

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, April 28, 1999 8:00 p.m.**

Date: 99/04/28

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please be seated.

The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

MS KRYCZKA: Yes. May I have your consent to introduce a guest tonight?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: May we revert briefly to Introduction of Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

head: Introduction of Guests

MS KRYCZKA: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased this evening to introduce to you and through you one very fine lady who is very important to me in my work that I do in Calgary-West. She's a constituent of Calgary-West, and this is her first visit to the Legislature. I hope that she is left with a good impression so that she will be back again in the future. Her name is Joan Bloxom. I think her face is probably red right about now. Joan, will you please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: Government Bills and Orders

head: Third Reading

Bill 21

Irrigation Districts Act

MS EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move third reading of Bill 21, the Irrigation Districts Act.

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

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Actually I just want to say a few things about this Irrigation Districts Act. I spoke earlier about this act and spoke about the differences in this province. [interjection] The hon. member from Edson is asking for trouble, but I'm going to ignore what he said.

AN HON. MEMBER: Was he bad?

MRS. SOETAERT: He was bad, but we're going to let it go.

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members, it's Assembly. We would appreciate those who wish to engage in lively conversations removing themselves from the Chamber. Otherwise we'll hear from the hon. member who's going to direct herself to the items that are in third reading on the Irrigation Districts Act, Bill 21. Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

Debate Continued

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you very much for that, Mr. Speaker, and with all sincerity I would like to speak to Bill 21 for a few moments.

I spoke earlier about the differences in our province, one being the reality of water in the north being rather plentiful and in the south not at all. So the reality is that we have a province that does worry about water in some parts of our province and may tend to take it for granted in others.

Virtually what this act will do is update and revise the present Irrigation Act. It will change the role of the Irrigation Council, giving it the power to monitor operations of the district and hear appeals. It will give new powers to the district boards, including the ability to set up separate companies to conduct commercial operations if approved by a two-thirds majority. Irrigators must be notified of major changes, and they can petition and appeal to the Irrigation Council. It increases the flexibility in allocating water for irrigation purposes, and it gives the boards new powers to deal with seepage problems.

I know that the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East has spent much of his time as an MLA speaking to the different irrigators and the councils and the boards across southern Alberta, and he's very respected for his work and the job he does in representing those people. They have often come to him with issues that he has been able to clarify or assist them with. I know this bill was part of that, and he worked along with the Member for Calgary . . .

DR. TAYLOR: Colleen, you've just got a prepared speech. What do you know about irrigation?

MRS. SOETAERT: I think I'm going to talk a little bit more about irrigation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. minister of science, research, and information technology had an opportunity to speak to this bill earlier and will as soon as the hon. member has concluded her remarks on third reading.

The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was almost done, but you know, I just had an inspiration from above to talk a little bit more about irrigation. Once upon a time, not that long ago, a few of us from this caucus went on a tour down south because all of us are not . . .

DR. TAYLOR: Is that the only time you visit, is on a tour?

MRS. SOETAERT: Oh, no. In fact, we were invited on this tour, but there have been other times I've gone down south in case, Mr. Speaker, anyone cares in this province. In fact, once I went down there to a Knights of Columbus convention in Medicine Hat with my husband, and actually there were some very gracious and polite southern Alberta people down there, certainly not the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

But while down south, I did gain an appreciation for what irrigation means, and though I never make snide remarks about people who don't live in my part of the world, and I would expect that people would not make snide remarks when I don't live in their part of the world, certainly we can have knowledge . . .

DR. TAYLOR: Address the Speaker. Don't be talking to me.

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. minister of science, research, and information technology, the custom is that one person is allowed to speak at a time. Three times and you're out.

Hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, we're on third reading. This is not a ramble all over the map. This is on the bill as it has passed through second reading and through committee, not what might have been, could have been, should have been, or any of those other things, just on the bill that's now being dealt with. I would ask the hon. member's indulgence. Would you address the chair and not all of the assembled members who are here, and get on with the bill.

Debate Continued

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad you refocused us on this Bill 21, which I'm almost completed speaking on. But there are a few more things I want to say. This process has gone through many people. Lethbridge-East has been involved in it along with the Member for Calgary-Glenmore. I believe they've worked quite co-operatively, worked on some amendments, talked to the different groups involved. It's an example of what co-operation can do in here. So I appreciate the opportunity once again to speak to Bill 21. Despite the fact that I live a little north of where irrigation occurs, I like to think that we can all take part in these debates that affect all of the people of Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 21 read a third time]

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Leduc.

MR. KLAPSTEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to move third reading of Bill 18, the Engineering, Geological and Geophysical Professions Amendment Act.

The amendments outlined in this bill create a new category under the current Engineering, Geological and Geophysical Professions Act to allow appropriately qualified, experienced technologists to apply for designation as a registered professional technologist and practise independently within a defined scope.

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

MR. WHITE: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the recognition. I'd like to thank the Member for Leduc for piloting this piece of legislation through the Assembly and through the various committees on his side and for bringing it to the House. It is a good piece of legislation, a very good piece of legislation, well thought out. A number of people have spent a great deal of time on this bill, in fact, not just inside the House but outside the House. I know the minister has spent a good deal of time trying to bring the parties together and have them come to some understanding as to their various professional responsibilities. In fact he was very successful in dealing with I believe three different executive directors and at least two or three presidents of the various associations over the span of a number of years. As the Member for Leduc has mentioned, this creates a new recognized profession in the province of Alberta, and it gives that person special consideration in the law and is a very progressive step forward.

8:10

This industry, the engineering, geophysical, and geological business, is highly technical and getting more technical all the time. The specialties are getting narrower and narrower and narrower, and

as the envelope of knowledge increases, these specialties are becoming more difficult to cover. What has happened is the engineering profession has grown accordingly to fill the need for the ever expanding knowledge, and this creates a number of specialties where technologists specially trained in these areas are able to fill a need and restrict their practice to that need. This act in fact allows that practitioner to go through an examination by a board and prove to that board that that person is capable of practising within this scope and, therefore, receive the seal of approval, if you will, of that body to practise without direct supervision of an engineer in that specialty. Those members of ASET that have and will be breaking this barrier should be very proud of the fact that their association has brought them this far.

In subsequent amendments in subsequent years perhaps this same area of technological accreditation will be expanded, and expanded a great deal. This member expects that it could readily occur in the architectural field. It will certainly occur in other areas of engineering, particularly civil engineering, the branch of engineering that this particular member comes from.

Finally, as an engineer I'm really quite proud to assist in passing this piece of legislation. This side of the House is most keen in getting this piece of legislation completed and through the House tonight and hopefully assented to tomorrow, awaiting a date certain that the proclamation of this act can come into effect.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the time.

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

MR. DUNFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter the debate on third reading just briefly. I do so from the position of MLA for Lethbridge-West rather than the particular responsibilities I might hold in advanced education.

This has been a very difficult one for many of us at the constituency level. I personally have represented on my board a representative of APEGGA and also of the association now referred to as ASET. We've tried to work together to find some sort of accommodation, some sort of arrangement that would be satisfying to both parties. I think what we have here in Bill 18 is a good first step. Certainly I don't think this is by any means the end of the discussions, but it has been a very, very painful process for a lot of people, and I want to acknowledge that this evening.

I also feel that I must apologize in some sense to constituents of mine who belong to ASET. I was unable to be here in the House during the committee stage, so I was unable to participate at that particular point in time. Certainly, I've made that known to the ASET people, but now we've put it on the record. I would hope that in the future, should the hon. Member for Leduc decide to carry something forward, perhaps with the co-operation and the experience that we have from the Member for Edmonton-Calder we can find a way to bring closure to this particular situation. Again I want to acknowledge that we are continuing a process here this evening, not closing it.

With those comments, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

[Motion carried; Bill 18 read a third time]

Bill 27 Regulated Forestry Profession Act

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

MR. STRANG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to move third reading of Bill 27, the Regulated Forestry Profession Act.

At this time I'd like to show my appreciation to the professional foresters and the professional forest technologists as well as the Liberals and the NDP for their co-operation and understanding so that two groups from forestry can get together and decide how they want to regulate a business, make it a lot more accountable, a lot more seamless for the rest of the people in the industry. The other thing: to be a registered society, a registered group so that everybody can get along together and understand that when the public, which we are here to look after with the public, Crown land, hires a person, they know that he's registered and he's being scrutinized by his peers. I think that's the important thing.

The other thing is that we don't leave out the fact that if somebody wants to look after forestry and has been in that most of his life, he's still able to do that task as well as work with Alberta Forestry and get that done at that time.

At this time I'll take my seat. Thank you.

MR. WHITE: I wasn't sure, Mr. Speaker, whether the member actually moved third reading.

AN HON. MEMBER: He did.

MR. WHITE: That's fine. I wanted to make sure that that had occurred. We don't want to mess things up here.

