are resolved in the other provinces? In statement 5 another constituent goes on:

I disagree that the unique character of Quebec is fundamental to the well being of Canada. The unique character of Quebec is definitely an asset to Canada, as much as the Rocky Mountains are to Alberta, or the wheatfield prairie is to Saskatchewan. However, in singling out Quebec as somehow being "more unique" than the rest of this country again emphasizes, at both a subconscious and conscious level, an inequality which renders Quebec somehow "more equal" than the rest of us.

Another constituent says:

This is a back door for the Quebec government to further suppress minorities. It will make it legal for them to suppress all languages other than French.

From another constituent:

In amendment number five, it states that Quebec should be recognized for their "uniqueness." If Quebec can be recognized, why can't the Aboriginals? After all, they were the first people here anyway. We just came along and took over Canada from them. Why recognize Quebec and not the natives, when the only thing different about Quebec is their French-speaking majority?

Another constituent says:

I was born and raised in Montreal and I left that province because I felt and was treated as being an anglophone even though I speak the French language. This hurt me to the core of my heart and I could not believe that I was treated like a second-class citizen by my native province. There was a large article in the newspaper stating that Hydro-Québec would only deal with customers in French; I knew it was time to leave. Services are slowly being taken away from the Anglophones and all the ethnics. I vowed that I would stay and fight for my rights as a Canadian and always fight for unity in that province, but eventually my soul was being depleted and my spirit was dying; this is very unhealthy.

I could go on and read some of those. I don't want to belabour it, because I do think and say that my constituents have said that they overwhelmingly support the initiatives of this declaration, though serious effort must be given to the wording and the accommodation of the issues relating to the uniqueness of Quebec. The other elements were overwhelmingly favoured by very positive support.

In closing, I would like to quote another constituent speaking of the process and their gratitude for having been involved in such a process: I believe that this framework can be the foundation to form positive reasons to stay within Canada.

Thank you again, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to represent my constituents. I'd like to table the responses of 543 of my constituents.

Thank you.

4:00

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. Firstly, I would like to thank the Member for Athabasca-Wabasca for inviting us to join Canada. That was a very nice gesture yesterday, so I just want to make sure that we all recognize his goodwill.

O Canada, we sing it often. We sing it at many functions; we sing it in groups. When we sing it, we all stand. We're very proud to sing *O Canada*. Canada is without a doubt the greatest country in the world. The federal government, the provincial government, the municipal government, all groups and organizations must work extremely hard to make sure that Canada remains the number one country in the world. We are the envy of many people, of many countries. Let us not forget that we may have different political views, but this debate is not about political differences. This debate is about keeping Canada together for the betterment of all Canadians. Without Quebec and, in fact, without any province we would be creating a devastating effect on all of us.

Men and women went to war: the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean war, and many peacekeeping ventures. Earlier today we had members of the legion here. We have to keep in mind those people that spent time and energy to in fact

protect Canada. I never talked to many of those people that said, "We went to protect Alberta or Saskatchewan or Quebec." They went to protect us. They sacrificed their time and they sacrificed their energy and, I might add, some sacrificed their lives for us and some returned injured, all for the sake of keeping Canada together.

We as Canadians must and will always care for those that cannot help themselves. We must have tolerance. We are made up of many cultures. When I look around this Legislative Assembly this afternoon, I see people from many backgrounds with unique cultures, and that's what makes Canada so great. It's because we are different. You know, when I was young, there was that feeling that if you were of British descent, you were better than the Germans or the Ukrainians or the Polish or vice versa. In our area I've seen it with my own eyes. We got rid of all of that. We got rid of that in the last 40 or 50 years. We will continue to get rid of it but only if we work together regardless of our beliefs, our cultures. We can all work extremely hard and we must work hard to continue to have Canada the best country in the world.

We as Canadians, we as Albertans don't expect any special status, and no one else should either. If people are not happy in Canada, then I suggest they move to another country, because I am sure that within a month they will all be back to our great country. It is unfortunate that we lost sight of the late John Kennedy's statement: it's not what your country can do for you; it's what we can do for our country.

I want to thank all the people of the constituency of Dunvegan that took the time to fill out the questionnaire on this very worthwhile project. I want to also thank the Premier, the Leader of the Official Opposition, and the leader of the New Democratic Party. As I said earlier, this is not a political debate. This is a special event where we in Alberta can keep Canadians together. Let's all work extremely hard to keep Canada united.

Thank you very much.

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

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The term "unity" invokes many feelings, as many different definitions and interpretations as we have different peoples in this land. Today we are being asked to debate Canadian unity in the context of a declaration, the Calgary declaration as it is known.

Preceding this debate, we have seen politicians and the media simplify the process and its outcomes. They say that the majority of Albertans approve of this undertaking. In fact, the Premier has gone so far as to predict the Constitution will be renegotiated in 1998 and that this declaration will serve as his backpocket security to know how the good people of this province feel.

It would be true to say that the majority of Edmonton-Riverview constituents approved and supported the framework proposed. It would not be true nor responsible to ignore and simplify the recurrent expressions of concern that this declaration is intended to serve agendas larger and longer than Quebec separatism and Canadian unity. I must acknowledge the volume of thoughtful, insightful, passionate, and wise submissions made and heard from the constituents of Edmonton-Riverview. The 502 received to date I table in this Assembly today. They individually and collectively have served to deepen my own sense of respect and love for Canada and its diversity of people. I must also acknowledge as the vessel whereby these expressions and views

are voiced that my personal sense of Canadian unity and citizenship is strong, having lived in four provinces and worked in all 10 in my registered nurse career.

What we are debating today is a step, another piece in the puzzle, another chapter in our evolution as a country. I do not agree with those who attest that the future of a united Canada hinges on this declaration. Our history and future is much more complex than one document, one articulation, one Premier. An excerpt of history will serve to magnify this point.

4:10

In September 1864 the American Civil War was raging. Sherman had invaded Atlanta. In October the Confederate General Hood ambushed Sherman outside the city. His assault failed to stall Sherman's advance. By November, Hood had retreated, and Yankees swarmed to the sea, hunting rebels, destroying railways, looting mansions, torching crops. To the north, west Canadians, east Canadians, and the Maritimes argued over unity. When they weren't debating unity, they were stating firm opinions over who should shoulder the better part of the national debt. A review of this debate over a hundred years later signifies that while Americans battled fellow Americans for unity, Canadians then and now fought each other over negotiating tables, offering arguments, hesitations, compromises, and principles.

This process in 1997 continues to resonate the early spirit of Canadian unity. While any and all steps must be taken to preserve our country's unity and signal to Quebeckers how integral, valued, and respected their presence is within the country, many constituents and I believe that our collective and individual sense of unity is being undermined by forces greater than our brothers and sisters in Quebec.

