

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, March 22, 2004**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 2004/03/22

[The Speaker in the chair]

head:

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Welcome back.

Let us pray. Guide us so that we may use the privilege given us as elected Members of the Legislative Assembly. Give us the strength to labour diligently, the courage to think and to speak with clarity and conviction and without prejudice or pride. Amen.

Hon. members, we'll now participate in the singing of our national anthem. We'll be led today by Mr. Paul Lorieau. To all the members and to all the people in the gallery please feel free to join in in the language of your choice.

Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

head:

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Development.

Mr. Norris: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a great pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to this House a group of students from the grade 6 class of Talmud Torah elementary school in my riding. They are with their parent helpers, Debbi Joffe, Terry Karpman, and Aube Levine, and their teacher, Christy Dowell. They're seated in the members' gallery. I would very much like to welcome them. Shalom. Please stand and be given the warm welcome of this House today.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly five very esteemed representatives from the county of St. Paul. Joining us today are Deputy Reeve Mike Bergeron, councillors Sharil Baumgardner, Don Mudryk, Frank Sloan, and Allen Young. They are seated in the members' gallery this afternoon, and I would ask them to rise, if they would, and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Mr. Rathgeber: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure for me to rise to introduce two groups of special guests. Firstly, I have some special family members who are visiting from the fine city of Airdrie, Alberta: my brother Dale Rathgeber, his wife, Germaine, and my nephew and niece, Kendel and Jase. I'd ask them to rise. They're in the public gallery. I'd ask all members to give them the warm welcome of this Assembly.

I'm also pleased to introduce to you and through you to all

members of the Assembly 33 students and two teachers from NorQuest College, of which the Westmount campus is located in the Edmonton-Calder constituency. They're studying English as a Second Language. There are 33 students along with their instructors, Ms Capune and Ms Ilott. I believe they're in the members' gallery. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm reception of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members assembled here this afternoon some valued constituents from Edmonton-Mill Creek. Joining us today in the gallery are Terryl Brosda, whose children attend Julia Kiniski school, and Lori Reid, whose children also attend Julia Kiniski school. They are part of the Education Watch initiative. They are joined by Preet Sara, the co-ordinator of Action for Education and the Education Watch initiative. I don't know if Judith Frank made it today or not. She was planning to come. I'll ask those who are here to please now rise and receive the warm welcome of everyone here.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Ms Carlson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Legislative Assembly 36 students who are joining us from Holy Family Catholic school, one of my favourite schools because that's where my children went. They are joined today by teachers Miss Sonia Mangieri, Mrs. Louisa Hoekstra, and parents Mr. Scott Vickery, Mrs. Marline Magdales, and, of course, an old friend of a few of us here in this Assembly, Mr. Norm Murphy. I would ask that they all now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all hon. Members of this Legislative Assembly another class from Clara Tyner elementary school, another fine public school in the constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar. The 26 polite but enthusiastic students that are here today are led by their teacher, Mrs. Sandi James, and they are accompanied by parent helpers Cheryl Anderson, Colleen Ellis, Bonnie Smith, Donna Thachuk, Leona Paush, and Mary Synnett. They are in the public gallery, and I would now ask them all to please rise and receive the warm and traditional welcome of this Assembly.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Dr. Taft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce more parents who are here watching our proceedings as part of the Education Watch initiative. They are seated in the members' gallery. They're concerned about the quality of education their children are receiving and the level of funding for public education. I'll ask them to rise as I read their names. One is Mr. Ross Alexander, who is a parent with one child attending Lendrum elementary. The second is Shari-Lynn Lane, who has two children attending Lendrum elementary. Please give them a warm welcome.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Marz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise today and introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly two very distinguished gentlemen from my riding. They are seated in the public gallery, and they are here today to meet with various ministers to tell us all the wonderful things that are happening at Olds College and Olds College Centre for Innovation. They are Stan Mills, the chairman of the board of Olds College, and Jim Smith, chairman of the board of Olds College Centre for Innovation. They're in the public gallery. Would they please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**
Calgary Health Region

Dr. Taft: Mr. Speaker, Calgarians can't trust the Calgary health region. The region has become a political patronage playground while two more people die needlessly. This government responds as it did in the case of Vince Motta, as it did in the case of Maren Burkhart: don't worry; the Calgary health region will handle it. Well, I am worried, and Calgarians are worried. My questions are to the Minister of Health and Wellness. How can Calgarians trust the Calgary health region to get to the bottom of these deaths when the Motta inquiry just one year ago said, quote, the CHR appears to view the inquiry process as a public relations exercise, end quote?