This Bill 27, the Regulated Forestry Profession Act, did not come with the same rancour that the Member for Lethbridge-West, actually the minister of advanced education, so aptly noted in his speech. This particular piece of legislation came together rather well with two associations, one that has been in existence for quite some time -- that's the foresters themselves. Then the forest techs came along and decided they wanted some recognition in the act and a start in the long chain that leads to professional recognition.

The entire profession of either association did not agree, of course, as expected. In fact, the forestry profession in their last kick at the cat, as it were, voted only 60 percent in favour of it. But that was good enough, as far as I can see. This member on behalf of this side of the House believes that you're not going to get unanimous consent in this House or in any association, and this act represents the best that could be done at this stage. That does not mean to say that it will not and should not be improved. I've been given to understand by the minister and by the sponsor of this bill that in two, three, or perhaps four years it will be revisited with the associations to see how in fact the application of the act is coming along.

This side would note, though, that not one, not two, but three, perhaps as many as five pieces of legislation will be passed through the Legislature tonight at third reading with agreement by this side, unlike that which is told by most of the spin doctors employed by those people on the other side, who keep telling us that we're all so, so horribly negative, that we're hardly worth being in existence, and that is our sole contribution.

8:20

Well, I think if they ask the proponent of this bill and the proponent of the former bill and the respective ministers, they'll find that this member was not obstructionist at all. This member in fact went out of his way to make sure that the path traveled here was not adding to the difficulties of the two parties on the outside on each of these bills. So it would be nice to hear just once, just once in this Legislature, of course, publicly that the opposition does have some semblance of some role. I know that the Speaker would concur in that, although I have yet to hear him publicly say it, but I'm sure he shall sometime.

If the other side wants further co-operation, it makes it a whole lot easier if there is some kind of recognition or at least a neutral recognition, not a negative recognition, from their leader or from all of those members of the paid staff of spin doctors that keep telling the world in letters to the editor and columns and public speeches that this side is less than useful in any respect.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the time, and I again thank those who have been involved in bringing this bill forward. I'd like to move the question at this time. Thank you, sir.

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

MR. STRANG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure tonight to once again thank everybody for their determination and understanding of how this is going to be so much better once we pass Bill 27. I'd like to thank them all.

Thank you very much.

[Motion carried; Bill 27 read a third time]

Bill 29

Securities Amendment Act, 1999

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Member for Calgary-Mountain View, I'd move Bill 29, the Securities Amendment Act, 1999, for third reading.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. This bill has had pretty quick passage so far to the third reading stage, and I can attribute that to a couple of things. Number one: the responsiveness of the Member for Calgary-Mountain View and his willingness to take our queries and concerns seriously and get them to the Alberta Securities Commission for their review and then respond back. Just today in tablings he tabled a piece of correspondence, three or four pages from the commission, in response to some of the questions we raised in committee earlier this week. The second reason it's getting pretty quick passage through the Assembly, at least from the opposition standpoint, is that the bill makes a lot of sense. It corrects some problems. It helps position the commission for the future, and we think that it's a fairly proactive approach.

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Securities Commission has been pursuing harmonization and has demonstrated in the past the fact that Albertans can depend on it to take its role seriously. The commission has had the ability to make its own rules ever since June of 1995 and hasn't abused that privilege. The commission raises its own moneys, is responsible for its own operations, and I think it's done a good service for us all and for the business interests in Alberta that depend on the commission to help safeguard the trade of securities and the raising of capital through the market.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of lingering concerns though. Having read the document prepared by the Alberta Securities Commission and tabled by the Member for Calgary-Mountain View earlier this afternoon, I continue to be concerned about the degree to which many important elements of the commission's work are left to regulation. Having just said all of those nice things about the commission, I'm not about to contradict myself, but the reality is that the buck stops here in the Assembly. At least it should. What happens is that when the commission is making its regulations or suggesting regulations to the Lieutenant Governor in Council for any

of those areas in section 196, it's really the cabinet that gets together and decides which of those regulations should be put into effect and when and whether or not they're going to add a word or take away a word or maybe add a whole new sentence or a whole new paragraph. So what Albertans are left with is a commission that says, "We are to a large extent sovereign; we make our own rules," and a government that says, "Trust us; we're only going to do what's in your best interests."

You know, there are many examples of popular humour about the three big lies. One of them is: I'm from the government, so just trust me. I think there's another one that goes: the cheque's in the mail. There are a couple of others. So I don't think it's good enough, when you're talking about something as important as a new enforcement regime or new penalties or a series of quasi-judicial matters, that we should be left with "Just trust us." So I continue to have some concerns about the degree to which there is subordinate lawmaking involved in the control of securities in the province of Alberta.

The other issue is a question that I raised about why none of the fees that flow from the Securities Act are included in Bill 35 in the legislative initiative of the government to first freeze and then review all of the user fees. The response from the commission follows the following logic: as a self-funded body the commission retains its fee revenues to enable it to do its work, and all of the fees, even though they're imposed under regulation, don't go to general revenue, and because they're not a contribution to the GRF, they don't fall under section 2 of Bill 35. Well, that's no doubt true, but it's a little bit of a circular defence. The reason the fees from the Securities Act aren't included in the review is because the government didn't include them in the review. I mean, it's a tautology.

AN HON. MEMBER: A what?

MR. SAPERS: Tautology. [interjections] Well, we can go around and around and around, hon. member, if you want to keep on discussing this.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: On the hon. opposition member's side there is only one person that has been recognized. That's Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. SAPERS: Thanks. So I don't find the explanation really very satisfying. In fact, I'm more and more and more concerned because I think it's going to be a bit of a preview of coming attractions. I think we're going to hear this kind of defence a lot for what's been left out of Bill 35. That concerns me because of course the government is saying that this is the most comprehensive, far-reaching, overarching kind of review and that nobody's doing it better. I don't want to debate that bill under this bill, Mr. Speaker, but it's just that we've got an example here of where a whole bunch of user fees set by regulation by the cabinet aren't going to be reviewed. While it's true that those fees go to help run the commission and not run government services per se, they are still fees that can be adjusted around the cabinet table. So I'm not entirely satisfied with that state of affairs.

8:30

Other than really those two concerns, Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, the Liberal opposition is encouraged by the work the ASC has done and appreciates the co-operation they have shown and the leadership they have shown, and we wish them nothing but the best of luck as they work with the new junior exchange that will be headquartered in Calgary.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Provincial Treasurer to close debate.

MR. DAY: The Member for Edmonton-Glenora is quite right in extending congratulations to the commission for the ongoing good work, the innovative and very responsible approach to all their issues.

On that note I would move third reading of Bill 29, the Securities Amendment Act, 1999.

[Motion carried; Bill 29 read a third time]

Bill 14

Municipal Government Amendment Act, 1999

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Leduc.

MR. KLAPSTEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to move third reading of the Municipal Government Amendment Act, 1999.

These amendments clarify and streamline the processes and provisions relating to governance and administration, assessment and taxation, planning and development. They provide additional tools to assist municipalities in the administration of the act and consolidate provisions of the Border Areas Act to streamline legislation and to ensure that it is current and relevant. The amendments were developed in consultation with municipalities, municipal associations, and other stakeholders around the province.

In concluding my comments, I would like to recognize the contribution of the opposition Municipal Affairs critic, the Member for Edmonton-Manning.

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

MR. BONNER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise this evening to make a few comments at third reading of Bill 14, the Municipal Government Amendment Act, 1999. The Official Opposition recognizes that Bill 14 has been the product of extensive consultation with stakeholders, beginning with the release of the red book in July of 1998 and continuing with the amber book of December 1998. I would like to acknowledge that the process of consultation included seeking constructive input from members of the Official Opposition. This was reflected in the enhanced enforcement provisions for derelict buildings through the specific ability for a municipality to caveat properties subject to a demolition or remedial order that was brought forward by the diligent effort and work of my colleagues, the Member for Edmonton-Manning and the Member for Edmonton-Norwood.

On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs as well as the sponsor of the bill, the Member for Leduc, for including the Official Opposition in this process. We on this side of the House believe that the consultation and input on Bill 14 serve as a model for the development of effective legislation in this province. The Official Opposition looks forward to working with other members of the government in a similar fashion in the future. Albertans clearly recognize that a democracy works most effectively when all viewpoints and recommendations are considered as part of the legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments contained in Bill 14 are consistent with the principle that municipalities should have more decision-making power and responsibility. Bill 14 clarifies and adds provisions in areas relating to governance and administration, assessment, including complaints and appeals, taxation and taxation

recovery, and planning and development. Some of the major highlights of Bill 14 include enhanced enforcement provisions regarding derelict buildings, adding another method for determining business value assessment, establishing maximum fees for assessment complaints, and adding mediation as a prerequisite for dispute hearings.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 14 acknowledges the need for enhanced decision-making power and responsibility in our local communities. Now the government must take the next step and provide the framework for adequate, appropriate, and predictable funding for our local governments. According to Statistics Canada, total general and specific grants from the province to local governments in Alberta have fallen by \$390 million, or 46 percent, between 1992 and 1997, the second highest decrease of any province in Canada. The Official Opposition believes that this is the time to forge a new deal with municipalities based on the principles of accountability, responsiveness, efficiency, fairness, and equity.