It is clear that a corporate economic model governs us. Economists mostly on the transnational payroll appear to be deciding what democracy will be. There are and have been political advocates of the economy-first mind-set: Brian Mulroney, Preston Manning, Newt Gingrich in the U.S., Margaret Thatcher, and the Premier of Alberta. These are leaders who promote bottom-line politics. Individually and collectively, they systematically and subliminally work to undermine the very unity that this framework espouses to protect. Agreements made, NAFTA, internal trade, and MAI hand our power, influence, and democracy over to market strategists and the transnationals, placing these entities' entitlements above any Legislature or citizen of the land. What bubbles forth is not a value of Canadian unity, Canadianism, or even human beings, but a value of profit, corporate citizenship, and freedom only dictated by the market.

Drop the walls of government regulation, dismantle what are perceived to be unprofitable Crown corporations, drive issues of governing and political responsibility away from the questions of injustice, inequality, ethics, dehumanization and oppression, exalt consumption, push questions of citizenship away from the broad public sphere into the narrowed zones of homes and neighbourhoods, . . . promote the language of trade and markets over the language of inspiration, compassion, and comprehension, . . . enhance the mobility of capital through improved global communications, hand more power over to unelected officials in the World Bank and IMF, make illplanned cuts to areas where people need more development . . . and you change the symbolism of Canada and Alberta from an evolutionary spirit and character to an investment property for fast sale.

A quote from B.W. Powe, *A Tremendous Canada of Light*.

These, Madam Speaker, are the undercurrents of concern I read and share with respect to this declaration and more so the global

environment in which it lives.

To conclude, I would like to acknowledge the constituents of Edmonton-Riverview and B.W. Powe, whose thoughts and writings I have embodied in this response. Thank you.

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

MR. STEVENS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's with pleasure that I rise today to report on what I've heard from the people of Calgary-Glenmore regarding this Dialogue on Unity. I did not hear from all or even a majority of my constituents on the seven-point Calgary framework, but I did receive input from a significant number, and I believe these views are generally representative.

Some 54 people participated in a roundtable Dialogue on Unity meeting convened solely for that purpose on Monday, November 10, 1997. The attendance of the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs at that meeting was greatly appreciated. Others talked with me on a one-on-one basis. Some 436 responses were mailed, faxed, phoned in, or sent by Internet. Many of those responses reflected the views of couples and families. Madam Speaker, my limited speaking time does not permit for a full canvas but rather a snapshot of both the uniformity and diversity of ideas and sentiments currently present in my constituency.

A key question asked in the dialogue was, "Overall, do you support the framework?" We know that overall, 76 percent of Albertans responded by supporting the Calgary framework; 14 percent said no; 10 percent said they did not know. In Calgary-Glenmore, 73.2 percent of the respondents provided unqualified support for the Calgary framework by answering simply "yes" to this question; 12.4 percent provided qualified support; 14.4 percent either did not support or expressed no opinion on this matter. In other words, an overwhelming majority, some 85.6 percent, concurred with the principles embodied in the elements of the Calgary framework. There was a variety of opinion on the specific wording of the principles. What I wish to share with you now are comments from the Calgary-Glenmore unity meeting.

While many thought that principle 1 accurately reflected their views, there was a substantial number who felt it ought to be modified to reflect an ideal rather than a reality. So modified wording was: "All Canadians [should be] equal and have rights protected by law."

Many felt that principle 2 should be modified also to reflect an objective. So it might say: "All provinces, while diverse in their characteristics, [should] have equality of status." Many thought that the third principle should be changed to read, "Canada [should work to preserve] diversity, tolerance, [respect], compassion and an equality of opportunity," and that the words "is without rival in the world" either be deleted or altered to read: striving to be without rival in the world.

The fourth principle reads:

Canada's gift of diversity includes Aboriginal peoples and cultures, the vitality of the English and French languages and a multicultural citizenry drawn from all parts of the world.

Many felt that this principle should be eliminated, as singling out particular groups does nothing for unity. Others felt that the principle was better stated as: Canada's gift of diversity includes multicultural citizenry drawn from all parts of the world.

Without doubt, principle 5 was the most commented on, with some believing it should be accepted, some believing it should be

eliminated, and many believing it needed modification. Many felt that the word "unique" should be deleted and that the principle should be reframed to read: "In Canada's federal system respect for diversity and equality underlies unity. The character of Quebec society, its culture and its tradition of civil law, is fundamental to the well being of Quebec and therefore of Canada."

Principle 6, which reads, "If any future constitutional amendment confers powers on one province, these powers must be available to all provinces," was generally accepted as accurately reflecting people's views.

Many thought that principle 7 was too wordy and that it was necessary to say only: Canadians want their governments to work co-operatively and with flexibility to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the federation.

People were also asked: "What does it mean to you to be a Canadian? What do you value about being a Canadian?" I would like to share some of the thoughts of those who responded in writing. A common view is reflected in this comment:

There is no place on earth I would rather live than in Canada, when I think of our achievements, our quality of life and the relationship between citizen and state. I am a Canadian first before anything else.

Another said:

Let's keep our discussion simple and direct. Too many issues and groups tend to create a divisiveness that is ultimately detrimental to our main objective - national unity.

Diversity is the subject of this comment.

Diversity is great and it is one aspect that makes Canada so interesting and colourful, but that diversity should be within a framework of unity.

Another person said:

If Canada breaks up, it will be broken by the people of Canada. If we choose to be petulant, unco-operative, carping and refuse to compromise, we - all of us - will be responsible for the breakup of a country we do not fully appreciate.

4:20

The pride of being Canadian is reflected by a person who said this.

Canada is a country where everyone is Canadian first and . . . whatever your cultural background, is second. If you ask an American what he is, he will say American no matter what part of the country he comes from. This would solve a lot of problems if we all thought this way and be proud of it, as I am.

A common view is reflected in this: "Equality for all! No unique! No distinct!" Another common perspective was:

As a Canadian, I value freedom - to live where I choose, work where I choose - and to know that my family has those same choices.

Another person reflected: "We are vulnerable because of Quebec's agenda to break up the country."

I particularly like this outlook.

Sixty-one years ago I started school in northern Saskatchewan. The first thing I did was to learn to salute the flag and to sing *O Canada*. I call myself a flag waving Canadian!

Another view of Canadian pride:

I value the pride and respect of being able to say, "I am Canadian!", not a hyphenated Canadian, but simply a Canadian.

Another person said:

The one thing [the framework] seems to do is reflect the good will that I believe most Albertans feel toward Quebec. That in itself is laudable.

And one last but common reflection, "I would really hate to see Quebec separate, but a person really gets weary . . . [of the debate]."

