

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, March 24, 1999** 8:00 p.m.

Date: 99/03/24

head: Committee of Supply

[Mr. Tannas in the chair]

THE CHAIRMAN: Good evening. I'd like to call the Committee of Supply to order. As we know, we have two subcommittees meeting this evening. The first, subcommittee A, Advanced Education and Career Development, to study those estimates will be in room 512. So if they'd like to leave now, we'll wait a moment and then we will have subcommittee B begin with Transportation and Utilities here. As soon as you can muster enough people up there in room 512, you can begin Advanced Ed.

[The committee met as subcommittees A and B from 8:01 p.m. to 10:05 p.m.]

THE CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call the Committee of Supply to order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

MRS. FORSYTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Subcommittee B of the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of the Department of Transportation and Utilities, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the committee concur in this report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? So ordered.

The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Subcommittee A of the Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of the Department of Advanced Education and Career Development, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the committee concur in this report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed? So ordered.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

10:10

MR. DICKSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. There are actually three motions being distributed as I speak. I thought the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek would be delighted that I only did two last week so that we were able to spend a little time on Labour estimates.

### Committee Membership Change

Mr. Dickson moved:

Be it resolved that the following change in membership be made to the designated supply subcommittee on Environmental Protection: Ms Olsen to replace Mr. White.

MR. DICKSON: The first motion is the simplest one, and it's simply make a substitution. There is a designated subcommittee of supply of Environmental Protection, which meets tomorrow evening, and

the first motion makes a substitution. That's the first motion I'm putting forward.

[Motion carried]

MR. DICKSON: That was pretty exciting, Mr. Chairman. Thank you and thank you to members.

There are two substantive motions. Just dealing with them quickly, the first one I'd draw members' attention to is the one that deals with the Department of Environmental Protection, which is a going to be a designated subcommittee of supply tomorrow evening.

head: Committee of Supply Witnesses

Mr. Dickson moved:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Orders 56(4) and 66 and the Legislative Assembly Act, RSA 1980, chapter L-10.1, section 14, the Committee of Supply summon the following witnesses to attend before the designated supply subcommittee on Environmental Protection on Thursday, March 25, 1999, at 6 p.m. until discharged by the said subcommittee: Dr. John Waters, provincial health officer.

MR. DICKSON: The authority is Standing Order 56(4), which provides:

A Designated Supply Subcommittee may request of the appropriate member of the Executive Council, through the chairman of the subcommittee, that a specified person, who is an employee of the Crown in right of Alberta, attend the subcommittee; however, no witness shall be summoned to attend before a Designated Supply Subcommittee except by order of the Committee of Supply in accordance with Standing Order 66.

Now, the individual sought is Dr. John Waters, who's the provincial health officer. I think every member in this Assembly can understand that when you're dealing with environmental protection, what would be more relevant, more significant than having the chief public health officer for the province of Alberta there to assist the minister in responding to questions.

I want to address what I anticipate will be the issues. There may be some members who query why we would do this, why a designated Committee of Supply subcommittee would require that a witness be summoned. We had an experience last week on Thursday. We had the benefit of hearing the government arguments, and I'm going to anticipate what the Government House Leader may come up with with his brand-new *Erskine May* in his hot little hand.

The first argument that the government was concerned with last week, when we dealt with two similar motions, was that there was a concern with calling an MLA who also chaired a committee. Well, that's no problem here. Dr. Waters is a civil servant and is an employee within the meaning of Standing Order 56(4).

The second argument was -- and this was the most interesting one. The Government House Leader had argued and I expect he may yet argue again this evening that this kind of request is inconsistent with a parliamentary democracy. Well, I thought a lot about that after the Government House Leader raised that. He's an intelligent member of the Assembly, a thoughtful member of the Assembly, and he wouldn't have said that without meaning it. My difficulty, Mr. Chairman, is this: when I look at Westminster, the Mother of Parliaments, what I discover is that Westminster, the United Kingdom House of Commons, lo and behold has rules that permit the calling of civil servants as witnesses.