The roles and responsibilities of municipal government must be clarified and respected by the provincial government. A three-year funding framework must be created so that municipalities can plan responsibly as they determine infrastructure and community program and service needs. Any changes in personal and corporate income taxes or revenue policies can be undertaken only after the effect on municipal funding arrangements has been carefully examined.

Once again I would like to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Member for Leduc for taking the time to include the Official Opposition in the development of Bill 14.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have very few remarks to make at third reading stage of Bill 14. I think it's quite commendable that the Minister of Municipal Affairs was open to some helpful suggestions. Of course this assisted in the stewardship of the bill as offered by the sponsor, the Member for Leduc.

The ability for a city to caveat problem property is, I think, a very, very progressive step forward, and making sure that property owners that would otherwise flip property or change the name of the title just to escape responsibility for an order, just to further a blatantly dangerous pursuit of maximizing return at the possible expense of life or limb is something that I feel is long since overdue.

As far back as 1989-1990 I had an opportunity to work with the city of Edmonton's Mayor's Task Force on Safer Cities, and there was a housing subcommittee at that time. I think that at the time the Minister of Municipal Affairs and I both earned our living elsewhere, and we had an opportunity to review numbers of reports that dealt with suggestions on how local governments could get more into the game of helping make communities safer by being creative with their own bylaw-making power. This suggestion was one that dates back at least that far and probably predates my knowledge and awareness of the issue.

There was a companion recommendation which unfortunately hasn't found its way into legislation yet at the provincial level, and as far as I know, no city government has quite taken it on yet in Alberta. But I'm ever hopeful. It was a notion that was being kicked around a good 10 years ago as well, and that was coming up with a mechanism to regulate the safe and appropriate use of property in part of the minimum land use bylaws or property use bylaws that exist in most municipalities. Those bylaws talk about the kinds of developments that can happen on land, and they often talk about some safety issues, but they don't then regulate what the

occupiers of the land or of the building are doing. I don't want to get into a philosophical debate about what kind of lifestyle decisions we may or may not be trying to regulate. I simply want to say that there is a reality, particularly in urban life in Alberta, that sometimes you need a little bit of help dealing with your neighbours.

8:40

We've seen repeatedly in cities where there may be drug houses located or other nuisance uses of properties that there's a real inability using the existing legal framework to do anything about it, and I still hope that together we can collectively wrap our heads around that problem and move this issue forward just as we have with this progressive step on the use of a caveat so that a property simply can't be flipped for the owner to avoid the responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, I think there's still some work to do on this other issue. Cities do need enhanced ability to regulate around the use or the user of a property or building that is in a dangerous or clearly antisocial way, and we're more than willing to see even further amendments to the act as they may be helpful in dealing with this problem.

Thank you.

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

MR. KLAPSTEIN: I move third reading, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 14 read a third time]

Bill 17

Quality Assurance Activity Statutes Amendment Act, 1999

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Economic Development.

MRS. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my colleague the hon. Member for Red Deer-South, I'd like to move third reading of Bill 17, the Quality Assurance Activity Statutes Amendment Act, 1999.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Speaker, there's a couple of observations I wanted to make. Bill 17 is a bill that the Alberta Liberal caucus has supported in principle. We put forward amendments that did not carry, and we're now at the third reading stage, and I think it's fair to say that the essence of the bill is one that continues to be supported by the Liberal opposition. But I might make the observation that there are two issues which remain outstanding which have not yet been satisfactorily addressed, and the first one has to do with the protection of personal health information. This is gratuitous advice to the Minister of Health to do with as he wishes. I hope he'll give it some careful consideration.

What we've done is said that the records and information that a quality care committee creates -- for example, that critical incident review committee in the Foothills hospital or some other health facility -- will be outside the freedom of information act, and that's fine and that's good. But we must recognize what that means is that the activities of that committee come out from under the existing FOIP Act altogether, and we understand, we all agree on what the reason is. Now, the problem is that some of those records may contain personal, identifiable health information, and the question is: once you've taken them out from under the FOIP Act, they're sort of orphaned, if you will, and one of the amendments that -- and I'm

not rearguing an amendment that was unsuccessful, but I'm sure the minister can think of other ways of addressing it. One of the amendments had been to say that to the extent there's personally identifiable patient information, once it comes out from under the FOIP Act, once that critical care review committee is finished with it, those records must either be destroyed or returned to the original source in a fashion that protects the privacy of any personal health information. So the amendment didn't carry, and I certainly can't and wouldn't try to reargue it, but the issue remains.

I expect the minister is going to stand in his place, or maybe the Member for Calgary-Glenmore, perhaps tomorrow, perhaps on Monday and introduce with much fanfare the sequel to Bill 30, a new health information law. I expect at the time we're going to hear some comments about the importance of protecting the privacy of personal health information. I think that's going to sound a little bit hollow, Mr. Speaker, unless we see in the implementation of Bill 17 some addressing of that issue. This isn't just academic. We've seen today the FOIP co-ordinator for the CRHA acknowledging that we had a health care worker who took some personal health information home with her, and that's how it ended up blowing around on somebody's lawn in south Calgary. It may have been inadvertent. It may have been one of those things, and those things happen. But when you look at the provision in the Hospitals Act, you know it's supposed to be an offence under the Hospitals Act not to take proper care of health information. We'll be interested to know how the Health minister is going to enforce those provisions.

Anyway, I don't want to make it sound like I'm opposed to the bill. The bill is good, but I am trying to signal in the strongest possible terms, Mr. Speaker, that there are some elements that are missing from our health information regime. I want to challenge the Minister of Health to ensure that he either addresses those in the health information law coming forward or looks at doing something else to make sure the information is protected.

The other concern, Mr. Speaker, continues to be the breadth of this. I continue to have difficulty with section 1(2) and the new proposed section 9(1)(b)(iii). It's too open ended. We've made that point before, starting at second reading. We consistently reiterate the point that it's too open ended. If the Minister of Health wants to designate something as a quality assurance committee, other than that very long list of items that have already been identified, then surely that could be done by statute rather than leaving it to ministerial fiat.

So those are the concerns I wanted to raise with Bill 17. On the whole, this was a bill that was required, frankly, before October 1, 1998. It tells us something about the cumbersome nature of the government's internal bill review process that the Calgary regional health authority critical care committee effectively disbanded, suspended operation, because there was not adequate protection for their deliberations. This is one of those things. We could all see it coming. The Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake will remember that on the freedom of information select special committee I had raised it. We talked about it, had meetings in September. I just think the government has to find some way to be able to deal with issues, take them through their legislative process in some kind of expedited fashion, because you shouldn't have to wait nine months, Mr. Minister, through the Speaker, to have those kinds of concerns addressed. This is just way too inefficient.

So I make that point, and it's gratuitous advice also to the Minister of Labour, because people in Sue Kessler's office were alive to it too. I find it troubling that it takes government so long to respond to an issue everybody seems to agree on.

Anyway, those are the points I wanted to make. I'm voting for it, and I encourage every member to support Bill 17.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

8:50

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

MR. DOERKSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do wish to make a few comments in closing debate on Bill 17 today and to acknowledge that the members opposite have raised some issues with respect to freedom of information and protection of privacy. I think those comments have been noted and will certainly be considered as we get into the FOIP Act.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just point out that in simplest terms this legislation is really about improving patient care in our health care system and ensuring that each and every Albertan receives the best possible care without in any way diminishing the professional accountability of the caregiver. It's about ensuring that quality assurance reviews continue to take place in Alberta. The quality assurance review is an important part of our health care system. During the quality assurance review a complete and straightforward discussion occurs among the health professionals in a health institution setting.

The purpose of this review, of course, is not to affix blame when something goes wrong or an unusual incident occurs but to analyze how the individuals and institution involved could respond better to a similar situation in the future. Mr. Speaker, this type of review will only occur if the confidentiality of such reviews is ensured. This enables the review to occur in an atmosphere that encourages and supports full and frank discussion and debate.

Mr. Speaker, that, in the simplest terms, is what this bill and the amendment are all about. I thank the members for their support.