Madam Speaker, some 45 years ago a man who knew something of inspirational leadership in difficult times, Sir Winston Churchill, while addressing the United States Congress commented on dealing with the stresses of cold war politics and noted: we must not lose patience, and we must not lose hope. That was good advice then and now. Albertans have told us - the majority concur with the principles embodied in the elements of the Calgary framework. We are Canadians first, before anything else. With this we have reason to hope that we are taking a step in the right direction toward ensuring that our Canada remains as one.

Thank you.

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

MR. BONNER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is indeed a rare opportunity in the Legislature when a member can congratulate all three leaders of our representative parties for their co-operation and focus regarding an issue. However, I cannot think of any more pressing issue to Canadians and Albertans than the future of this great nation, which would require our leaders to participate in a plan to ensure its survival. This survival must continue to include all the people, provinces, and territories. I must also congratulate the efforts of the hon. minister of federal and intergovernmental affairs and his department for their efforts in distributing, collecting, organizing, and analyzing the results of over 50,000 unity questionnaires.

Public opinion is the world's most powerful force. It impacts on the ultimate success and direction of every facet of public policy. The distribution and collection of the questionnaires on national unity brought the citizens of Alberta and all of Canada to the table and has facilitated a dialogue between the public and their elected representatives. This public consultation process can only strengthen the Canadian federation and give the necessary strong signal to Quebec of support and recognition of the special fundamental characteristics of Quebec and respect for the other members of our federation.

Madam Speaker, I am honoured to represent the people of Edmonton-Glengarry. Edmonton-Glengarry is in north Edmonton. It is known as one of the constituencies in Alberta that is very much representative of the spectrum of what Alberta is all about. It has a wide range of people living in the constituency, which includes a very high proportion of ethnic minorities. It is indeed with great honour and pride that I present to the Legislative Assembly the results and comments on this unique process on national unity.

I've reviewed all of their responses and have attempted to present their unbiased results in the following statements to please share their views with us. To the first, "Overall, do you support the framework?" out of 191 responses, I had the following: yes, 157; no, 26; no response, don't know, or undecided, nine. This result equates to an 82 percent support for the established framework.

Some comments made by constituents were as follows. All of these people have given me their permission to use their names and comments. The first comment, by Emily Trace:

No. If you're making a framework, shouldn't Quebec be present? It's like having a wedding without the bride and groom.

Comment made by Marie Brault: "Yes. I certainly support this framework put together by real Canadians."

A third comment was made by J.B. Struthers to the first comment on the framework for discussions on national unity: "All

Canadians are equal and have rights protected by law." His quote:

I'm not convinced that we are all equal although I truly believe that has merit. Some of the very "rights protected by law" abrogate the equality. For example, aboriginal peoples have rights with respect to hunting and fishing which I don't share. That said, I understand, originally, those rights were granted to aboriginal peoples as concessions to facilitate treaties. Now they are recognized by Section 35 of Canada's Constitution Act. We, therefore, cannot renege.

I will have further comments later to the plight of members of the First Nations in the unity process.

In response to question 2, "What are the elements in the framework that you particularly like?" the majority of the responses to this question were written responses dealing with equality for the provinces and Canadians. Seventy-five respondents indicated in writing that they desired equality for the provinces, Canadians, or both.

I had another 47 respondents support point 2, "All provinces, while diverse in their characteristics, have equality of status." Thirty-nine respondents supported point 1, "All Canadians are equal and have rights protected by law." Another 35 respondents indicated that they support point 6, "If any future constitutional amendment confers powers on one province, these powers must be available to all provinces."

A constituent, Frank Dann, wrote, "Diversity in characteristics should not affect constitutional equality."

Another comment was made by Ms I.E. Turnbull. It reads:

I like the fact that most of the elements reflect what this consultation is all about and that is - it is about our partnership within Canada and the role of all the provinces.

I felt that question 3, "Are there any elements in the framework that concern you?" and why, was an extremely good question. R. and B. Carlson responded in the following manner.

Protecting and developing the unique character of Quebec must be done with wisdom so that it doesn't lead to "Distinct Society" or give special powers to Quebec.

To conclude question 3, Morna Storozenko wrote:

I hear you when you say this is not just about Quebec. I see a problem though, in #5. Will Quebec agree to the role of developing their uniqueness within Canada?

Moving on to question 4, "Are there any other elements that you feel should be addressed?" This question provided a number of interesting results. Some of the replies questioned aboriginal rights and responsibilities. It is coincidental that on December 8, 1882, Cree leader Big Bear was the last of the major prairie chiefs to sign a treaty with Canada. Perhaps the best response I can provide at this time was supplied to me in a letter from J. Wilton Littlechild, Queen's Counsel, a friend, a former classmate, and a member of the Ermineskin Cree Nation.

4:30

Briefly, the four conclusions were:

- i) It is our strong opinion that for Quebec to separate, secede, or declare unilateral independence from Canada, it requires the consent of the Indians of Treaty 6 in particular, the Ermineskin Cree Nation.
- ii) Secession by Quebec would alter one of the parties to Treaty 6, which would be a unilateral breach of treaties, which is a violation of international law and human rights instruments.
- iii) If Quebec were to secede, separate, or declare unilateral independence, are the existing legal obligations picked up by the other provinces? [In other words] would other provinces and territories assume 25% more of their current existing legal obligations of the Treaties?

- iv) Consent of both parties is a very fundamental principle of Treaty relations. The Ermineskin Cree Nation argues that it can be a very willing partner and be directly involved in rebuilding Canada.

A constituent, Chas. Skinty, wrote:

Provincially, we can contribute to a "unity issue." Politically, I support an equal Canada and that overview should be the unwavering mandate of the Federal Government.

Question 5 invoked many responses from the constituents of Edmonton-Glengarry. "Do you think the interests of Albertans are reflected in this framework?" One hundred and twenty-eight responded yes, 37 responded no, and 27 had no response.

Pauline Fix wrote, "I am a Canadian first and an Albertan second."

Robert Robinson responded similarly: "Not exactly. You need to stop thinking about more for Alberta and think about what is good for Canada."

The most interesting responses I received were to question 6: "What does it mean to you to be Canadian?" Here are two examples.

Roberta Hall wrote:

I am an eighth generation Canadian. We are a unique and peaceful nation and have a great gift of understanding for other cultures.

Mrs. Carol-Anne Lung responded:

There is an opportunity for each Canadian to be the best they can be - freedom to work/worship - to go from one side of the continent to the other and still be home.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion I would like to quote Stéphane Dion. This portion of his address was given to the Montréal Press Club on December 3, 1997.

The changes we are making are not designed to make Canada acceptable; it already is. They are designed to improve a country that is an overall success, but is far from perfect.