Mr. Mar: Mr. Speaker, let me say first of all that there were tragic deaths that occurred as a result of a medical error. I want to express my deep condolences and sympathies to the families involved. Not because I know who these individuals or who their families are; it's because I use the system in exactly the same way as these families use the system. I want to say that this could be my father, this could be my child, this could be my wife, this could be somebody that all of us know personally, and I am deeply committed to a health care system that helps people and doesn't harm them or in this case kill them.

1:40

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we are fully committed as a government to independent reviews that are currently being conducted by the medical examiner, who is not an employee of the Calgary health region. We are fully committed to work that's being done by outside groups like the pharmacists. The College of Pharmacists is interested in reviewing what happened here. There are many who are interested in getting to the bottom of this.

Yes, there are individuals that must be accountable for what happened in this circumstance, but just as important we have to go beyond that. Merely finding accountability for the individuals involved is not sufficient. We must go further. We must understand how we can change the system so that we can take human error out of the system.

Will our health care system ever be perfect? It cannot because our system is always subject to the frailties of human judgment and human activity. We need to look at this from a patient safety perspective and ask ourselves, Mr. Speaker: what can the system do from its point of view so that as much as possible we can take the frailties of human error out of the picture?

Dr. Taft: Mr. Speaker, how can Calgarians trust the Calgary health region when just one day after the region claimed that similarly labelled chemicals were to blame for the medical mixup, the company producing the chemicals said that the labelling is very different?

Mr. Mar: Mr. Speaker, we again are still allowing the process to be

completed, the process wherein the region itself looks with a critical eye as to how this happened. They want to get to the bottom of this, and their motivation is exactly the same as, I would suggest, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview's or mine or yours or any Albertan's. The motivation is this: we want a health care system that protects people, that helps them, that saves their lives, not one that harms them. So it's for that reason that I ask the hon. member to put himself in the shoes of somebody with the regional health authority. Is he suggesting that in fact people want to harm people in our health care system? The answer is of course no.

Mr. Speaker, we are allowing this process to take place. If the medical examiner recommends to the Attorney General's fatality inquiry board that one should be constituted, we'll fully participate in that.

I can say that in speaking with Greg Eberhart, the registrar of the College of Pharmacists, he too is interested in this, and it's the reason why we will be having a review, also an independent review by the Health Quality Council of Alberta, in collaboration with the national patient safety institute, getting to the issue of how we can deal with products that have potassium in them. I expect that the best practices from across the country will be reviewed so that we can help prevent this from happening again in the future.

Dr. Taft: Mr. Speaker, how can Calgarians trust the Calgary health region when this recent dialysis solution mix-up occurred four years after the Calgary health region assured Patricia Evans' family that steps would be taken to prevent it from ever occurring again?

Mr. Mar: Mr. Speaker, I don't wish to bring the individual cases before the floor of this Legislature and make a political statement out of it. I can tell you that, again, the people who work in the health region in Calgary, as they are throughout this province, are committed to a health care system that helps people, not one that harms them. I think that Albertans and Calgarians who look at the circumstances here will understand that that is their motivation, and they seek not to correct something that may have happened in the past but to make sure that that correction is there for the benefit of people in the future.

Dr. Taft: Mr. Speaker, Calgarians cannot trust the Calgary health region. Despite warnings from employees that the new central production pharmacy could lead to errors in the system, the Calgary health region publicly touted the new cost-saving facility as a safer way of dispensing medications. We need to shed light on this issue. The public needs to know. Again to the same minister: how were employee concerns with the central production pharmacy and the tech-check-tech policy addressed by the Calgary health region?

Mr. Mar: Mr. Speaker, of course, we always look for efficiencies in the operations of our system but not at the cost of quality. I can assure you that Mr. Eberhart from the College of Pharmacists is interested in finding out the bottom of this: how did this happen, and how can we make changes to the system to prevent it from happening again? The regional health authority, as I indicated, is also equally motivated in this.

But I point out, Mr. Speaker, that at the outset, in answering the hon. member's first question, I talked about the fact that our system is subject to the frailties of human error and human activity and that as long as we have people making judgments and people doing things in the health care system, our system is necessarily subject to errors a person may make and that there's an enormous difference between a human error and a professional error. Such a human error could have been made by any one of a number of people. It could

have been made by a pharmacy tech; it could have been made by a pharmacist; it could have been made by a doctor.

So let us allow the system to go through the review so that we can find accountability for the individuals involved, but let's also look at the bigger picture of how we actually make our system safer in the future.

Dr. Taft: Will the minister immediately make public all written records of warnings and concerns raised by employees of the Calgary health region about the central production facility, including memos, e-mails, and minutes of meetings?

Mr. Mar: Mr. Speaker, I'll take that question under advisement. I don't know, personally, of any particular documents that the hon. member refers to, so I'll have to take that under advisement accordingly.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Taft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What reassurances will this minister offer employees of the Calgary health region who want to speak up on this issue but are frightened to do so?