[Motion carried; Bill 17 read a third time]

head: Government Bills and Orders
head: Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Tannas in the chair]

Bill 15 Natural Heritage Act

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. members, the Committee of the Whole has under consideration as its first item Bill 15, Natural Heritage Act. This has been before us on several occasions, and we could ask, further, if there are any comments, questions, or amendments.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to see this bill back in the Legislature after some long absence. We did have it before us earlier this week for a very short time period when we debated the government amendments, which were all accepted and which we agreed to, some of them unconditionally, and then our subamendments, which the government had absolutely no time for and did not support, which is too bad, because it would have strengthened what is essentially a very weak bill that meets . . . [interjection] We had seven subamendments that were introduced, all roundly defeated. In fact, it didn't even look like the Minister of Environmental Protection or any of his colleagues were paying any attention to the debate that was ongoing in that time period.

However, having said that, I would like to recap for the House what our major issues are with Bill 15 and why it is that we find this bill to be such a weak piece of legislation and such a step backward for this province, in fact back as far as when dinosaurs were the leaders here. We see that the government is patterning their behaviour after those ancient creatures when they had an opportunity

to show true leadership, which is what we could have expected. Not only we, as the Official Opposition and the opposition, but also industry in this province were looking for some substantive leadership on this issue, as were environmentalists, as were all Albertans who had some concerns about environmental protection in this province.

Mr. Chairman, we have three major concerns with this bill. One is the basic premise that the minister operates under with the bill, and that is that industrial development, from his perspective and from this government's perspective, is compatible with protected areas. Our position is an unqualified "not" in that corner. We do not believe that industrial development is compatible or will ever be compatible with protected areas.

Mr. Chairman, it isn't just us saying this. It's many groups. In fact on February 12, 1998, petroleum and natural gas exploration and development in the form of CAPP, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, got together with some environmental groups: the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the World Wildlife Fund of Canada, the Federation of Alberta Naturalists. They got together on their own, without government assistance, without government help, because they realize that protecting endangered spaces and areas that need protection is a big issue in this province. What they did as a group was come up with a statement of consensus on outstanding issues that agreed on a vision for special places in this province. What they agreed on is that Special Places is a network of protected areas and that they need to be protected. They agreed -- this is the oil and gas industry -- that in those special places designated to achieve the preservation goal, industrial activities are not compatible.

The oil and gas industry agreed, Mr. Chairman, that industrial activities are not compatible, are in absolute contradiction to what this government says on a day-to-day basis and to what this government is practising in every aspect of their operations when it comes to protected areas and in fact enshrines in legislation with this bill. In exact contradiction to that.

Those organizations agreed further that a process needs to be in place which will facilitate the transition of those special places sites designated for protection from having existing activities or existing but undeveloped tenures to sites having no industrial activity. So industry, Mr. Chairman, was willing to come to the table and say: just figure out a way for us to get out of those areas that are environmentally sensitive and that have industrial activity in them. In addition to that, they agreed that there are a variety of tools that can be used to make this transition.

[Dr. Massey in the chair]

Now, Mr. Chairman, this is very important, because we have heard this government, particularly the Premier, particularly the Minister of Environmental Protection, and particularly the Minister of Energy, stand up time after time and say: the only answer to getting those businesses out of those protected areas is money, and we're not prepared to go there. In fact, industry itself is saying that there are a variety of tools that could be used, many of them.

CAPP, CPAWS, WWF, and FAN believe that for the special places initiative to meet its goals, the Alberta government must also consider various forms of compensation for existing tenures in special places sites. Once again, the government said that they're not prepared to do that. It's going to cost money, and they're not prepared to spend money on environmental protection in this province. Yet just this week in question period the Minister of Energy said that, in one case at least, they were prepared to reverse their decision in that regard. They are at this moment sitting at the

table with Amoco with regard to their transition out of the Whaleback. Now, that's a good-news story, Mr. Chairman. We're happy to hear that that's the case, and we're also happy to hear that while the government thumps and rants and raves and says, "We're never going to do that" and "It's way too much money" and "That's the only choice there is," in fact they have recognized that at least in the Whaleback and at least with Amoco there are other options and that they are being forced by industry to come to the table and negotiate transitions out of environmentally sensitive areas.

9:00

So, Mr. Chairman, that is a first step. But you know what? If industry wasn't pushing so hard and environmentalists weren't fighting so hard, it would never happen. It would never happen due to the leadership of this government. It's only happening at this time because the government feels it doesn't have any choice, and if that's what it takes, then we are going to see industry and environmentalists throughout this province fight that battle hill by hill and valley by valley until we get some essentially protected areas in this province that are not overshadowed by industry.

We're going to have industry inside in that fight, and that is certainly going to make the government sit up and listen when it comes to election time, because it's going to cost them votes. They can find that out now and start to do something about it, or they can find it out later. For our own purposes it would be much more beneficial if they find it out later, but we don't want that to happen, Mr. Chairman, because that is not in the best interests of Albertans. We want what is in the best interests of Albertans, and that is to protect the integrity of the environment for generations to come. We think that's a very important goal.

If the government continues on its way with this bill and they continue with their die-hard position that industrial development is in fact compatible with protected areas, then they are forcing a situation in this province for greater uncertainty to occur. Our second major concern with this bill is that by forcing this bill through in this manner, uncertainty for industry will definitely happen. What's the problem with creating uncertainty for industry? Well, Mr. Chairman, it costs us all money when that happens. When industry is in a position of uncertainty, they know that it's going to cost them money. They don't know what the rules are going to be, they don't know where they're going to find the fights, they don't know what kind of litigation they're going to find themselves in down the road, and that creates a degree of instability for industry. That affects their ability to do business. It affects their ability to compete in the global marketplace, and it affects the way people in the global marketplace reflect back on their operations.

Think about this just from an economic standpoint. If you're going to invest in a province or in an industry or in shares in a company, where are you going to do it? You're going to do it where you believe there is some long-term stability, where you're going to be able to make the profits that are projected. Well, that place is not going to be Alberta in the next two decades, given this legislation that we're seeing being brought in here. What they're doing by putting up these invisible barriers for protection is creating an element of uncertainty for industry, because people are going to fight those barriers. There are people in this province -- by all standards, by all the records that we see, the majority of people in this province -- who simply believe that industry does not belong in these protected spaces, and they're going to fight when industry comes in not because industry wants to be there but because they are forced to be there by the government.

So they're going to be faced with ongoing lawsuits, more litigation. We've seen that happen in the coal mines just east of

here, and we see that happening in the Whaleback. Chinchaga is going to be another big area where it happens, and it's going to cost industry money. That creates instability and increased operating costs for them, and it makes them unattractive to investors. So this government, which has such a high focus on the bottom line, on dollars, on increased revenues, on attracting new businesses to the province, is doing exactly the wrong thing. They are acting, Mr. Chairman, like dinosaurs. When you can't react and when you can't change to the needs of the people -- and what happened to dinosaurs in the ice age?

MR. SAPERS: They became puddles of oil.

MS CARLSON: They became puddles of oil. So the oil and gas industry today is benefiting from them. Well, you know who's going to be benefiting next time from those puddles of oil? It's going to be us, because we're going to be in government, and they won't be. They'll have nobody to blame but themselves because they did not make the kind of decisions that provided a stable and certain marketplace for industry to flourish in this province.

We have a wonderful province. It has lots of things to offer everybody, including industry, including environmentalists, including those people who like to enjoy the protected areas, the green areas of this province. Those areas are not going to be protected and are not going to be green for very much longer, Mr. Chairman, if this government gets its way and this government puts in this bill.

So what's our third concern with this bill? Our third concern is an issue of trust, Mr. Chairman.

MRS. SOETAERT: Yeah. That's a concern.

MS CARLSON: Well, it's a big concern where this government is concerned. There are no two ways about that.

The fact is that with this legislation, written the way it is, the minister and his department have all kinds of control on what happens outside of regulation. Because this bill is really just a framework bill, it doesn't have a lot of specific criteria in terms of how these new areas that are going to be designated are going to be acted out, the rules that are going to be followed as we go through the process and as areas are protected and as industry is allowed to move into those areas. The rules aren't enshrined in legislation in this case, Mr. Chairman. They're all left to regulations outside of legislation.

AN HON. MEMBER: Secret regulations.

MS CARLSON: They are secret regulations. There's absolutely no doubt about it. We have seen from this government's behaviour in the recent past and over the last five or six years that they like to do business by secret regulation and that those secret regulations very seldom conform to the wishes of the majority of the people of this province.

So the third issue for us on this bill is an issue of trust. Do we trust the government to go back behind closed doors, in secret, to put forward regulations that are going to define how these protected areas in this province are regulated? Well, I don't trust them, Mr. Chairman. I have had enough dealings with this minister and with this government on environmental issues that we have absolutely no basis on which to build a level of trust when it comes to ongoing protection.