At this time, Madam Speaker, I would also like to table the 197 responses from the members of Edmonton-Glengarry constituency. Thank you.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

MR. MARZ: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today as a proud Canadian on behalf of the constituents of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, all proud Canadians, to speak on this resolution based on the Calgary framework for discussions on national unity. I would like to table 668 responses from my constituents and thank them for their participation in this process.

Over the past several weeks I've advertised for input from my constituents through local media and have consulted people in the coffee shops as well as attending six events in various locations in the constituency. This past week I've spent many hours reading and reviewing responses that have been returned to me, responses that were still being accepted and processed right up until this morning. I've read each one line by line and word by word. Although the comments received were as diverse as our great country, it soon became evident that there were common concerns being expressed. Then on December 4 we received a breakdown of the results as tabulated and interpreted by an all-party committee. An interesting thing I noted was that there was a greater percentage of respondents in each category that did not express a concern than those that did, with the exception of element 2.

The feedback on element 2 is broken down as follows: 45 expressed no concern, 47 expressed a positive concern, and 8 expressed a negative response. In all the other elements those

who expressed a concern either for or against numbered less than those that did not comment. After studying the bar graph on page 12 of the Albertans Speak Out on Unity analysis, it would appear that the Calgary framework has found favour amongst Albertans who responded to the questions except for elements 4 and 5. Element 4, dealing with the gifts of diversity and multiculturalism, was tied at 16 in favour, 16 opposed, and 68 choosing not to comment.

The other element that has not captured the hearts of Albertans is element 5, which makes reference to the unique character of Quebec. It appears to stand alone as the only element of the Calgary framework that has had more opposition, at 33 percent, than it had support, at 12 percent; 55 expressed no view. Madam Speaker, I believe this is very significant, especially in view of the fact that element 5 is a principle which has been recycled from the Meech Lake accord of 1987 and the Charlottetown accord of 1992. Both of these accords were subsequently rejected.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Many of my constituents have expressed concern that they feel the distinction or uniqueness question is being put to them more often than the Quebec referendums. I have concerns, Mr. Speaker, about assumptions that may have been made in the interpretation of the responses in the consultation process. The document titled *My Canada Is* states that

with the overall results showing 76 % support for the framework, it is evident that most Albertans focused on the framework as a whole, rather than on specific elements.

Is it then being assumed that if you agreed on some of the elements but did not comment on other specific elements, you then support those elements? I hope that's not the case. I don't believe we can make such an assumption any more than we can assume that all those Albertans that did not respond at all must be in favour or they would have told us otherwise.

Tomorrow in this Assembly we'll be asked to vote on a resolution, a resolution that will be a guide for our future constitutional amendment. This Assembly, on behalf of the people of Alberta, will concur with the principles embodied in the elements of the Calgary framework. There are no exclusions of any of the elements in the resolution, and it is not amendable. So as I understand it, that means all of the elements are included in the resolution.

I fully understand, Mr. Speaker, that any future constitutional amendment must be approved by referendum. I do have a concern that if this Assembly passes this resolution as is, we on behalf of all Albertans are sending a message to our fellow Canadians in Quebec that although we are equal, we feel Quebec is without equal. That is what unique means: without equal. If we pass this resolution now and then in the future through a referendum defeat a constitutional amendment that states the same thing, we will experience a loss of credibility with Quebecers, and the interests of national unity will suffer a serious setback instead of being advanced.

In my opening comments I talked about responses I've received from my constituents. Although there were some concerns expressed about all of the elements, there was really no commonality of those concerns, and their numbers were few except for number 5. Of those 668 responses, 35 percent were in agreement with some conditions, 27 percent were negative, and many of those expressed concerns that any agreement on their part would probably be misconstrued as total agreement. Thirty-six percent agreed with many of the elements but definitely not to number 5

or any reference granting Quebec special title or status. Two percent dealt with a variety of other concerns. This makes a total of 63 percent of the 668 constituents that responded not willing to support element 5, which most believe to be the most significant element of the framework.

I've also had many opportunities to consult with constituents on a personal level, including many who stated they did not and/or would not send in a response. Again, number 5 was their major concern. Many stated they felt the questionnaire was confusing, contradictory, and they were tired of having distinct, unique status for Quebec being forced upon them regardless of what they say. So why bother responding? I feel it's most unfortunate that people feel that way, but it's difficult not to sympathize with their feelings. It is evident that many Albertans would like to endorse the majority of the elements in the Calgary framework, especially those that speak of equality of individuals and equality of all provinces. Those are the issues Albertans want us to focus on. However, the inclusion of element 5 tends to contradict the principles of those other elements that speak of equality and cooperation in spite of diversity. Ultimately, any constitutional amendment will be challenged and interpreted by the courts.

4:40

The inclusion of a statement naming Quebec as unique will have to be defined. By allowing such a statement to be made now as a basis for a future constitutional amendment, we are saying that we trust the courts to ensure that it does not mean any special treatment for Quebec. The question is: are Albertans ready or willing to do that? At a time when the media is carrying stories about the lack of confidence Albertans have in our courts, one can only wonder how much confidence they would have in a Supreme Court interpretation of such a wording. Mr. Speaker, our country cannot exist in harmony with such distinctions any more than a family can exist in harmony by singling out and identifying a favourite child.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, based on the input from my constituents it is evident to me that there is a concern about the unity of our country. Efforts to resolve this issue are to be commended as long as they are based on equality for all, and I applaud those efforts by the Premiers. However, for a future constitutional amendment to be successful, it must have a solid foundation. From what I've heard, most Albertans do not believe element 5 should be part of that foundation. I believe they will need some assurance before a vote is taken that their concerns regarding the inclusion of element 5 will be taken seriously and not lost or ignored.

On behalf of my constituents as well as all those other Albertans who expressed their concerns regarding the inclusion of number 5 in the framework, I am asking that those assurances be given in this House before a vote is taken and before support is given.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice.

MR. HAVELOCK: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to make some brief observations regarding the unity debate. For quite some time, and I believe inappropriately so, we have let those who wish to dismantle Canada set the national agenda. Clearly, a unilateral declaration of independence by Quebec, regardless of the process used, has no basis in law. Rather, Quebec's political elite has simply assumed the existence of such a right. Rather remarkably, we have a federal govern-

ment which, despite the clear need for national leadership, continues to capitulate its moral and legal authority on this issue through its muted response. The Prime Minister as recently as Sunday indicated a willingness to negotiate with Quebec if, based on a clear referendum question, the "yes" side garners significant support. Negotiate what, Mr. Speaker? An agreement based on an unconstitutional referendum vote? As a result, the provinces have been forced to fill the vacuum created by an absence of federal direction.