Mr. Mar: Mr. Speaker, again, everybody is motivated by the right thing. I would say this. If the hon. member is suggesting that this should be an exercise simply in naming and blaming and shaming individuals, then it will have the exact opposite effect of what he's trying to accomplish, which is to bring this out into the full fullness of light.

Mr. Speaker, what I've suggested to you is that we are interested in getting to the bottom of this. There will be a complete, full, and frank disclosure of what's happened. It think that it's important we do that from a patient safety initiative. If the hon. member wishes to go on this name and blame and shame route, all it will do is the next time somebody dies, there might not be such full and frank disclosure that in fact an error was made. He will have the exact opposite effect of what he's trying to accomplish, which is to make our system safer.

The Speaker: Third Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

SuperNet

Ms Blakeman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The SuperNet boondoggle has already cost taxpayers \$193 million, and despite promises that any cost overruns would be paid for by Bell West, just last Friday the government had to provide \$1.2 million to municipalities who could not afford the hook-up fee. The tab for hooking up the SuperNet to the remaining 4,400 schools, libraries, and public buildings is \$17.6 million. My questions are to the Minister of Innovation and Science. Where is the \$17.6 million coming from? The province? Or will it be downloaded onto the municipalities?

1:50

Mr. Doerksen: Mr. Speaker, there are some things I can accept. One is where people might have a difference of opinion with respect to a value of a particular project. In the case of the SuperNet, a project that connects libraries, schools, hospitals, and government buildings, that is provided for in the \$193 million. That means that all 4,700 locations are hooked up to the door.

What I cannot accept is a press release that, frankly, is incorrect, because municipalities were never included in the hookup and are not included in the contract. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask the

Minister of Municipal Affairs to supplement, but I would ask the Alberta Liberal opposition to withdraw their press release and the facts that I think are recorded on their web site.

Mr. Boutilier: Mr. Speaker, last Thursday a member of the opposition berated the government for doing nothing to help municipalities. On their web site on Friday they're criticizing the government for doing something.

What I find interesting – and I take the quote from Thursday's *Hansard* – is the “prohibitive costs [creating] barriers for rural residents” when it comes to access to technology. The member then went on to say – and I quote from *Hansard* – “how are cash-strapped [municipalities] ever going to afford to join up?”

I said: please stay tuned. We announced on Friday that every municipality in this province is hooked up now, and they're saying no. So I am encouraging every Albertan to go to www.liberal.com so they can see the untruths that are on their web site.

Ms Blakeman: Can't even get the web site right.

To the same minister: given that to service each SuperNet hookup costs the user from \$3,000 to \$10,000 a year, will the taxpayers also be on the hook for those costs, which could be as much as half a billion dollars over the next 10 years?

Mr. Doerksen: Mr. Speaker, again this is an example of trying to confuse the issue. There is the build cost of the SuperNet. That's in a contract of \$193 million. In this case the municipalities are responsible for the connection charges, and the fact that they have approached us to help them get connected tells me that they're very interested in being hooked up and having access to that service.

As far as the schools are concerned, there is a provision already in their budget and has been for a number of years to have them pay for the connection charges to a certain level so they can continue to deliver the programs that people in larger centres are used to, so students in Rainbow Lake can have access to the same kind of quality of education that we're used to in the major centres.

Mr. Boutilier: Mr. Speaker, in the *Hansard* last Thursday members from the opposition said: how are you helping “struggling communities, like the village of Heisler”? The hon. member did say that they're not receiving help. They're part of the program that was announced on Friday. We're helping them. The president of the AAMD and C is quoted as saying: the government listened, and they're acting. They thank us for that. The president of the AUMA, Mr. Patterson, said: this is terrific for helping Alberta municipalities.

In fact, what they're saying on their web site is shameful.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you. Again to the Minister of Innovation and Science: given that the Minister of Economic Development believes that wireless technology is the future, how much more will this government spend before the SuperNet is rendered useless by wireless technology?

The Speaker: Well, now we're getting into a real debate about the future. All I know is that we're in the present. Be very, very brief. I don't know where the crystal ball is here.

Mr. Doerksen: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to answer that one because there have always been wireless solutions as part of the original intent of the Alberta SuperNet. Wireless makes a whole lot of sense for short-haul distance so you can get connected to that base

network, which will carry the huge amounts of traffic and data that are required.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by the hon. Member for Wainwright.

Calgary Health Region (continued)

Dr. Pannu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since day one the Calgary health region has been a laboratory for Tory privatization schemes. It's been turned into a retirement resort for recycled Tories like Jim Dinning, Rod Love, and current CEO Jack Davis. Whether it's the decision to blow up hospitals and start building new ones, the Vince Motta fatality inquiry, or the recent tragic deaths in the Foothills intensive care unit, the fingerprints of this Tory government are all over the long-standing problems at the Calgary health region. My question is to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General. How many more tragedies have to take place before cabinet orders a full public inquiry into deep-seated systemic problems of the Calgary health region?