I'll just quickly go into two recent examples. Most recently is Lakeland. When the Minister of Energy wanted to give the okay to

a big pipeline and towers coming south, down from Fort McMurray, what he wanted to do was come right through Lakeland. So what does the Minister of Environmental Protection say about Lakeland provincial park? It was absolutely amazing. In a letter, in correspondence between him and the Minister of Energy, he literally said: if I could run that pipeline through the lake, I would. Through the middle of a provincial park.

MRS. SOETAERT: He didn't say that.

MS CARLSON: Yes, he did.

He said: since I can't run the pipeline through the lake, this is what we will do; we'll just change the boundaries of the provincial park so that we can accommodate the pipeline along the edges. [interjections] So we get some hear, hears from the other side. They still think that's a good idea, Mr. Chairman, and it's shameful. It's appalling. This wasn't even a secret deal. The Minister of Environmental Protection said this to the media: well, we'll just change the boundaries. What a good idea; right? So much for the park, so much for protection. All he does is just change the boundaries and bring the pipelines through.

This is not a minister that I am prepared to trust, and neither are our friends who are visiting us here tonight. [interjection] Well, that's true. I don't think the judges trust them either, given some of the comments.

So here's a minister who's just going to arbitrarily change a boundary to accommodate a pipeline when he thinks that's what the Minister of Energy wants. Well, I'm not going to trust him with the regulations on this bill, Mr. Chairman. There is absolutely no way. If I don't see it enshrined in legislation as a rule, I don't believe that whatever he says in terms of protection is ever going to happen. I want to see it in legislation. I want to be able to debate it, I want to be able to show it to the people of this province, and then I want to be able to vote on it. That would be a fair process. That would be an open and accountable process, which is what we hear them always talking about but which never really happens in practice.

9:10

Mr. Chairman, they are just not prepared to walk the talk. They talk a good case. Special Places 2000 on paper sounds wonderful. The bill and the introductory comments sound wonderful, but when you actually go to the application of the Special Places 2000 program or to how this bill will be applied, we find that the reality is quite different from the pretense that they're telling Albertans about. So that's one reason why I don't trust him.

The other reason why I don't trust him is because of Rumsey. Here we had another situation where industry and environmentalists and affected people from the region got together and said: "You know what? Rumsey is a very important area for us to protect. Industry, we want you not to move into this area. We want you to phase out your work. We want you to agree to leave this as a relatively pristine area." And you know what industry said? They said yes. So they stopped operations in that area. They pulled out. They pulled back. They said, "We're not going to do it." What happens? The government comes in and gives those dispositions to different companies. It was appalling. It was shameful.

MR. SAPERS: But it's their way.

MS CARLSON: It is their way.

That's exactly what they did. Here industry and environmentalists spent a lot of time sitting around the table finding a position that everybody could live with, and industry was right up to the mark on

that one. They said: "You're right. This is a sensitive area. We don't need to be in there. We're going to voluntarily pull out. We're not going to ask for lots of money. We're not going to ask for new dispositions. We're just going to voluntarily pull out." And they did. It was a win/win deal for Albertans; there's no doubt about it. It was leadership of such a magnitude that people throughout the world took notice. Then what did the Alberta government do right behind the back of that particular business? They gave out the dispositions again to another company, and that company just rolled in and started business all over again.

MRS. SOETAERT: Undermining the people.

MS CARLSON: It is the truth. They were undermining the people who worked very hard to create that alternate solution, and it was an excellent solution.

Unfortunately, that is what we can expect from this government. That's the kind of behaviour they endorse on a daily basis, consistently. They endorse it consistently, and that is not the kind of behaviour that I trust with the future of this province in terms of environmental protection. If we allow them to continue in this manner, my children and their children are not going to have any kind of a green future left in this province. This government in one life cycle will eliminate all of it. They will destroy the integrity of this province, and they will do it in a heartbeat. It is happening. They had an opportunity with this bill, with Bill 15, to take a forward-thinking leadership position. Instead they became dinosaurs on the issue. Absolute dinosaurs.

I hear lots of muttering from the other side, and I hope that at least one of them will stand up here at some point. I'm not even saying tonight if you're not prepared. Think about it, get ready, and come back next week. But stand up here and defend your government's position. Tell me how you can defend the position on the basis of trust given your own track record, given the votes that you have participated in on that side of the House, given the decisions your ministers have participated in behind closed doors. Tell me how you can defend that.

Tell me how you can defend the fact that you are creating a field of uncertainty for industry in this province. That has never been your mandate. It isn't what you campaigned on. It isn't what your propaganda is full of. It is not what you're telling people you are doing. Yet in fact you are creating a level of uncertainty in this province that is going to be very hard to reverse. So answer that one for me. Tell me how you can defend industrial development in endangered spaces, in protected areas when industry themselves are saying: let us out; let us out in a fashion that isn't going to cost the people of Alberta a lot of money; let us out in a variety of different areas. Tell me how you think you're going to be able to defend any of those positions.

Mr. Chairman, I haven't even scratched the surface of my comments. I will be back tonight and for many nights to come.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

MR. WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will pick up right where my colleague left off, and that is roundly chastising government and government members for not speaking up on this bill, for not saying what they believe to be the benefits of this bill.

MR. DICKSON: They may be embarrassed by it.

MR. WHITE: Well, my colleague has mentioned that they may be

embarrassed, and quite frankly I am sure they are. How this could occur in a government caucus is beyond me. How they could take four pieces of legislation . . .

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, I assume this is the preface to the clause-by-clause examination of the bill. Thank you.

MR. WHITE: Oh, absolutely, sir. You have to speak of the general first and take it to the specific, and that's precisely what I was talking about, sir, how . . .

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: I just wanted to check that that's where you're going.

MR. WHITE: . . . this piece of legislation came about, because quite frankly I can't understand how anyone . . . Am I having a difficulty with my microphone here?

MR. DAY: We hear you loud and clear.

MR. WHITE: Oh, good. Thank you. The hon. Treasurer is telling me that I come through loud and clear, much to his chagrin. He would much rather it come through much more silently I am sure.

What I can't understand is what the genesis was of this piece of legislation that collapsed these four pieces of legislation, albeit not perfect, albeit they needed some work to keep them up, and albeit there were some rumblings in the industry, both the forestry industry and resource extraction, that there was some need for some changes in some areas and some need for some co-ordination and areas of responsibility defined between the department of the environment and the AEUB. All of that aside, we don't know how you can collapse that into a piece of work that says that we're going to do away with these, that we're going to reclassify all of the lands, that we're going to have one piece of legislation much smaller than the rest, and that everything is going to be in regulation.

Well, that does not give this member, nor does it give the members of the ecotourism business or the logging business or the oil and gas business, any of the businesses that rely on the land as it is in this province, any kind of comfort whatsoever. The uncertainty of it can be a major detriment to the economic development of this province, and this member predicts that it in fact will. What this piece of legislation relies upon totally and completely is trust, trust in a government that brought you all kinds of disasters that we hear and read about all the time.

There are those in this House that I'm sure would say that government policy has absolutely nothing to do with that clash between oil company and landowner when it comes to utility of the land for extraction of the subsurface, and this government would say: oh, it's got nothing to do with us. Well, that's not the case. There are not clear and understandable rules, there is not clear and understandable enforcement, and there's many a case for precisely that.

This member happens to be a critic in another area, in oil and gas in the energy business as well as in forestry, where voluntary compliance is supposed to be the rule of the day. Why? Not because of any edict or any set plan. It's simply because this government has fired or laid off all the inspectors. Well, how does one enforce any compliance laws or regulations if you haven't got anyone to enforce it?

So we get to a situation of voluntary compliance. One recent study, a review of enforcement initiatives in British Columbia and Yukon conducted by Environment Canada in 1998, found that when the government relied on a system of voluntary compliance, high

levels of noncompliance were reported. In fact, the study found that 60 percent of cases were in compliance as opposed to a well-regulated and well-inspected system which ran a high of some 94 percent in compliance. In fact, this became such a serious concern in British Columbia that seven new full-time inspectors were hired.

9:20

In fact that is not the case here. If memory serves right, the AEUB went from some 650 members of staff to 557 members of staff from '94 to '97, and the people that were laid off were precisely the people in the field. They are the people that were in fact inspecting those facilities. They are supposed to be the people that in co-ordination with this act maintain the integrity of the environment across the entire province when it's dealing with mineral extraction. How can you do that?

Another case in point. I see the Member for West Yellowhead, which includes a town called Edson. A very, very lovely town it is, and he was at one time the mayor of that town. In 1997, the AEUB after reducing the number of staff for . . .

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: I hesitate to interrupt the member, but may we have unanimous consent to revert to Introduction of Guests? Agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

head: Introduction of Guests

(*reversion*)

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all Members of this Legislative Assembly Stephanie Key, an MP from Australia. She is, of course, a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. She represents the electoral district of Hanson, which has 23,000 constituents, on the western side of the city of Adelaide in South Australia in their Legislative Assembly. Adelaide is a city that's famous for its festival of the arts celebration, which is an internationally renowned festival. It is also home to the famous Grange Hermitage red wine, which is one of the top vintages in the world.