Our government, in conjunction with all parties represented in this House, has entered into a grassroots dialogue with our constituents to ensure the message we take to the unity table is consistent with what Albertans want. This is a timely initiative, especially in light of the failure of previous national unification efforts, which supported the interests of politics as opposed to the interests of Canada. That still begs the question: what is the solution? The feedback from my constituents confirms that we regard ourselves as Canadians first and that all Canadians and provinces are and must be treated as equal. We must respect our gift of cultural diversity, including Quebec's French-speaking majority, its culture, and civil laws, but there should be no special status for any segment of society. We must not ignore another equally important message, that being support for the rebalancing of federal and provincial roles.

I had the pleasure this past week of engaging Quebec's *Ministre de la Sécurité publique*, M. Pierre Bélanger, in conversation at a national Justice ministers' meeting. The discussion eventually turned to unity. When I asked Pierre what was his motivation to separate, he simply said: *le Canada ne changera pas*. Canada will not change. Pierre suggested that without separation Canada would remain paralysed due to the federal government's refusal to substantively redefine Confederation. For Pierre, separation through referendum was inevitable.

Given that we can expect another referendum in the near future, Mr. Speaker, we should develop our response now. The process must include a concise referendum question, including an explanation of the legal, financial, and cultural implications of secession, a recognition of the rights of Canadians outside of Quebec to participate in the referendum process, and a constitutional amendment establishing the conditions under which Canada and the provinces would negotiate with Quebec. Furthermore, we must unequivocally disassociate ourselves from the referendum process which has been used to date. In conjunction with such rejection, our message to Quebecers should be honest, direct, and uncompromising: *on veut que vous restiez partenaire dans le Canada; on veut que vous nous aidiez à changer cette nation*. But just as we must be direct in our message to Quebecers, so too must we be as direct with Premier Bouchard. Premier Bouchard, Quebec is not yours to take.

Thank you.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise and speak on behalf of the constituents of Edmonton-Gold Bar on Motion 23. Many citizens expressed their concern over the future of this country during this public consultation process on unity. A strong majority supported the elements of this framework. All results were similar regardless of the format: people at town hall meetings, people at the Saturday morning meetings at the Capilano market, and of course the 450 who responded by

mailing in their *My Canada Is* brochure. These people all made their feelings about this country perfectly clear to me. It is an honour to read through these brochures, discovering just how passionate Canadians are about their country. There is no doubt, no doubt at all, that every Canadian has an opinion about Quebec and the issue of national unity.

We are as a country 130 years old. We are however, Mr. Speaker, at a crossroad. We can continue as one country by changing our federal/provincial responsibilities, or the country will probably break up. In the meantime, all Canadians continue to pay a price for our uncertainty. In a capital-intensive economy driven by exports, we all pay for our situation with a reduced standard of living.

What does Quebec want? This is a question we've all heard this fall, and now it is part of our political culture. Most recently it was answered, on October 20, 1995, by a 49.4 percent yes vote. That means about six in 10 francophone Quebecers appear to have voted to secede from Canada.

Whether Quebec now moves to full sovereignty, remains a key part of the Canadian family, or finds another solution between those two will have important implications not only for Canada but also for our neighbour the United States and the wider global community. If Canada, a country with so many assets and so many opportunities, cannot cope successfully with its unity problems, cannot cope successfully with multilingual, multi-ethnic societies, how are the countries of eastern and central Europe or other parts of the world going to deal with their problems, their violent internal strife?

4:50

I wish, Mr. Speaker, our Premier and all his provincial counterparts the very best in their future efforts to resolve this unity issue. If you fail, Mr. Premier, we all fail. If this unity issue cannot be resolved without the separation of Quebec, the resulting uncertainty and instability will be harmful for both Canada and Quebec. Such an outcome would represent a failure both of Canada's experiment in diversity and of Canada's international experience with reconciliation and compromise.

It would appear to me after these fall consultations that there are three points we must consider, Mr. Speaker. We can decentralize legislative authority to the degree that a majority of Quebecers will decide to remain a part of Canada. If we accommodate Quebec, however, then we must be prepared to recognize other issues from other regions of Canada, including some that have been forwarded to me by alienated constituents of Edmonton-Gold Bar. The third point is that we must address the issue of self-government within Canada to those of our First Nations who want it.

Mr. Speaker, I would like now to repeat the words of Mr. Jim Wiesner of 58th Street in Edmonton-Gold Bar. Mr. Wiesner's reasons why he is a proud Canadian are worth repeating.

I am proud to be a Canadian:

- because of the beauty of our land; the majesty of the mountains; the far horizons of the prairies; the sweep of the shorelines; the abundance of the farmlands; the sparkle of the ten thousand lakes and rivers – even the forbidding barrenness of the North.
- because of the rich diversity of our people. We are not a melting pot, but a unique union of minorities; each of us proud of his origins, but prouder still to be a Canadian.
- because we are a multicultural country; two basic languages, and – woven through the fabric and enriching it – the sound of other tongues, all united in praise of "the true North, strong and free."
- because our country was not born in nor does it [have to] live

in violence. We harbour no hate, we covet no territory, we envy no other people.

- because our heritage confers such bounty. Our laws and traditions have been built on faith in God and man, on an unflagging love of freedom, and on respect for the rights of others. Our physical resources have not yet been fully contemplated, much less measured.
- because in Canada, the operative word is Tomorrow, not yesterday. Our greatness rests not only in our history, but in our future. Our destiny has yet to be fashioned.
- because my pride in Canada does not cause me to respect other nations or other peoples less. I am Canadian, yes; I am also a citizen of the planet Earth and a brother of every other man.

Mr. Wiesner's comments, Mr. Speaker, reflect the majority of what I was told on this issue by the constituents of Edmonton-Gold Bar.

However, we cannot forget the contributions made by the French-speaking pioneers to this fine province. One just has to look at the map of Alberta to see the positive influence the French pioneers have had. Place names all over the province indicate this: Lacombe, Lac Ste. Anne, Lac La Biche, Beaumont, Falher, La Corey, and St. Albert, to name a few.

We must consider francophone communities outside Quebec in this unity discussion. These communities will suffer if the province of Quebec gains independence. A vast majority of Francophones in Alberta and other provinces are strong federalists and fear their culture will be at risk if Quebec secedes from Canada. There are over 65,000 Franco-Albertans residing in and around this province. Liane Maisonneuve is one of them. I'm very proud to have her live in my constituency. She is a direct descendant of Marie-Anne Gaboury, who in 1808 became the first European woman to settle in Fort Edmonton. One of her sons, Mr. Speaker, was born in Medicine Hat. Her views on number 3 in the framework are shared by other people. She would like to see the word "tolerance" replaced with "respect." Tolerance means "you put up with something, not that you accept it." She would prefer to see her culture respected in this province, not tolerated.