I want to encourage the Government House Leader to break open that brand-new *Erskine May* copy he's got in his hand. If he looks at page 616, what do we find there? What we find there, Mr. Chairman, is a provision, "Power to send for papers or persons." We

see the provision, "A committee of the House of Lords may send for persons and papers without being given special powers by the House." It goes on to say:

In this respect the House differs from the Commons, where such power must be specifically given. Ordinarily, witnesses attend and documents are produced at the request of the committee, but if necessary an order of the House for the attendance of witnesses or the production of documents may be made.

Then it goes on to say, the very last sentence, hon. Government House Leader:

Where evidence is taken from a Government department, it is the practice for a committee to invite witnesses from the department generally, rather than to name specific individuals.

Then if he'd next turn to page 649, there's another provision for witnesses being called who are civil servants, and in fact the heading on page 649 is "Evidence from civil servants."

Civil servants frequently give evidence to select committees, although successive Governments have taken the view that they do so on behalf of their Ministers and under their direction, and that it is therefore customary for Ministers to decide which officials should represent them for that purpose.

So what we have is this, Mr. Chairman. While the rules of Westminster and the Standing Orders under which the United Kingdom House of Commons are somewhat different, it is absolutely fundamental that they have committees that are allowed to summon civil servants to come and respond to questions.

There had been some suggestion the other day that this was creeping republicanism, that this was an attempt to move away from a constitutional monarchy, that it was a move to undermine parliamentary democracy. Well, if it's good enough for Sir Erskine May, I say respectfully, I think it's good enough for the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

Now, the Government House Leader said that he didn't agree with the Standing Order, and my respectful submission to that is then he ought to initiate the process to change it. But, clearly, he is bound, as this member is bound and as you are bound, Mr. Chairman, by the Standing Orders as they stand now.

Mr. Chairman, I now come to the third argument that was put forward by the government the other day, and I anticipate we may hear it again, but it is the weakest of arguments. It's this. There are written questions and motions for returns, and he mentioned some 160 on the Order Paper. Surely what the Government House Leader recognizes is that under Standing Order 34(2) a written question or a motion for a return can stay on the Order Paper for 15 sitting days before it has to be dealt with, and even if it's accepted -- and it may not -- Standing Order 34(3) requires an answer must be filed within 30 sitting days. So anything put on the Order Paper today might go unanswered for 45 sitting days. That translates into about 90 calendar days.

In the meantime we are already on day 11, Mr. Government House Leader, through the chair, of main estimates. This only continues for nine more sitting days. So the estimates review will soon be over. The appropriation bill will be passed, and it will be another two months after that before we see responses to written questions and motions for returns. We want information in a timely way. We need the information now.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HANCOCK: Mr. Chairman, again I would urge members of the House to vote against this motion. The arguments that I made last week on similar motions apply mutatis mutandis to what we're discussing tonight. I won't repeat them.

But I would point out in response to the submissions made to the House by the hon. Opposition House Leader, when he's talking

about *Erskine May*, that whole section of *Erskine May* that he's referring to refers to select committees. I was going through it, it being, as he referenced, a new book in my possession and therefore enjoyable reading.

MRS. SOETAERT: How much did that cost?

MR. HANCOCK: As a matter of fact, \$350, and I noticed that you have three of them on that side. What a waste of resources. One would be enough.

10:20

But, anyway, select committees. I find nowhere in the provisions for select committees reference to a committee by whatever name which examines the estimates of a department of government under the auspices of a minister being brought before a committee to defend the estimates of that department. The select committees are appointed by the House to do certain things, to investigate and report back to it on matters they consider appropriate. Well, the Committee of Supply is not a select committee. The provisions for a select committee refer to a concept where you can draft witnesses, because the select committee is commissioned to do a certain specific thing and report back to the House.

I'd just make that distinction and suggest again that when we go to Committee of Supply and we call ministers before Committee of Supply to defend their estimates, they're defending the spending estimates of their department. They are the ones who are responsible for answering queries with respect to those estimates. They are the ones who should be accountable to the members of the House and who should answer those questions. They can draw on the resources of their department to answer those questions and very often do.

Thank you.

MR. DICKSON: I'd just make this observation quickly. Why would the rules for a designated subcommittee of supply be less than what would be available to a select committee? It's true that the parliament authorities talk about a select committee, but the point is that this designated subcommittee of supply should be vested with a least the same level of power and arguably far more because what we're doing is the bedrock work of a parliament, and that's passing the budget. It would be inconceivable that a select committee or select special committee would have broader powers than a subcommittee of the whole. So that argument just isn't adequate.