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Speaker, there have been in the health system across this country, across North America situations where deaths have occurred accidentally, where serious incidents have occurred and need to be investigated and need to be learned from. We have a process in this province as all provinces do and, I think, most jurisdictions do.

Under the Ministry of Justice in this province there's a medical examiner's office. The medical examiner has the job of an independent review of any unexplained death outside of hospital, any unexplained death in hospital, any death in custody. The medical examiner does a thorough review of the circumstances of the death to find out the cause of death and the circumstances around it to determine whether there's anything which can be learned from it. If in the course of that investigation the medical examiner discovers information which ought to be brought to the attention of other investigating authorities, such as the police, for example, it's his obligation to do that.

Once he's completed an investigation, he may report inappropriate circumstances to the Fatality Review Board. The Fatality Review Board is a board of citizens of this province consisting of a lawyer, a doctor, and a citizen who's not a lawyer or a doctor. Those three people look at the public interest side to determine whether further information is needed or whether it's in the public interest to have a public fatality inquiry, and if they believe that it is, they recommend to the Minister of Justice that a public fatality inquiry be called. I know of no circumstance where they've recommended a public fatality inquiry where one hasn't been called, but that decision obviously does remain one for the Minister of Justice to bring forward.

So we do have a process, a public Fatality Review Board, and a process for inquiry to learn from unexplained deaths, whether in or out of hospital or anywhere else in this province.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Pannu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given the most recent deaths in the ICU at Foothills hospital, how can the government continue to ignore Judge Manfred Delong's call for a public inquiry into the culture of denial at the Calgary regional health authority?

Mr. Hancock: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would answer the question this

way because I think the hon. member goes far beyond what we have at the current time. What we have at the current time is the medical examiner . . . [interjection] The hon. member says, "Culture of denial." There's no denial involved in this. The medical examiner is doing his job as he's tasked to do, to do an independent review, to do a thorough examination of all of the circumstances surrounding those deaths, and when he has completed his investigation, he will make recommendations. There's no denial in that. It's a question of having the facts before you jump to conclusions.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Pannu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second supplementary is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Given that the Pharmacists Association of Alberta has been warning for months that a shortage of hospital pharmacists was endangering patient safety, why is the government refusing to support their call for a public inquiry into whether a shortage of qualified pharmacists may have contributed to the two tragic deaths in the ICU at Foothills hospital?

Mr. Mar: Mr. Speaker, I humbly apologize, but I couldn't quite get the question that was being asked by the hon. member. I'm not trying to avoid it, but perhaps he could repeat it.

The Speaker: It doesn't work that way. There's supposed to be total decorum in the House.

The hon. Member for Wainwright, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Rural Economy

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the past year Alberta has been hit by BSE, forest fires, extensive continued threats of drought, global security concerns, and a number of other issues. My constituents are concerned about the possible erosion of the Alberta advantage. My question is to the Minister of Economic Development. Can you please tell us how Alberta's economy, particularly the rural economy, is expected to fare this year?

2:00

The Speaker: Hon. minister, we're going into the future here. If the hon. minister has a crystal ball that the rest of us don't have, he should share it. Go ahead.

Mr. Norris: Well, I don't think it takes a crystal ball, Mr. Speaker, to see what's going on in Alberta; I mean, drive down any highway or go visit any town or city in Alberta.

I would like to answer the hon. member's question in this way. There's a massive amount of focus in this House about negativity and finding and identifying problems. However, Mr. Speaker, in Alberta we have been challenged more than any other jurisdiction. [interjection] The hon. member likes to make light of it because he'll probably never be over here talking as a government member. However, we are very, very sympathetic to what's happened in Alberta not only through forest fires that caused massive devastation and the BSE, not only one but two mad cows – while they make jokes about it, we take it very seriously because it's the livelihoods and the jobs of Albertans that are affected.

As a result, to answer to the hon. member's question, there have been a number of initiatives that have taken place for rural Alberta. As all members will know, the hon. Member for Wainwright as well as the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake with the minister of agriculture recently released the rural development strategy, which speaks to the importance of rural Alberta. [interjections] You know,

Mr. Speaker, it's ironic. When they ask questions, they don't want to have answers. They just sit there with grins on their faces.

It's time to start listening about what's building Alberta. It's not negativity. It's not comments about how bad everything is. It's understanding what the future holds, and what the future holds for this particular province is a healthy rural Alberta, healthy agriculture, healthy forestry.

The outlook for the future, to the hon. colleague's question, is that Alberta once again, for the 10th year in a row – so listen to this – will lead the nation in growth at 3 and a half per cent, and the Conference Board of Canada says that for the next five years Alberta will continue to lead the nation.