Ms Key was first elected to the Legislative Assembly in South Australia in 1997. She is a member of Australia's Labour Party. In South Australia there is a 47-seat Assembly, and she is a member of the Official Opposition executive. She is the shadow critic for youth affairs, industrial affairs, and multicultural and ethnic affairs. She is visiting Alberta and British Columbia to study our respective workers' compensation boards. She is in the public gallery. She is accompanied by her husband, Mr. Kevin Purse, and I would ask them now to please rise and receive the warm and traditional welcome of everyone in the Assembly.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Bill 15
Natural Heritage Act
(*continued*)

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

MR. WHITE: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. In this Legislature I am often interrupted, but never so pleasantly as when some guests arrive. The members opposite have a habit of interrupting, as we do when they're up, of course. It's a little tit for tat for sure.

Mr. Speaker, I was describing a situation that occurred in an Edson oil cleaning plant because of the lack of staff and this government's lack of attention to personnel in the field that do inspections. With the reduction in staff, the applications increased fourfold. As an agency they become swamped. The industry becomes impatient with the applications and rightly so. They want to get on with the job, and they need the approval or disapproval or at least some indication of what in fact the status is.

[Mr. Tannas in the chair]

The board then proceeded to allow facilities to commence construction prior to approval, and the Edson oil cleaner's application for the Brazeau oil field waste treatment facility was one such application. It slipped through. The information was highly inaccurate as it was reported by others and was misleading in many, many important areas, including hydrological and hydrogeological assessment information needed to justify the site location. The company also allowed the construction to proceed. The AEUB was ultimately forced into a hearing situation, and when they were, they heard to their chagrin that the information was so lacking there were serious, serious problems with leachate, and the site selection was absolutely wrong.

The long and the short of this story is that after the construction and the start of processing at this plant a new firm, Canadian Crude Separators, bought the Edson oil cleaning plant out and immediately did the right thing to clean up the site. They in fact changed the site drainage such that it would drain to a central collection and a holding pond so they could treat that. They took the railcars that were cut in half and used for on-site stationary storage tanks for waste, with of course all the spilling that was there, cleaned them up, and replaced those with permanent tankage. They cleaned up all of the soil in and around the tanks and did all that was required.

Here is a case where if it weren't for a very, very good operator, we could have a potential disaster on our hands for years and years and years to come. These are the kinds of situations that are repeated time and time and time again throughout this province. Now, there's a lot of good operators in this province, and thank goodness for that. There's a lot of good people that do take of their own volition, no reason -- certainly government doesn't enforce the legislation to the effect that all things have to be cleaned up, but these people in fact do it because they are good and true Albertans. They know that once land or water or air is polluted to the extent that it can be in an instant relative to geological time, it cannot be fully reclaimed again. Yes, a tree can be planted. Yes, a stream can be redirected, and it can be repopulated with some species of fish, but that takes an incredible amount of time.

Yes, sir. The chairman wishes to . . .

Chairman's Ruling
Committee of the Whole Debate

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon member, in attempting to follow what particular item you're dealing with, we are in committee, where we deal with specific items that you want to discuss as opposed to the whole bill, which tends to be done at second reading. Listening for the last few minutes, it would appear that you have a line of thought that is more appropriate to second reading than committee. If you have specific items to deal with, you know, that would be more in keeping with the purpose of committee.

9:30

Debate Continued

MR. WHITE: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'll direct your attention to section 80, the amendments to the Fisheries (Alberta) Act, the Forests Act, the Government Organization Act, the Highway Traffic Act, the Interpretation Act, and then the Public Lands Act, all amended. The Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act and the Wildlife Act are amended. In fact the acts that are repealed by section 81 are that which I'm speaking of, how the environment is affected by these particular acts. I'll repeat for you, I'll read for you the repeals. The following acts are repealed upon proclamation, of course, which is the second to last item, section 81:

- (a) the Provincial Parks Act;
- (b) the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act;
- (c) the Willmore Wilderness Park Act.

Those acts are the parts of the act of which I speak. The examples that I happen to be giving are those areas that are peripheral to those protected areas.

Just recently we had a major announcement by this government of a protected area a little north and west of Edson. In fact, the example that I just cited for you at some length was the Edson oil cleaning plant. That, in fact, was a disposal site for oilfield waste, which must be located throughout the province so as to be able to do away with these wastes. Well, that's what I'm talking about. That's why I feel it's really quite pertinent to speaking of these acts, because parts of this act do away with sections that protect the environment to that extent. So I assume you now understand, sir, how I'm making the connection.

There are numerous areas throughout the province that have this interconnection with the environment and those that extract subsurface minerals and sometimes surface minerals. It's invariably on a collision course until and unless there is an adjudicator, the government, that stands between these people and says: these are the rules so that we protect the environment, at least in microcosm, in a pristine form and still allow some industrialization. That's the way of the world. One cannot bury one's head and say that it will not occur. It does occur and will occur, but the rules are set.

This act changes completely and, this member believes, irrevocably the rules of that game. You'll note that there's CAPP that has put a great deal of time and effort into working to some certainty in these areas to allow the industry and the protection of the environment to go hand in hand and know what the rules are and set out geographical turf as well as rules of operation in lands throughout the entire province so that the ecologists and the industrialists of this great province know what the rules are, understand each other's desire, and in fact both at least in part know of each other's considerations.

Now, that has happened. They've had discussions independent of government. Then when it's brought together to government, government says: oh, here you have -- and we heard it in the House just the other day. The minister of the environment stood in his place and said: how can you trust two totally disinterested parties in we the government's position; how can they divvy up the pie? Well, in fact they are Albertans. They are the people that we are elected to serve. They are all peoples. They happen to be specialists in two areas that, because of the lack of direction of government, are coming into conflict, and it is to the ultimate detriment of all of us in this great land.

There are two other areas that I wish to cover, but it will have to be done another time. Suffice to say that the conflict between landowners and industry is an ongoing consideration. We do need some certainty there.

The last area I'd like to cover is specifically the history of the safeguards that have been put in legislation and taken out in various areas. One area in particular is an area that this member knows reasonably well. It's a special places area, an area that I know very well geographically, that is under threat of some forestry.

Now, this act moves any kind of protection under either the Wildlife Act or the Forests Act out of there and into this bill and puts the areas up to the discretion of a ministerial order such that the special places could barely exist, because this government has said that all industrial dispositions will be honoured without question. That means that if there is a contract in place the day before this act is proclaimed, then that is the government's position.

We're rapidly moving to the deforestation of lands, that are known to most of us, in the Bighorn area, which is north and south of highway 11 and immediately west of the Forestry Trunk Road. Now, this particular area is under threat and will be under threat for deforestation immediately. I believe it's Sunpine that is going in immediately to start harvesting at the same time, I might add, that this particular area was nominated and has been under discussion by the Special Places 2000 group. Here we have a government that puts forward these areas and then immediately takes them back and says: now we're going to forest them.

Well, this particular member has been in that area, walked through that area, bicycled through the area, and at one time rode horses through that area right up to the Banff park gates. It is one of the finest, most pristine areas in the province, and we're going to level it. This province is going to allow all the trees there to be taken, and some of the old growth forest just will not be replaced in a 60-, 70- or even 90-year turnaround. These areas are relatively high. To this member they have an appearance of an alpine meadow and in fact will not be replaced in that time.

Mr. Chairman, it's a shame that the 20-minute buzzer has gone, but I shall be back up again to speak on this bill until it is forgotten.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I would be happy now to adjourn debate and request that progress on the bill be reported when the committee rises and reports.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Provincial Treasurer has moved that we adjourn debate on Bill 15 at this time and that when the committee rises, it reports progress on this bill. All those in support of this motion, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Carried.

9:40

Bill 12**Domestic Relations Amendment Act, 1999**

THE CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions, amendments, or comments to be made on this bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

MS GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This evening I do want to describe for the committee a few amendments, which hopefully ought to be circulated to members here in the Assembly shortly.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, we'll call this amendment A1 when you move it. You're moving it to start?

MS GRAHAM: When it is in the hands of all the members, it is my wish, yes, to move the amendment as A1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE CHAIRMAN: We're not ready for the question yet. We're just waiting for everyone to have a copy of the amendment.

MR. SEVERTSON: We're ready to vote on it.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sure you are.

Hon. member, you've moved it. You can begin your explanation of the proposed amendment.

MS GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just before I do, I would like to advise members of the committee that the majority of these amendments I will be proposing tonight are based on recommendations by the Canadian Bar Association, and that would be both the Edmonton and Calgary family law sections of the Canadian Bar. They've had an opportunity to look at Bill 12, Domestic Relations Amendment Act, 1999, and have provided the government with their comments. I'm sure members from both sides of the House will appreciate the input of the family law sections. These are family law practitioners that represent both payors and recipients of spousal support, and their time and attention in reviewing this legislation and providing their comments was certainly appreciated. The government has carefully considered their comments and as a result is proposing a number of amendments based on the recommendations.