MR. HANCOCK: Not to prolong debate on this matter, Mr. Chairman, but I just would make this point. The reason why a select committee requires broader powers than a Committee of Supply is because a select committee is an investigative committee charged with investigating the matters which are sent to it by the House, and the Committee of Supply is a committee to examine the estimates. The person who's responsible for those estimates on behalf of the government is the minister, and therefore questions relating to those estimates should be through the minister. So there's a very clear distinction between the powers which are necessary for a select committee and the powers which are necessary for the Committee of Supply.

MR. WHITE: Mr. Chairman, I hate to interrupt the lawyers in a debate of select standing committee and other standing committees and the rules, but fundamentally what the opposition is asking for in a Westminster style of government is the opportunity to question a member of the administration about the policies of this government through the minister with the minister present, and this particular

department is the Department of Environmental Protection, that takes care of clean water, clean air, and clean soil.

The other member of the administration that we are asking to be present is Dr. John Waters. He's the provincial public health officer. I mean, what can be more logical than that? The lawyers could have a great time arguing it, but fundamentally this is simply a motion to ask -- the people of the province of Alberta have the right to hear the protector of their health in the same context as listening to the description of the expenditures of money in a policy area called environmental protection. That is it. This is not an outlandish request, thinks this member.

Thank you, sir.

[Motion lost]

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

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Chairman, the Assembly missed a golden opportunity, but they have one more chance. I'm next moving a motion that has been distributed to members. It provides

... that pursuant to Standing Orders 56(4) and 66 and the Legislative Assembly Act, RSA 1980, chapter L-10.1, section 14, the Committee of Supply summon the following witnesses to attend before the designated supply subcommittee on Education on Friday, March 26, 1999, at 9 a.m. until discharged by the said subcommittee: Mr. Jim Dueck, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, and Dr. Roger Palmer, Deputy Minister of Education.

Mr. Chairman, I repeat and incorporate herein by reference all the comments I made on the previous motion. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again we would oppose this motion on the basis that this is Committee of Supply, not a select committee. However, while encouraging members to vote against this motion, I think it's very probable, having just consulted with my colleague the Minister of Education, that those two people will be there to assist the Minister of Education in answering questions. So I think the motion is not necessary. I'd urge the House to defeat it. However, I'm sure that those two individuals would be there to assist in answering questions.

MR. WHITE: That is an interesting argument you've heard. You've just heard the argument made that because these gentlemen that are named in the motion will be there or may be there, a motion is not necessary. Well, is that how this democracy runs? It's a strange way of doing things, a very strange way. I urge the members to support a little democracy here and require these civil servants to attend.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't want to prolong the debate, but I do want to respond to indicate that I wasn't suggesting the motion be defeated for that reason. I was just offering an assurance to the opposition that whatever questions they might have they should bring forward at the appropriate time, because the gentlemen being requested will likely be there.

MRS. SOETAERT: Mr. Chairman, just briefly. I'm going to be on that committee, and I know the Minister of Education is looking forward to that. I'm glad those people will probably be there, because we want to find out where this 10 pure and 10 applied and math 13 and all that stuff came from and where it's going. One of these people invented this idea or at least knows from whence it

comes, so I'm really hoping they're going to be there. If they're not, I'm sure the minister will have the answer.

The other one I want to find out about is the performance based, this scheme that's coming on. I want to know whose brainchild that was, and you know what? These two people ought to know. I guess it's nice to assure us. I guess we should believe everything they tell us, but you know, after a few years we've found out we really can't. That's why I'm encouraging people to support this. If they're going to be there anyway, support it. And if they're not going to be, well, maybe the minister will be able to answer the questions.

Maybe, in fact maybe, Dr. John Waters will come anyway. Maybe he will come anyway, because he'll know that we'd like to meet with him and talk to him, and maybe we'll write him a note anyway and say we really wanted you there; we hope the minister will let you speak. So we'll do that with Dr. Waters, maybe, and maybe through the minister we'll get to Mr. Dueck and Dr. Palmer. Maybe we will.

But I can't see why this Assembly can't support a little information coming to the general public. That's what happens when we ask questions. They find out what's cooking, and that's our job.