It should be pointed out to the rest of Canada, including Quebec, that this province doesn't deserve the anti-French label that has developed. In November 1993 this Legislative Assembly adopted Bill 8 giving Franco-Albertans the right to their own school boards. It took over 100 years for the province to give back to its francophone population a right it had enjoyed until 1892.

The active promotion, as I have been told, of multiculturalism has not worked in this country. Many citizens tell me they are content just to be called simply Canadians. They are insulted when no mention is made of them on the census forms.

All views on Quebec must be heard in this debate. Laura Williamson of 45th Street in Edmonton-Gold Bar wrote to us, and I would like to quote a part of her letter. She states:

We are even rewriting our history to suit Quebec. We have now become known as a nation of two founding nations. On CBC news one evening, a constitutional expert from the University of Toronto confessed that nowhere in the original constitution that began Canada is there a mention of two founding nations. Eugene Forsey, another constitutional expert, in his book, *A Life on the Fringe*, concurs. I have always contended there are many founding nations in Canada. Who built the railways, the roads; who homesteaded and cleared the land to grow the finest wheat in the world, built bridges and businesses and developed the oil industry which has contributed so many dollars to the Canadian economy? Who started the forestry and fishing industries in B.C.? And we never mention the native people in the founding nations context.

Mr. Speaker, these are the words of Laura Williamson of 45th Street in Edmonton.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the hon. Mr. Hancock and his staff for organizing this unity issue, this dialogue. They've done a tremendous job, and I wish the Premier and Mr. Hancock Godspeed on their trip to Ottawa.

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

MR. McFARLAND: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to present to you and Members of the Legislative Assembly some of the views from constituents of the Little Bow riding. Two hundred and eighty-seven respondents to the Calgary declaration indicated that they wanted their views shared with me, and I will table their views if each and every one of them wishes me to do so. In the limited time that I do have, I'll break down their comments in a way that fairly reflects these constituents' views from this part of Alberta and Canada.

Seventy-two percent of my constituents support in varying degrees the overall or general framework of this document; 16 percent said no, definitely; 10 percent had no comment; and 2 percent had other conditions of support. We must remember that this support should not be interpreted to mean that 72 percent of these Albertans support all components of this framework.

Response to question 2 indicated that, generally speaking, this is a motherhood type of statement. Ninety-three percent of the people agreed in a very general way with questions 1 to 7. More specifically, the majority liked questions 1, 2, 3, and 6. When it came to question 3, additional comments from 17 percent, a very significant number, portrayed the feeling that although the desire is there to keep Canada as one, there has to be a limit.

The second strong comment stated that there should be no special rights or treatment to Quebec and that their culture is no more unique than any other group or province. Whether constituents agreed with the framework or not, 27 percent reiterated in their written comments that all Canadians and provinces should be equal. Their opinion is that equality isn't negotiated on compromise or on a sliding scale based on your cultural heritage or any particular language. The quoted response from Enchant, Alberta: "Any type of special status or distinct society must not occur. It does nothing but create hate."

5:00

Question 4 was generally accepted, but 37 percent of the comments reflected a very uneasy feeling with continual reference to hyphenated Canadianism, divisive unity debates, as well as aboriginal issues and French language being "jammed down our throats."

Question 5 has the strongest level of rejection in Little Bow. Seventy-nine out of 83 indicated that they didn't care for this part of the Calgary declaration at all. There is not a great deal of trust in politicians, and referring to one part of Canada or one culture as a distinct culture is very divisive. This quote from a retired and happy couple living in Coaldale said, "Should not the government have a role to protect unique characteristics in all provinces, not just Quebec?"

Question 6 had a common theme, Mr. Speaker: patriotism, pride in being a Canadian, living in peace and harmony from sea to sea. One Picture Butte resident responded:

To be Canadian means the freedom to be who I am within the jurisdiction of the Constitution of Canada and the Charter of Freedoms and Rights. It means liberty but not licence.

Question 7 was best summed up with the following words: too

warm and fuzzy. There was no clear consensus one way or the other.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that the constituents in Little Bow are any different than any other part of this province or our wonderful country called Canada. They do look at themselves as patriotic Canadians, willing to live and let live, willing to accept each other on an equal, national footing, but they do have issues that they don't particularly agree with.

[The Speaker in the chair]

Those other comments that they made addressed the following: wasting time and money again and again on this unity subject; our justice system, the soft treatment of criminals, young offenders; a strong discomfort with special status for language and culture and a strong desire to have equality for all; an elected senate; and a national referendum on the entire unity issue.

Like one of my colleagues before me, Mr. Speaker, I too am very proud to be part of this province of Alberta in this country called Canada. In 1898 my great-grandfather began ranching near Waterton in southwest Alberta, raising livestock for the North-West Mounted Police, a long way from his job as a millwright in Ireland. My wife's great-grandfather came to Alberta from France after the turn of the century. I doubt that any of us can imagine what it was like to arrive on a train in Claresholm or on a wagon in the middle of the prairie surrounded by miles and miles of grass and few inhabitants to speak of only to find your neighbour was from Scotland, Germany, Finland, or some other distant country, many speaking a different language, and the only thing you had in common was hard work, survival, and proving up on your claim. Perhaps that's why this new Canadian told his family that now they were in Canada, and they would now learn and speak English.

My children are fifth generation Albertans and Canadians. Through marriages our extended family over these past hundred years now has French, Irish, Belgian, English, German, Polish, Russian, Scandinavian, Korean, and Cree connections. No doubt I've missed a few others. We have, like millions of Canadian families, benefited by an amalgamation of each other's gifts and talents. From childhood our true friends were not chosen based on their language or heritage. Thankfully, there are no laws that prevented my best friends having their family roots in Czechoslovakia, Holland, or Japan.

To this day there are no special laws preserving or recognizing their talents, their devotion to Canada, their family cultures, or their languages. They alone, just like many, many other families in Little Bow, decided they wanted to be Canadian without preferential treatment or consideration. Their children and their grandchildren and their great-grandchildren were both born Canadian, and they're proud of it. They, too, are proud of their past, so let's keep it that way.

Mr. Speaker, I believe my constituents truly want a total Canada, one nation. They believe the offers have been on the table for years, and they do support what we have but are not prepared to compromise anything more than that to keep this nation a united country. May I take this opportunity to thank my colleague from Calgary-Fort for concluding his statement on separatism, and may I thank you for the opportunity to present and relay to the Assembly here in Alberta Little Bow's contribution to this Calgary framework.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I understand that the hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services will now be called, and then I will ask the hon. member to please recognize that the speaker after him will be the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow. If she's not feeling that well, it might be best if we could hear her remarks before we adjourn today. Then everybody would be very happy.

The hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, please.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I feel very honoured and privileged to be able to make a few comments on behalf of my constituents on this extremely important issue. I'd like to start out by saying that this issue was handled in a truly nonpartisan way, and I'd like to acknowledge the co-operation of the Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert in our endeavours to gain the opinions from both of our constituencies. I'd like to also thank the three leaders for setting the tone by making this a truly co-operative venture, and I think the level of debates and comments in the House is reflective of that.

I think it'd be quite important to reiterate the motion that we are in fact debating at this point. It says:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta be guided by the input received from Albertans during the public consultation process, Dialogue on Unity, and on behalf of the people of Alberta concur with the principles embodied in the elements of the Calgary framework, recognizing that the Calgary framework is not an amendment to the Constitution acts of 1867 to 1982 and that the specific wording of any amendment to those acts must be approved by Albertans in a referendum in accordance with the Constitutional Referendum Act.

I think it's important that we take our feedback in this context. The motion is a statement that I think reflects the position of all members and reflects the views of the majority of the Albertans who responded. I think that this motion does that as close as can be hoped for.

I also appreciate the fact that the views of Stony Plain constituents were approximately 80 percent in favour of the Calgary framework. This is not saying that they were in favour of every aspect of it, but in general terms they were 80 percent in favour of it as a package. However, the question that I think was most significant is the one what says, "What does it mean to you to be a Canadian?" It was gratifying to read such varied yet overwhelmingly positive responses to this question. I'd like to thank those constituents for sharing their views.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a few moments to share some of the comments that the constituents took the time to write. These are pretty much at random out of the pile of some 230.

My Canada is a country where ordinary citizens and governments at every level work for the betterment of all. I would hope that we could set aside those things which divide us so that we may pursue the best education system, health care system, and social justice system in the world. I envision a country where we have so many opportunities to meet fellow citizens and visit other parts of the country that we might constantly grow in understanding of each other.

Another one writes: what it means to me to be a Canadian is "to be a part of this whole country," and "whole" is in bold letters. "I love the diversities, the different peoples, the amazing physical beauty everywhere you look!" And the additional comment went on as follows:

Having been from coast to coast, I and my family appreciate how fortunate we are to live in such a beautiful, truly blessed part of the world. My hopes and prayers are that everyone will work to keep Canada as one country. Every part is needed. Let everyone try to work in harmony and love and tolerance!

5:10

Another commented:

The UN is right to say Canada is great. When will Canadians wake up and agree?

It should be said loud and clear that while founded by England and France politically, Canada is in fact multi-national in its origins with many languages, many cultures and many national origins, each of which are free to nurture their own language and culture.

Another one:

What it means to me to be a Canadian is to be part of a wonderful country where everyone is equal. I am a unique and special person, just as all Canadians are. I have my own culture, traditions, etc. within my home, but would never demand special status or privileges. I am secure in the fact that I am part of a diverse country with many different cultures, etc. and that we all live harmoniously. Quebec is unique as is Alberta and all other Provinces, but it is not necessary to recognize this in our Constitution, or the federal Government had better recognize each citizen of Canada as special.

Another one goes on to say:

To be a Canadian means I come from a country where love, honour, respect, personal value and worth are all available to me each and every day. The freedom to live and give.

Still another one:

I watch international news programs and I'm always thankful to be Canadian. When I traveled, I was proud to be Canadian.

You need to make the "common" man understand that he is not losing anything by recognizing the diversity of Canada's culture. All the cultures are afraid of losing, and it's fear that blinds people to beauty. My fear is losing any part of the beauty of Canada.

Another one goes on to say:

What it means to me to be a Canadian is the freedom to voice my opinions, seek financial security, raise my family with minimum interference. A special feeling that I live in the best country in the world.

Yet another one says:

I am fortunate enough to be a citizen of the best country in the world – standard of living, health care, diversity of culture and scenery.

She or he goes on to say:

I was born in Quebec but moved to Alberta in 1948 when I was a small child. I am firstly, a proud Canadian and secondly, a proud Albertan. I would not consider living any place but Alberta. It is vital we retain Quebec or we will see the dissolution of our great country. But, although Quebec is indeed unique, they should not be given any rights not accorded to all provinces. Our Premier, as usual, is right on track.

The next one: to be a Canadian means "to be tolerant and neighborly. To feel welcome and at home no matter where I am in this country."

Another constituent goes on to say:

Having said all that, I feel that we need to take a very strong stand on unity. Make it impossible (constitutionally) for anyone to separate. When this generation of separatists is gone, perhaps the idea will just fizzle out. I don't feel that I know enough about the laws involved – it's a large, grey area. We need to know what the Constitution says – in layman's terms. The thought of Canada's break-up scares and saddens me. Just tell them (Quebecois) no!

Mr. Speaker, these quotes represent how most of the constituents who responded generally feel about being Canadian. I wholeheartedly share these feelings.

There were concerns expressed, as in other member's constituencies. These were expressed primarily to question 5. There was a very strong opposition to special status but, I might add, to special status for anyone. The important thing is, the overwhelm-

ing position is: keep Canada equal between provinces and unique in the world. Albertans recognize the diversity of Quebec but also feel strongly that special rights should not be granted.

By passing this motion, the majority of Albertans are still saying that Quebec can and should keep their unique identity and that they are a vital and important part of Canada. Let us work to build an even better Canada so that those with concerns and apprehensions will be proud to join the majority in supporting one Canada for all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege today to rise and report to this Legislature on the unity consultations from Calgary-Bow. My constituents wish to congratulate and thank our Premier for undertaking this wide consultation and for the opportunity to express their views on the topic of unity. We received 261 written responses to My Canada Is from Calgary-Bow residents. An open public meeting was held on November 1 in the community of Parkdale. The format utilized at the meeting was a large group discussion followed by breaking into small focus groups to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to be heard.

The only task for the large group discussion was to answer the question: what do you believe it means to be a Canadian? General themes were developed through consensus, and these were: patriotism, compassion, value our high standard of living, citizenship. There were two types of comments. One was: I was born here and lived here all my life. The other was such as: "I immigrated to Canada at a very [early] age and Canada does not owe me anything. I thank God I had the chance to live in such a great place." Freedom of choice was another theme that was developed, and some of the comments were: freedom of speech, freedom of voting, movement, religion, and opportunities, and the opportunity to participate in a mosaic of cultures.

My constituents mentioned many times that they appreciated the opportunity to have input into this process. Small groups were asked to review, affirm, or modify the seven principles in the framework document.

There was general agreement with the first principle, "All Canadians are equal and have rights protected by law." There was also general agreement on principle 2. However, one group suggested the following amendment: the addition of the words "and territories" to make it more inclusive.

Principle 3 was agreed to generally but some thought that the principle is loftier than everyday achievement. A suggestion was made that the principle could have read: "Canada is graced by diversity of opportunity."