Mr. Chairman, there are nine amendments, and they revolve around three main subject areas, the first one being the definition of a common-law relationship. The second set of amendments deals with variation orders and the terms and conditions under which those variation orders can be made. The third set of amendments revolves around the circumstances that the court can take into account in overriding a cohabitation agreement in the face of this legislation.

The first amendment, Mr. Chairman, affects section 2, which involves proposed section 1(2)(b)(ii), by adding the word "marriage-like" to describe a "relationship of some permanence." The Canadian Bar Association recommended that the language used in both subsection (i) and (ii) be similar. The rationale for this is to prevent the perception that a different test was being established for common-law relationships with children as compared to those without children. This amendment brings the language of subsection (ii) closer to that of subsection (i) and makes it clear that both subsections require a conjugal type of relationship and that this definition of common-law relationship excludes other types of relationships such as a parent/child relationship or a roommate type of relationship.

The next amendment, Mr. Chairman, involves section 5 of the bill whereby the proposed section 16.1(4)(c) is amended by striking out the words "relating to support of either spouse" and substituting the words "between the spouses." This change will enable the court to look at all arrangements made between parties and not just those relating to spousal support in deciding whether to make a support order upon the application of either party. It is one of the factors to be looked at.

That then leads us to the third main subject area of the amendments. The third main amendment affects section 5 of the bill, and it amends the proposed section 16.1 by adding the following subsection (7) after the existing subsection (6). The proposed subsection will read as follows:

(7) Where a spousal support order provides for support for a definite period or until a specified event occurs, the Court may not,

on an application instituted after the expiration of that period or the occurrence of the event, make a variation order for the purpose of resuming that support unless the Court is satisfied that

(a) a variation order is necessary to relieve economic hardship arising from a change described in subsection (6)(a) that is related to the marriage or the common law relationship, and

(b) the changed circumstances, had they existed at the time of the making of the spousal support order or the last variation order made in respect of that order, as the case may be, would likely have resulted in a different order.

Mr. Chairman, the effect of this proposed additional subsection (7) is to make the Domestic Relations Act consistent with the Divorce Act provisions governing variation orders. It places a limit on the court's ability to vary an order. It will mean that married persons will not have an incentive to legislation shop between the Domestic Relations Act and the Divorce Act and that married persons and common-law persons will be on the same footing when it comes to varying support orders.

Mr. Chairman, under this new provision, where an order for spousal support has been made for a specified period of time or is to stop upon the happening of a particular event, once that time has expired or that event has occurred, the court can only make a variation order extending the spousal support requirement if there has been a change in circumstances related to the marriage or the common-law relationship and, as well, the other conditions of the subsection are met. So in the main, the change requires the court to only extend an order if the change in circumstances is related to the marriage or the common-law relationship. That is the crux of it.

That, then, Mr. Chairman, leads to the last subject area of the amendments, and it involves the last six amendments. I would like to deal with these amendments as a group rather than strictly in sequence. They come about because the Canadian Bar Association made a very strong presentation to government opposing a retroactive application of Bill 12 to existing cohabitation agreements. The representation basically was that probably thousands of existing cohabitation agreements entered into before this legislation was contemplated would be jeopardized by the proclamation of Bill 12, and the government felt that this representation was very persuasive.

So in accepting most of this recommendation, as I mentioned, the government proposes to make a total of six amendments to section 7 to bring the recommendation into effect. The most significant amendment to section 7 is to the proposed section 25.01 and is achieved by striking out clause (a). Clause (a) had provided for an automatic reopening of cohabitation agreements made prior to the proclamation of the intended bill where such agreements were found to be inequitable. By deleting clause (a), existing cohabitation agreements are no longer subject to an automatic reopening simply because they were made prior to the proclamation. Nevertheless, they can still be reopened in the limited circumstances if they come within one of the enumerated conditions under section 25.01(2) and, as well, as a second precondition the court finds that the existing cohabitation agreement is inequitable.

9:50

Also, Mr. Chairman, to support the adoption of the recommendation, we are proposing to amend section 25.01 by striking out the existing subsection (1) and substituting the following, which will read:

Subject to subsection (2), an agreement containing spousal support provisions, whether entered into before or after the enactment of this section, prevails over the provisions of section 16.1.

The effect of this amendment is to confirm the validity of existing cohabitation agreements. We do not need to confirm the validity of

other kinds of agreements -- for example, property settlement agreements or child support agreements -- because Bill 12, in particular section 16.1 of Bill 12, only deals with spousal support.

The next change to the proposed section 25.01 is to subsection (2). The change is achieved by striking out "the agreement as to support, or any provision of the agreement" and substituting instead "the spousal support provisions of an agreement referred to in subsection (1)" and, as well, by striking out "or the provision." Thus, Mr. Chairman, the amended section will read as follows:

The Court may disregard the spousal support provisions of an agreement referred to in subsection (1) if any of the following circumstances apply and the Court is of the opinion that the agreement would be inequitable.

The effect of this amendment is that it is only the spousal support provisions of an agreement that can be overridden, but in making that determination, the court will look at the entire agreement to decide whether the entire agreement is inequitable. Of course, it has to meet one of the enumerated circumstances in section 25.01.

The final change regarding retroactivity, as recommended by the Canadian Bar Association, is to strike out clause (e) in section 25.01(2). Clause (e) would have given the court the ability to reopen an agreement for spousal support where adequate provision had not been made for the support of children of the relationship. The Canadian Bar Association felt that it was potentially problematic to mix the concepts of child support and spousal support in this fashion. Since an agreement for child support, Mr. Chairman, can always be opened up by a court and since other legislation deals with child support, this was the reason the government agreed to accept the recommendation of the Canadian Bar Association.

Finally, in clause (f) we propose to add the word "reasonable" before the word "support," as clause (f) is intended to give the court the ability to reopen a support agreement where one of the parties is on social assistance. As presently drafted, someone could pay \$1 a year to his or her spouse and avoid clause (f). So the government is proposing to correct this potential problem by requiring the spouse to pay reasonable support, which would exclude a dollar per year, to the other spouse if the agreement is not to be reopened.

That, then, is a description of the amendments being proposed by the government to Bill 12. As I mentioned, they come from family law practitioners, who'll be working with this legislation after it is proclaimed. I believe that the amendments based on the recommendations make the bill a better one, and I commend them to the committee as deserving of support.

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. A couple of points as I was listening to the Member for Calgary-Lougheed put forward her amendments, I guess one that was brought to my attention by my always alert colleague for Edmonton-Glenora, and it was an interesting one. One would think that the input of the Canadian Bar Association would always be of some value, but it might have been a good thing to solicit before the bill came in in the first place. I'm not suggesting that the Member for Calgary-Lougheed didn't think of it. She's been an active member of the family law section in Calgary of the Canadian Bar Association, but it does cause one to wonder.

This is a government bill, so ultimately the responsibility is not with the Member for Calgary-Lougheed but with the Minister of Justice, the Member for Calgary-Shaw, the top lawyer in this province, the head of that 200-lawyer civil law firm, the man who has been a member of the fences committee, the man who was able

to bring in some of these amazing bills that we've seen with the product of inadequate consultation.

One has to ask, Mr. Chairman, not of the Member for Calgary-Lougheed, who has done her customary diligent and responsible effort, but one has to ask of the Minister of Justice. In fact, as I look into his eyes, as I look figuratively at the Minister of Justice, I'm thinking to myself: how is it that it's after he brings in the bill?

This is the product of his internal review process. Presumably his department reviews these things; Peter Pagano, an extremely able parliamentary draftsman in the employ of the Department of Justice. Somewhere among those 200 lawyers in the civil law side there must be lots of expertise. Why would it be, then, that these kinds of amendments from the Canadian Bar Association come in at the midway point? It's a question I've got for the Minister of Justice. I don't know whether tonight he's going to offer an explanation. I don't know whether he's going to offer some justification. You know, we'll maybe sit for a while until the minister chooses to rise and offer some explanation for why he didn't consult with the Canadian Bar Association before the bill was introduced.

I do want to say that the Canadian Bar Association and the different sections are one of the best resources legislators have in the province, and we use them too seldom. I also think, looking at the amendments, that it's sort of like we've constructed two different legislative issues here. We have the Domestic Relations Amendment Act, which makes some sense in terms of responding to one court decision, but most Albertans and certainly the distinguished members of the government's fences committee at the forefront of them are alive to other decisions.