Thanks.

MR. DICKSON: Just one observation I wanted to make. There is a world of difference between an assistant deputy minister or a deputy minister sitting quietly in a corner of a room on a Friday morning and passing notes to the minister who then may or may not relay them to the rest of us gathered around. What we're talking about is having a senior civil servant there that you can put questions to and get responses from. You know, it seems to me the real issue that government members have is with the Standing Order. As the Speaker said the other day to this member: the Standing Order is the product of what's done in this Chamber. We all created those rules, and presumably there was a purpose for those rules. So in any event, there is a world of difference. I'm happy if the Minister of Education brings those two individuals with him, but it does not afford us what this motion seeks.

Thank you.

[Motion lost]

10:30

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would now move that the committee rise and report progress on the estimates of the Department of Advanced Education and Career Development and the Department of Transportation and Utilities and, in addition, the various motions that have been brought before it.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

DR. MASSEY: The Committee of Supply has had under consideration certain resolutions of the Department of Transportation and Utilities and the Department of Advanced Education and Career Development, reports progress thereon, and requests leave to sit again.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does this Assembly concur in this report?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: So ordered.

head: Government Bills and Orders  
head: Second Reading

**Bill 18**  
**Engineering, Geological and Geophysical**  
**Professions Amendment Act, 1999**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Leduc.

MR. KLAPSTEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In appearing before the Legislative Assembly to move second reading of Bill 18, the Engineering, Geological and Geophysical Professions Amendment Act, 1999, I would like to provide a brief background on this bill.

The purpose of these amendments is to create a new category under the act to allow appropriately qualified technologists to apply for designation as registered professional technologists and practise independently within a defined scope of practice. Specifically, this bill provides details for the registered professional technologist, engineering, designation and makes provision for future regulations relating to other categories. Under existing legislation, Mr. Speaker, technologists may only provide services under the supervision or direction of a registered professional member of the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, APEGGA will continue to govern the practice of engineering in Alberta. This bill will allow appropriately qualified engineering technologists who achieve an RPT engineering designation to practise independently within a defined scope established by the board of examiners. This act will make a broader range of resources and expertise available to Albertans.

The bill is the result of a great deal of discussion between the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta, or APEGGA, and the Alberta Society of Engineering Technologists, or ASET. These two organizations have made great contributions to this province, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to take this opportunity to tell you more about them.

APEGGA regulates the professions of engineering, geology, and geophysics in Alberta. The association also administers the educational standards, competency, and discipline of these professions. APEGGA ensures that only those who are properly qualified are allowed to practise, and they do so according to professional standards and a code of ethics. APEGGA has the authority and the obligation to respond to complaints regarding the practice of its members and can impose sanctions against its members for unskilled or unprofessional conduct. APEGGA has more than 30,000 members, and certainly the government of Alberta has relied on the expertise of both in-house and private-sector members on numerous projects over the years.

Accordingly, we also rely on the expertise of ASET members. ASET was formed in 1963 as a professional organization for applied science and engineering technicians and technologists in Alberta. ASET's mission is to enable its 13,500 members to better serve the public through the professional application of technology.

The main purpose of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is to implement an arrangement between ASET and APEGGA that will allow registered professional technologists, engineering, who are members of ASET to practise within a defined scope of practice. The registered technologist designation for the field of engineering would be reserved for ASET members only. Anyone using the registered

professional technologist, engineering, designation must remain a member of ASET.

The bill will also allow for the expansion of the APEGGA board of examiners to include representation of this new designation, registered professional technologists. While currently, Mr. Speaker, the APEGGA board of examiners is made up of only APEGGA members plus three public members appointed by the minister, this bill will allow the board to be expanded to include two ASET members who have achieved the registered professional technologist, engineering, designation. These appointments would be made by the minister from a list of registered professional technologists, engineering, nominated by ASET.

For the interim, Mr. Speaker, Bill 18 contains a transitional process that will allow for engineering technologists to serve on the board of examiners on an interim basis until an adequate pool of registered professional technologists, engineering, is established. A subcommittee of the board, consisting of APEGGA and ASET members, would assess applicants for the registered professional technologist designation in the engineering discipline. These applicants would be registered engineering technologists nominated by ASET. This addition to the act will assure ASET's input into the registration process for its members. The board of examiners will also define the scope that registered professional technologists, engineering, will be allowed to practise, which will be established for each individual based on education and experience.