So the Alberta advantage is in place. We're going to keep working on it. I thank you for the question. I'm sad that the sensitivity to the other Albertans who have struggled so much doesn't seem to resonate with the hon. members opposite.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My only supplemental question to the same minister: what exactly is the Department of Economic Development and the minister doing to encourage economic development outside the Edmonton/Calgary corridor?

Mr. Norris: Well, Mr. Speaker, I will try and be a little more brief. The question that's posed by the hon. member is an excellent one. The Calgary/Edmonton corridor has been ranked the number one growth area in North America, second only to Luxembourg in the whole world. So, clearly, there is an awful lot of economic activity happening down highway 2 from Calgary to Edmonton.

What we're concerned with as a department and we've worked very, very hard with the hon. Deputy Premier is to identify opportunities for rural Alberta, and one of the ways we do it is through regional economic alliances. Now, these alliances identify strengths and weaknesses of particular regions, rather than cities versus cities and counties versus counties. In our province we have 12 of them, Mr. Speaker. We signed two of them most recently. The hon. member for Lethbridge was at that signing.

What they do is take the region and talk about the strengths, because the global site selectors, that everybody covets to come in and set up a new plant or a factory, do not have time to come visit any more. They want to talk very, very briefly on web sites, et cetera. So we've worked very hard with that, and we're continuing, for the hon. member's edification, to promote tourism as a great rural development tool.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw.

Occupational Health and Safety

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2003 124 Albertans died as a result of their work, compared to 98 in 2002 and 106 in 2001. Fifty-seven of last year's work-related deaths were attributed to occupational disease. We need to reduce this frightening statistic. We need to reduce health care costs, and we need to improve the health of Alberta workers. My first question is to the Minister of Human Resources and Employment. Given that the minister has done some excellent work as far as reducing workplace incidents, will he initiate now a public information campaign for employers and employees to ensure that proper respiratory equipment is supplied and worn on every dangerous job site across this province?

Mr. Dunford: Well, that's something that certainly we'll take a look

at, Mr. Speaker. We've tried to use this WorkSafe initiative on all fronts. We've tried as best we can to approach every work site here in Alberta and all of the different activities that are involved. We've had a long array of different subinitiatives inside WorkSafe Alberta. I certainly would agree with the hon. member that the number of deaths in this province is still too many, and we have to do everything we can, working not only with the Department of Health and Wellness but also the Department of Transportation and other ministries, to get these numbers down.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: what effort is the minister making to reduce workers' exposure to toxic substances, that over a number of years can slowly kill that worker?

Mr. Dunford: Well, without the details actually in front of me, Mr. Speaker, I think I can say that with the legislation that we put in place, with the regulations, and with the most recent publication of the safety code, we've looked at all aspects of activity at the work site. I can take it under advisement if he's looking for actual technical details, but for the time being, I want to assure the hon. member that something as important as the environment in which we breathe will not and cannot be overlooked.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: given that in the last four years there has been an increase of more than 70 per cent in the number of workers dying from occupational diseases on an annual basis, does the minister consider that the occupational disease reserve fund, which sits at \$220 million and is held by the WCB, is adequate to meet the needs of future claims?

Mr. Dunford: Well, again, I believe the hon. member is on an important topic here. I believe he's already stated in perhaps the preamble that for many of these occupational diseases that he's talking about, it's taken many, many years for the actual symptoms to come to light. Certainly, we expect and would want to monitor that the Workers' Compensation Board, under its chair and all of the members that represent the employers, the employees, and the public, would be cognizant of what future costs will be. They have, as I would understand, actuaries that they'll be able to work with. So it'll be very important that they keep an eye on that fund.

Now, where the challenge always comes, Mr. Speaker, is that we must be aware that we're not talking about taxpayers' dollars here. We are talking about contributions that have been made to the fund by employers. So it is very, very important that any board for workers' compensation that's put in place be very, very judicial and meet their obligations that they have under the legislation.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Education Funding

Mrs. Ady: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government recently announced additional funding for education. In spite of this, my constituents continue to ask me why they are being asked to raise money to purchase textbooks and other learning resources for the classroom. My questions are for the Minister of Learning. Are parents required to purchase textbooks?

Dr. Oberg: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question, because last spring we responded to this concern by adding \$20 million to the Learning Resources Centre. This was money that the school boards could utilize to do things like purchase textbooks. In essence, it was a line of credit with the Learning Resources Centre. By spending the Learning Resources Centre monies, it would actually free up monies to do other things. So about a year ago we did make an announcement of \$20 million. That money subsequently went in to allow them to purchase textbooks, things like that.

Mrs. Ady: I have one supplemental. If this extra \$20 million dollars was put there to address these concerns, what has Alberta Learning done to ensure that school jurisdictions don't miss out on this opportunity?