We have the M and H decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, that was argued I think more than a year ago now. We understand the decision may come down within days. The issues in that M and H case aren't dealt with in the bill and are not dealt with in the amendments. We've been waiting for a long time to see Bill 12 come back, Mr. Chairman. You'll recall that when it came in, there was a flurry of interest in the bill. The opposition had lots of advice to share with the Minister of Justice and his colleague the Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Then the bill sort of disappeared off the legislative program. Each Thursday when we would ask for the projected government business, we'd sort of be there with pen or pencil poised ready to write down 12 and see what day or what evening it was going to be on, and it never came forward. So we thought: ah, finally maybe the government is going to look at broadening it to head off the anticipated outcome of the M and H case.

10:00

So when I heard there were some amendments, that was pretty positive news. I've looked at the amendments. You know, for the most part if M and H never existed, if we didn't have some profound inequality in terms of the way we treat people in same-sex relationships, these amendments would be pretty darn good. They make sense. They would be supportable, but only if you view them in this sort of narrow focus which doesn't admit of the real world that we live in, doesn't admit of this pending court decision, which it looks like is going to hit the Minister of Justice yet again smack between the eyes. He's going to be standing there, and he's going to get clobbered. I'll predict, Mr. Chairman, that we're going to hear the Minister of Justice standing up and speaking vigorously about how the courts are wresting away policy development in Canada, that they have no business doing it. [interjection]

Well, notwithstanding whatever the Minister of Justice says,

Albertans know better, Mr. Chairman. Albertans know a darn sight better, and what they know is that the Minister of Justice doesn't seem to give very good legal advice and he doesn't seem to take very good legal advice. Some things are predictable. We expect, you expect, I expect, our respective constituents expect that government is farsighted, that government anticipates issues, heads them off, takes appropriate action to avoid legislative crises. Why is it that our Minister of Justice from Calgary-Shaw chooses not to do that? I'm not quite sure I understand it. With the Minister of Labour we wouldn't expect that of him. We wouldn't expect that of the Provincial Treasurer. Why don't they look a little further down the road and look at a more distant horizon?

Mr. Speaker . . .

DR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman.

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Chairman. I just always see this chairman as the Speaker, and he's fixed in my mind as having that loftier position all the time, not just on a part-time basis.

Mr. Chairman, one amendment I find particularly interesting. You know, when I look at the proposed new 25.01(1), I'm reminded that here we have a provision in Bill 12 that would allow two parties to enter into an agreement, to make an agreement to decide what kinds of legal obligations and liabilities should accrue for entering into this sort of arrangement. So why is it that we'd be prepared to allow two partners to be able to do that, yet the government resists amendments -- at least I've put them to the government -- that would allow people in a same-sex relationship to also enter into an agreement? If the government believes that there's some sanctity to contract, that there's some rightful ability for people to be able to make an agreement, why do we say that only certain Albertans can make agreements and others can't? Why would we say that only certain powers have an ability to be able to contract in terms of their personal relationships and what legal liability and rights should accrue or attach to that and other Albertans don't have that opportunity? It doesn't make a lot of sense.

While I very much appreciate the advice of the family law sections in Edmonton and Calgary of the Canadian Bar Association and I think amendment B is a valuable amendment and a very good improvement to the existing bill, I'm struck by the narrowness of the new 25.01. Amendment A is problematic. I think the notion of "marriage-like" is interesting. It's in fact a kind of exclusive language at the very time when we'd be looking for a broader kind of treatment of relationships. But I think on balance I certainly have some problem with the A amendment.

The B amendment, as I've said before, is fine in the second part; that would be B(b). The A part is too narrow; it ignores the M and H case. In section C the new 25.01(1) would, I think, be fine except for the limiting word "spousal." In the B part, once again, the reference to "spousal": that adjective makes it unreasonably limiting. I don't particularly have a problem with C, D, or E.

So if we didn't have the M and H case pending, if we didn't have the situation of some Albertans being treated unequally, these amendments would be fine. But we do have some problems that have to be addressed. If the government doesn't address them, we shouldn't be surprised that the Supreme Court must do that. So I have some disappointment in that respect in terms of the amendment.

Those are the comments I wanted to make on this amendment. I expect that debate is going to be adjourned very soon. There are some other comments I know people will want to make. I think there are members of my caucus that have had very little opportunity to read the amendments to Bill 12, and I know they'll want some more time to do that.

I know the government is not anticipating that there will be a speedy disposition -- in other words, a vote tonight -- on the House amendments being put forward. We appreciate having the chance to review them, and members of my caucus are certainly going to be making, I'm sure, the kinds of appropriate comments that are important to them and their constituents.

So I'll conclude my observations at this point on the amendment. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I would move to adjourn debate and request that progress on the bill be reported when the committee rises and reports.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Provincial Treasurer has moved that the debate on Bill 12 adjourn and that when the committee rises, it reports progress on this bill. All those in support of this motion, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

Bill 16

Maintenance Enforcement Amendment Act, 1999

THE CHAIRMAN: The next item for our consideration this evening in Committee of the Whole is Bill 16. The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

MR. DUCHARME: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since the Maintenance Enforcement Amendment Act, known as Bill 16, was introduced on March 1, I've heard from a number of Albertans. The Minister of Justice, my colleagues in this House, and the staff of the maintenance enforcement program have also received comments.

Most Albertans have expressed strong support for Bill 16 because they believe that parents who can afford to support their children should do so. However, some concerns have also been raised about Bill 16. These concerns suggest to me that the bill may not be as clear in a few sections as it needs to be. That's why I am proposing two amendments to the bill this evening. I believe that those amendments are being distributed to the members as I speak.

10:10

THE CHAIRMAN: If you're going to speak to the amendment, would you please move the amendment. We'll call it amendment A1.

MR. DUCHARME: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I now propose to move the amendments to Bill 16 as amendment A1.

The first amendment deals with section 24.1(4), that allows the maintenance enforcement program to attach property or income held by a debtor, by a third party, or a corporation. This section would be used to obtain a court order when the maintenance enforcement program believes a debtor is hiding assets in someone else's name to avoid paying maintenance. Section 24.1(4) of Bill 16 as it is currently written allows the maintenance enforcement program to apply for a court order without advance notice to the debtor or other affected third parties. This ability to proceed without notice has made some Albertans very concerned. They are concerned that individuals' property will be seized without the courts hearing their

side of the story. This is certainly not what the government intends.

So I'd like to reassure those concerned by proposing an amendment to section 24.1(4). This amendment makes it clear that court orders to seize assets will only be sought without the debtor's knowledge in three situations: one, when the debtor cannot be located; two, when there is a real fear that assets will disappear if warning is given; and three, when the court considers that notifying the debtor is not appropriate. In addition, the amendment builds in a full guarantee of due process. It says that in all cases where an order is granted without the debtor's knowledge, that order will be reviewed by the court on a specific date so all parties have a chance to present their cases. Mr. Chairman, that summarizes the first amendment I am proposing.

The second amendment actually deletes section 35.3, which limits the liability of the maintenance enforcement program. The maintenance enforcement program deals with very sensitive issues, Mr. Chairman. Because of this, it has been subject to a number of frivolous lawsuits. It was our intention with section 35.3 to make sure tax dollars were spent on improving collections instead of needless litigation, but some have pointed out that section 35.3 goes too far. That section excluded liability unless the maintenance enforcement program "acted maliciously and without reasonable and probable cause." This test for liability is onerous, so I am proposing that section 35.3 be deleted. There is no need for a liability clause because I am confident in the program's ability to conduct itself admirably and in the courts' ability to sift out frivolous lawsuits. That deals with the two amendments I am proposing today.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to take just a minute to mention some other commitments that will be made in the regulations relating to Bill 16. The regulations will codify the maintenance enforcement program's intention to give out written notices in all cases before driver's licences are canceled due to maintenance arrears. The regulations will also clearly define the term "debtor chronically in default." This is important because section 35.1 allows the maintenance enforcement program to charge collection costs to debtors who are chronically in default. Chronically in default will be defined in the regulations as those accounts in arrears for more than six months or those that remain in arrears after court default hearings. Debtors who do not have the ability to pay their arrears will not be considered chronically in default.

This deals with all of my issues today. In closing, I would like to thank all of the interested Albertans who expressed their support for Bill 16, as well as those who brought their concerns to our attention so the legislation could be improved. Mr. Chairman, I urge you and

my colleagues to support the two amendments I have proposed today.

Thank you.

I now move to adjourn debate and request that progress on the bill be reported when the committee rises and reports.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake has moved that we now adjourn debate on Bill 16. All those in support of this motion, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: All those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: I might also add that when the committee rises and reports, progress be made.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that the committee rise and report progress.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Clegg in the chair]

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports progress on the following: bills 15, 12, and 16. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly. I would also like to table copies of documents tabled during Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Is everybody in favour of the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed, if any. Carried.

[At 10:18 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 1:30 p.m.]