This item has been under discussion for many years, and that we have finally arrived at this point is a tribute to both APEGGA and ASET.

Registered professional technologists, engineering, will also be appointed to the APEGGA investigative committee to ensure that when registered professional technologists, engineering, are being reviewed for discipline issues, ASET is represented in that process. This committee currently consists of APEGGA members plus public members and is responsible for reviewing complaints. This bill would allow for registered professional technologists, engineering, nominated by ASET to sit on the investigative committee, along with professional members of APEGGA. This change will ensure that ASET also has input into disciplinary issues for its members who have attained the registered professional technologist, engineering, designation.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important to note that the amendments will make existing penalties under the act applicable to the new designation of registered professional technologists. These penalties apply to unauthorized practice and to unauthorized use of titles, stamps, or seals. This will ensure that with the RPT designation comes the responsibility and the accountability APEGGA has been known for.

Eligibility requirements for the registered professional technologist, engineering, designation will be established by regulations and would be higher than requirements for obtaining the existing registered engineering technologist, or RET, designation. RET designation requires two years of education and four years of experience. An additional two years of experience beyond RET requirements would be required for the registered professional technologist, engineering, designation. This totals eight years of combined education and relevant work experience that is satisfactory to the board of examiners. These requirements will ensure continued public safety by requiring specified education and experience and by the establishment of the defined scope that registered professional technologists, engineering, would be allowed to practise within.

**10:40**

In addition to meeting education and experience requirements, applicants must also pass a professional practice examination. The

board of examiners will set the professional practice examination for the new designation, and it would be similar to that of professional members of APEGGA. As mentioned previously, Mr. Speaker, the minister will appoint two registered professional technologists, engineering, to the board of examiners, thus ensuring ASET will have input into the examination process for its members.

As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, while this bill provides details for the registered professional technologist, engineering, designation, it also makes provisions for future regulations relating to other categories. It is anticipated that the development of regulations that relate to the engineering discipline will be given priority upon passage of this bill. It is also important to note that this amendment allows regulations to be developed for registered professional technologists in both the geological and geophysical disciplines. Part 6.2 of this bill clearly outlines how similar provisions can be developed for other disciplines in the future.

Mr. Speaker, both ASET and APEGGA have been actively involved in the development of this legislation. Both groups support the idea of permitting independent practice within a defined scope by certain appropriately qualified engineering technologists without the supervision of professional engineers. The proposed amendments will achieve that objective through the introduction of the necessary regulatory process.

Through this bill ASET and APEGGA together will have the opportunity to continue to provide the excellence in their field that Albertans and the world have become accustomed to. While APEGGA will continue to govern the practice of engineering in the province of Alberta, this bill creates a unique arrangement between APEGGA and ASET that will allow ASET members who qualify to practise within a defined scope of the engineering field.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the purpose of this amendment is to create a new category under the act to allow appropriately qualified technologists to apply for designation as registered professional technologists, engineering, and practise independently within a defined scope of practice. I look forward to the discussion that will take place in committee, at which time there will likely be a couple of amendments.

I would like to move that Bill 18, the Engineering, Geological and Geophysical Professions Amendment Act, 1999, be read a second time. Thank you.

#### **Speaker's Ruling Committee of Supply Report**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we recognize the hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder, the chair in his zeal to hear the report cut off the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, and he has two additional items that should be now read and agreed to before we proceed.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

DR. MASSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table copies of a resolution agreed to in Committee of Supply on this date for the official records of the Assembly. I wish to table copies of resolutions considered in Committee of Supply on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree to this addendum to the earlier motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered. Thank you hon. members.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I must say that some compliments are in order here. This side of the House will be speaking in favour of the motion and in favour of the compliments too. The first compliments go to the minister and the member who presented this bill in that this bill is written in a straightforward manner such that the opposition found it easy to read and understand. The minister consulted with the opposition three times and briefed us on the bill so that it was fully understood and therefore aided in bringing this bill forward. The changes that occurred through this entire process, which is about a three-year process -- this member kept abreast of those changes through the minister's office, and compliments all around to him and his staff.