Dr. Oberg: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's an excellent question as well, because what we found out is that up until about six weeks ago, 25 per cent of that money had not been used; \$5 million of the \$20 million had not been used by school boards to purchase the textbooks that, indeed, each and every member here had heard were so critically important to the school system. That was why we had put in a \$20 million line of credit. But only \$15 million of that had been picked up to date. So what my department did was send out almost an emergency signal to the school boards saying that there is \$5 million still available and they should use it. To date they are working quickly and heartily to ensure that that is being used.

The whole point of this is that I find it very interesting that when we put out the money, we all heard about not enough textbooks in the classroom, but the school boards, in effect, did not utilize the dollars that were there to purchase the textbooks.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont.

2:10

Mathematics Curricula

Dr. Massey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mrs. Adachi, a parent who's been in contact with the Learning department, is completely frustrated with the continuing mess that the department created with the introduction of pure, applied, and transition mathematics programs. My questions are to the Minister of Learning. Why are parents still in the position of trying to sort out different sets of rules offered by the Learning department, school districts, and secondary institutions with respect to these programs?

Dr. Oberg: Mr. Speaker, first of all, when it comes to pure math and applied math, there were certainly some questions when it was first brought in about five or six years ago. One of the questions, in general, was that students would have a much more difficult time with pure math, that students were having a very difficult time with applied math.

One of the things, as an aside to the hon. member, that I will say is that in this last set of diploma examinations, we had more students than ever taking pure math. We had more students than ever succeeding at pure math. More students have succeeded at pure math than succeeded at math 30 in the old system, so I will say that pure math has been a success.

Where there has been some issue with applied math is in getting into postsecondary institutions. All the postsecondary institutions have made abundantly clear in their catalogues that go out to each and every school to each and every student what will or will not be accepted. This is not necessarily specific to each and every institution, but as a general rule applied math is accepted for the non

science-based faculties, Mr. Speaker. For example, my daughter is in grade 12, and she has just been accepted at the University of Lethbridge with applied math, without pure math.

So as a general rule what I would suggest to parents is that they get the catalogue from the postsecondary institutions, that they take a look at each individual application that they want to do. It is all laid out there very, very nicely for the parents and students.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Massey: Thank you. Again to the same minister: why are transitions between applied math and pure math almost impossible given the course sequence requirements and the lack of course offerings? They can't get the course.

Dr. Oberg: Mr. Speaker, a couple of things have happened with respect to this. It soon became very apparent that there were students who would be enrolled in applied math that wanted to proceed into pure math. There have been bridging courses put in at the postsecondary institutions. So you could have applied math, go into the postsecondary institution and take a bridging course to get into the pure math program, and subsequently go on if, for example, you wanted to change from an arts-based faculty to a science-based faculty.

Again, I'll return the question by saying to the parents out there: make sure that you take a look at the postsecondary institution catalogues and make sure that you know that before the students apply.

Dr. Massey: To the minister, Mr. Speaker: why were the changes introduced before problems with acceptance of the courses by postsecondary institutions and sequencing were ironed out?

Dr. Oberg: Mr. Speaker, what happened was that initially when we talked to the postsecondary institutions – and I will draw the attention of the House to the fact that this was about two to three years ago – and prior to the acceptance of the programs, the universities and postsecondary institutions had told us that they would be accepting applied math. What then happened about two months prior to the start of applied math 30 is that the University of Alberta said that it would not accept it. This started a cascade of events where other institutions joined in.

We subsequently sat down with the postsecondary institutions at that time and determined that the rationale and reason behind what they said was that there was not enough I believe it was geometry – I may be corrected on that – involved in the course. We subsequently made some minor changes to applied math, and at that time they said that the applied math would be accepted when it came to the arts faculties. The majority of the postsecondary institutions in Alberta now have applied math and accept it for the arts faculties. To the science faculties though – and I completely concur with this – it should be pure math; it needs to be pure math.

The other key component to this is that there has to be the bridging. The hon. member did speak one very important phraseology in my department, which was "transitions." As a matter of fact, we have established an executive directorship position that deals specifically with transitions, Mr. Speaker, which is a very important element of my department.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Drug-sniffing Dogs in Schools

Mr. Herard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first question is to the