Principle 4 was not supported by consensus. Some concerns were expressed about the promotion of multiculturalism by governments. However, the encouragement of an individual's observation of their culture and language was very acceptable to the group.

There were concerns expressed with principle 5. Some modifications of the principle were expressed, such as: "In Canada's federal system, respect for equality underlies unity." A second suggestion was to change "is fundamental" to "contributes." Another was to add at the end of the second sentence: "as long as not detrimental to other Canadian Legislatures and governments."

There was a consensus of agreement with principle 6, and the

suggestion again was that "and territories" should be added.

Two-thirds of the participants agreed with principle 7. A modification was suggested, that the first statement stand as it is, followed by: "provinces and territories renew their commitment to work in partnership with the government of Canada to best serve the needs of Canadians."

There was some support for adding an eighth principle. Not taking away the fact that French and English are the official languages, they would like to see: "English will be the official working language for all of Canada."

Results from the 261 written responses were as follows. Eighty-two percent of the participants supported question 1, which was the general framework. For question 2, "the elements in the framework that you particularly like," the first choice, chosen by 64 percent, was principle 2, equality of provinces. The second choice, 49 percent, was in favour of principle 6. For question 3, "are there . . . elements that concern you," principle 5 was identified, with 34 percent expressing concern. Some of the concerns noted were: the meaning of "uniqueness," centralization of the federal government's power, and the Quebec language law. Question 4: 50 percent supported this question, 16 percent supported it with some qualifications, and 19 percent said no. I think you could say in total that 66 percent agreed that the framework reflected Albertans' interests.

5:20

Mr. Speaker, I was deeply touched by the comments of my constituents. Their words were very thoughtful, meaningful, and beautiful, and their comments speak much louder than I do. I'd like to read some of their comments in answer to the last two questions. Question 6, "What does it mean to you to be a Canadian?"

Being Canadian means that two equally rich and treasurable cultures and languages and heritages have been bestowed on me, both of which I am free to celebrate. Canada is also one of the best lands to be born a woman in.

To have the freedom to express views which may not be "politically correct."

To be aware of all parts of Canada and their ethos and differences. Our diversity is our strength. Our compassion and understanding is a means to solving any of our internal differences.

When I think about being a Canadian, I'm sure I feel the same as if I had won the lottery. I am very lucky to live in the best country in the world.

Pride in Canada has always been paramount in my life; 5,965 days in a theatre of war, and then returned to Canada, because I had volunteered for further service in the Pacific theatre.

It means living in a just, merciful society; a multicultural, multi-religious society; a society of peace, good-will, equality among all peoples; a society which ensures all citizens the right to: education, health care, pension – along with the basics of life.

We are proud to be Canadians and we think that all provinces should work hard to keep our country united.

We are proud of being Canadians – we love the recognition that Canadians have earned by their behaviour all over the world.

As a first generation Canadian with Dutch parents, to be Canadian means to have peoples of many nationalities and religions living together in mutual respect and appreciation for each other's differences.

The freedom to be and express my life and who I am. To be a part of a growing, prosperous nation with its place in the face of the world. Especially to be an Albertan. Canada is a great nation [and] I'm proud to be a Canadian.

It means to me to have one country coast to coast with

equality to all. No special considerations to some.

United, equitable – time to settle with Quebec and Aborigines once and for all, [and] then move on.

Being privileged, fortunate and thankful to live in a land that has so much to offer us and future generations. Where the vastness of the country is equalled only by the abundance of natural beauty and resources which [you] should not only strive to protect, but also be willing to share in a thoughtful and carefully planned manner. It should also mean, relishing the enjoyment of our fundamental freedoms, knowing these are protected by law and that they have been preserved by the unselfish sacrifice of our fighting services in numerous worldwide conflicts. And it should also mean that all citizens respect the laws of Canada and be willing and eager to live by [these] laws.

Question 7, "Do you have any other comments that you would like to share?"

I am proud as an Albertan and Canadian to live in a multicultural society – and always remember that I, too, come from a long line of immigrants. The natives are our real founders and original settlers and deserve more respect.

Quebec should not feel threatened by a unifying and mutual building of Canada's constitution. Language, culture and tradition will always survive within the hearts of individuals who will ensure its passage on to the next generation.

National unity is worth whatever effort it takes to perpetuate . . . As a former resident of the maritimes, it pains me to hear talk of separation and disunity. If it were possible, I feel that this issue is one that could be best resolved in the hands of the people it most affects rather than the hands of the politicians and the media. I believe that most of us if given the opportunity, would realize that Canadians are people first and regional residents last.

My Canada is a united nation under one flag. Black, white, native, English, French – it makes no difference. My family has been in [the] country for 250 years. My home is in the maritimes [and] I am proud of Canada and want it kept in one piece. There is a lot of culture and history that should not be lost.

Canada, like a large family is made up of a number of different family members, each with their own likes and dislikes. These have to be put aside or compromised for the benefit of all the family.

There are ten provinces and two territories in Canada so I feel [that] this makes each province and territory 1/12 of the country of Canada and [no] one should be singled out as distinct or unique.

Equal rights [go] along with equal responsibilities. This includes being a law-abiding citizen of Canada.

Invest in a large program of student and seniors exchanges between provinces. [This will help to] break down the barriers.

As a country Canada enjoys a unique ability to be welcome in almost any country worldwide [and] this is a result of [the] image that we have as a friendly and united population that has been built over our history.

Another person says: "My ancestors made incredible sacrifices. They did not do this for any one province – they did it for Canada!"

Having lived outside of Canada for 3 years, the best way to promote Canadian unity might be to encourage Canadians to travel abroad, to experience the challenges facing the people of other countries. Such experiences shed light on the fact [that] Canadians are lucky to have a voice in government where we can settle unity disputes with pens rather than guns.

I believe the fears most of us, the senior population [have], is the break up of this beautiful country. I came to Alberta in 1946 as a "war bride" [and] it has been very good to me.

Mr. Speaker, I too am very proud to be an Albertan and a Canadian. The constituents of Calgary-Bow in general support this motion, and therefore I will vote in support of Motion 23.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the views of Calgary-Bow with this Assembly. I would like to table the 261 petitions from the consultations, and I would also like to adjourn debate in view of the hour.

THE SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree with the hon. member's request to adjourn the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: I'd like to apologize to the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs. I think inadvertently in the last day or two I've referred to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud as the minister of federal and intergovernmental affairs,

and of course that is a dated title. Henceforth we will refer to the hon. member as the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs to make sure that everything is correct.

May I now call on the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

MRS. SLOAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been drawn to my attention that a term I used earlier this afternoon has been previously ruled by this Assembly as being unparliamentary. In consideration of that information I am prepared to withdraw that term.

Thank you.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:26 p.m.]