Secondly, compliments are required today for the two associations or professional organizations that came together finally, after some early acrimony, to aid in drafting this bill and approving this bill so as to allow professional technologists to practise within a given scope of work, that they have a great deal of experience in, without having the supervision of a professional engineer. Now, that in itself is a milestone for both associations, and both need to be complimented in setting aside some early differences and coming to the conclusion that there was something to be gained by agreeing upon some fundamental ground rules of how professional organizations should interact. Therefore, we have today Bill 18 before us.

It should be noted that not only does this provide a mechanism by which some very learned professionals -- that is, the technologists in the speciality areas for the practice of engineering -- are in fact able to practise and have practised for many, many years in those areas almost independently, practically speaking. However, in the final analysis, when it came to the point where they had a drawing or a set of work that was to go into the field, to implement it a professional engineer had to add a stamp to that drawing. That has been done away with now, that extra step, to aid in streamlining the process and placing some trust in these people in an official manner.

It must also be noted that the board of examiners, those chosen members of both professions, are in fact in care and custody of the qualifications for these people and will be diligent in their duty to protect the public from those practitioners that don't have the qualifications to meet the high standards that will be surely set.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very good bill. It has been a long time in coming. A great deal of work has gone into its preparation, and this member believes that it should be moved along to the next level, to be examined clause by clause in committee, to further the cause of developing a piece of legislation that will last a good while and stand up to some pretty heavy scrutiny in the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, thank you kindly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Leduc to close debate.

MR. KLAPSTEIN: Mr. Speaker, I move to close debate on Bill 18.

[Motion carried; Bill 18 read a second time]

head: Government Bills and Orders  
head: Third Reading

#### **Bill 11 Public Sector Pension Plans Amendment Act, 1999**

[Adjourned debate March 23: Mr. White]

MR. WHITE: Mr. Speaker, you'll recall last evening this member

asked some specific questions of the government, and to date we have had absolutely no response.

MR. DICKSON: Oh, yeah. We had a response.

MR. WHITE: Oh, we did? I am sorry. Terrific. That is wonderful. Democracy has been served. We did get some answers, so I'll leave it to those that have had an opportunity to read those answers.

Thank you, sir.

10:50

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have some comments on Bill 11. I would like to formally express my gratitude to the Provincial Treasurer for answering our questions. We had a few questions outstanding regarding the direction that Bill 11 would take, particularly with the local authorities pension plan and the universities academic pension plan, the whole idea of establishing joint governance for their plans. We also had questions outstanding regarding reciprocal transfer arrangements on behalf of restructured public employees who would be moved from the public service pension plan to the local authorities pension plan.

The questions that were provided: once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. members across the way for these answers earlier today. However, in regard to our questions about the Employment Pension Plans Act, we realize that all these issues are within the prerogative of the Minister of Labour and officials in his department. Now, we know that the Minister of Labour is aware of the relevant issues and will deal with them when it's appropriate, but I'm very anxious to find out when that will be, because this plan is very, very important to over 25,000 retirees -- I'm referring to the local authorities pension plan -- and over 72,000 active employees. This is a fund of over \$7.6 billion, so it is very important that the Minister of Labour act and that we have legislation to address this specific question.

In regard to the question that we had on the reciprocal transfer arrangement and the answer that was provided, in closing, Mr. Speaker, I can only say that there is a great deal of difference

between answers to a good question and what was provided. The Provincial Treasurer states what the main objectives are regarding reciprocal transfer arrangements on behalf of restructured public employees who would be moved from the public service pension plan to the local authorities pension plan. I believe our questions have not been answered with any degree of depth, and I would have to say that I will have to reluctantly support Bill 11 at this time.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for . . . I'm sorry, hon. member.

MR. DICKSON: Calgary-Buffalo.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I'm quite aware of that. I just have that you've already spoken at third reading.

MR. DICKSON: On this bill?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.

The hon. Government House Leader to close debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Move third reading.

MR. HANCOCK: Third reading has been moved. We've had some discussion on it. Some questions have been asked. I hope the questions have been answered. We'll have more opportunity to debate pension plans later on in this session, and I would urge all members to vote in favour.

[Motion carried; Bill 11 read a third time]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the hour and the good work that we've done today, I move that we adjourn until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[At 10:54 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 1:30 p.m.]