Solicitor General. Last week the Solicitor General announced a canine sniffer program to help detect illegal drugs in our jails. Would the minister also consider randomly using these canine units to help ensure that our schools are also drug free?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Forsyth: Well, Mr. Speaker, thank you. The hon. member raises a very excellent question. As he indicated, last week I did announce entering into an agreement to have drug dogs randomly search our jails at all of our correctional facilities and remand centres. Over the year we would like the opportunity to evaluate the program to determine its success and whether or not to expand our own agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I want to let the hon. member know that I do not have the authority to set up an agreement with the RCMP to search the schools, but it's a very interesting idea, and I'll be happy to share our findings with anyone else that's interested in the program.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Herard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplementary is to the Minister of Learning. Mr. Minister, do school boards have the necessary authority and protection under the privacy laws to avail themselves of drug-sniffing canine units to help ensure that their schools are drug free?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Dr. Oberg: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's an excellent question as well. I do not as Minister of Learning have the authority to allow a drug-sniffing dog at a high school, for example, or a school of any sort. I will say, though, that the principal and the school board do have the ability to do that. As a matter of fact, in 1998 a Supreme Court decision upheld the right of having drug-sniffing dogs go in and randomly sniff lockers.

So, Mr. Speaker, in direct response to the hon. member's question, if the principal and the school board do say that they wanted to go ahead, yes, indeed it can go ahead, and the concerns about privacy are secondary to the concerns about finding illegal substances in the lockers of school-age children.

Mr. Herard: Well, that's good news, Mr. Speaker.

My final supplemental to the Minister of Learning: would you consider, then, funding a drug-sniffing canine program and make it available to Alberta school boards to send a message that illegal drugs will not be tolerated in our schools?

Dr. Oberg: Mr. Speaker, that's an excellent question. Certainly, the Solicitor General and myself will be talking about this. Over the past two to three months it's become very apparent that such drugs as crystal meth have been appearing in our schools at a very alarming rate. It is also very apparent that something needs to be done. I think that this certainly is one element that we can act on, but I think there are many other things that need to be done, and we do need to pursue this a significant ways further. The Solicitor General and myself will be looking at this very important issue. Our schools cannot be places where drugs are being sold.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

Protection of Wildlife

Ms Carlson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A number of wildlife

biologists and organizations for the protection of wildlife in Alberta have raised concerns about wolf and elk populations in and around our national parks. Low wildlife populations mean less biodiversity in our parks, indicating that our wildlife and our natural areas are not being properly cared for. To the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development: will this ministry conduct a proper species count in order to determine what action needs to be taken to ensure that we have healthy wolf and elk populations here in Alberta?

2:20

Mr. Cardinal: Mr. Speaker, because the member is referring to wildlife, to parks, the Minister of Community Development will no doubt supplement my question because he is the person in charge of the parks.

In relation to the wolves and also the elk population we do have many challenges when it comes to the animal population out there. The animals are getting urbanized. We have more wolves going into hamlets and towns and villages across Alberta. We have deer and elk and moose and coyote populations coming into town. They are getting very urbanized and we have a real challenge.

I know that we have to work together to ensure that there is a balance, Mr. Speaker, because it's also not healthy for the animals to be too tame so that they start moving to urban centres and depending on urban areas for their survival. I'll give you an example. Last year there were over 16,000 accidents between vehicles and elk, moose, and deer, and, in fact, five fatalities.

So we do have many challenges, and the Minister of Community Development may want to supplement in relation to the parks themselves.

The Speaker: I think we should move on with the next question because of the time element today.

Ms Carlson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: what plans does this ministry have to ensure that healthy prey/predator populations are maintained?

Mr. Cardinal: Mr. Speaker, part of our plan, of course, is to sustain a balance. Again, the Minister of Community Development may want to supplement after. My ministry manages over a hundred million acres of public land, and there are multi-users on that public land, including the oil and gas industry, including the forest industry, including agriculture, tourism, and recreation users, and, of course, the wildlife users also. So it is a challenge, and you can be assured that we won't be shutting down the economy and sacrificing the economy unless we can put a balance in place.

Ms Carlson: Mr. Speaker, to the same minister: what is this ministry doing to regulate human interaction with wildlife outside of park limits?

Mr. Cardinal: Well, Mr. Speaker, that is one of the challenges we have. When you say 16,000 accidents, the cost of that alone – and then we had five fatalities, which is nothing to be proud of. We do have a challenge out there. It will continue to be a challenge in the future.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

Federal Aid to Cattle Industry

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. After spending \$400 million in provincial taxpayers' money, much of which seems

to have gone to the fattening of the profit margins of U.S.-owned meat packers, it remains to be seen whether the latest federal government program will be any more effective in helping small and medium-sized cattle producers, yet the Premier can't resist the temptation to trash the federal initiative by calling it a pre-election ploy. My question is to the Minister of Finance. Is the government not concerned that such statements may jeopardize federal government aid to beef producers now or in the future?

Mrs. Nelson: Well, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't matter what seems to come out; this hon. member has to be negative about it. Someone mentioned that negativity was in this House constantly.

This was a positive today for our producers, that the federal government came forward, albeit we've been waiting for this initiative to culminate and come forward. But today, clearly – let's be very clear – in Lethbridge the Prime Minister did announce that there was a \$995 million project coming forward; \$680 million was going to be dedicated towards BSE relief. Today he announced this. There would be \$250 million in income support payments for all producers. This is part of the bridging process for the CAIS program that would be coming forward, and then there would be a top-up of the Canadian farm income program of \$65 million. This is welcome news for Alberta's producers.

I can't say how much they have suffered, Mr. Speaker, because our minister of agriculture and rural development has expressed that far better than I, but I have been able to experience some of the meetings with her and seen the devastation that has occurred within the province of Alberta and realized that all the help that can come forward is absolutely necessary.

We've been waiting for this federal announcement for quite some time, so we're delighted that it has come forward, and I'm sure that our producers today are happy. Even though you are negative about the whole program, everybody else in the province will be happy that it's finally come forward.

The Speaker: Just a second here. Hold on. The chair is not negative, and the member speaks to the chair, so I sure hope that there are not people out there saying that the Speaker is negative. That would be wrong.

Mr. Mason: We on our side consider you to be very positive indeed.

I would just like to ask the Minister of Finance how she can reconcile this apparent support for this federal beef program with the Premier's statement that this is simply a pre-election ploy by the federal Liberals?

Mrs. Nelson: Mr. Speaker, let me clarify. My comment was not to suggest the chair was negative. You've been absolutely supportive.

Mr. Speaker, the key message on this whole program from the federal government is in fact that they have recognized that they have a national responsibility to come to the table to bring aid and assistance to the devastation within the cattle industry, and clearly they have done that.

Clearly, everyone knows that today, as we are sitting here, our Premier and minister of agriculture and rural development are in Washington working to have the borders opened. Mr. Speaker, our Premier and our minister of agriculture and rural development have led the way for Canada to a resolution of opening the borders and getting this market back into a working situation. So to have any kind of indication that there's some negativity here attached to their efforts is wrong, and once again the member opposite is wrong.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Given the apparent support for this federal BSE program by Alberta beef producers, is the government not worried that it will undermine the beef industry when it plays politics with this issue?

Mrs. Nelson: Well, Mr. Speaker, if anyone read the member opposite's news release today, you'd know who was playing politics and not very smart politics – I can tell you that right now – because rural Alberta supports this government, not that caucus.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Family Violence

Ms DeLong: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As we focus on the obvious needs of women in domestic violence, we must be careful that we do not demonize men in the process. Recently, after consultations with the Human Rights Commission, the Lethbridge police department removed an anti male police manual. My first question is to the Solicitor General. In light of the Human Rights Commission recommendations will she direct all Alberta law enforcement agencies to review and eliminate all gender-biased training and public information materials?

The Speaker: The hon. Solicitor General.

Mrs. Forsyth: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that about a year ago the Lethbridge Police Service published a booklet on domestic violence in the community. A complaint was made to the Alberta Human Rights Commission about the absence of gender-neutral language in the booklet. The booklet contained words like "he" and "him" to describe the offender. The issue was resolved very quickly when the Lethbridge Police Service withdrew the publication and stopped distributing it.

Mr. Speaker, I think this shows how important it is for all of us to remember that domestic violence affects everyone: the husbands, the wives, the children, and the grandparents. In terms of gender bias in information from law enforcement agencies at this point this is one case in Lethbridge, over a year ago, that was addressed immediately. If the member has information about other cases, I would be glad to hear about them and take the appropriate action.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms DeLong: Thank you. This positive step will not end family violence but may result in better law enforcement.

Will the Solicitor General take steps to ensure that all law enforcement officers are properly trained to deal with domestic violence in a fair and unbiased way?

2:30

Mrs. Forsyth: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will. My department participates in the provision of family violence training to police members. We're working currently in consultation with Alberta Children's Services and Alberta Justice to enhance police training in this area.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms DeLong: Thank you. To the Minister of Justice: Alberta Justice is preparing new procedures to assist in dealing with family violence without gender bias. Will women's and men's advocacy groups be consulted in this work?

Mr. Hancock: Well, Mr. Speaker, any time we engage in consultation, we deal with all of the stakeholders that are involved in the area. We're very happy to be working with Children's Services, the Solicitor General, Health and Wellness, and many other government departments with the family violence round-table initiative to talk about family violence. It's an issue that's very, very important to Albertans, and it shouldn't be swept under the rug. It should be brought out and discussed.

We should understand that if we want to feel safe in our homes, we have to talk about the problem of domestic violence, family violence. We shouldn't get sidetracked in that discussion with respect to the question of whether it's violence by men against women or violence by women against men or, for that matter, violence by men against men or women against women. What we're talking about is violence, and we need to deal with the violence. We need to deal with the violence through our processes.

We have some very wonderful initiatives in this province. The domestic violence court, or HomeFront as it is now known, in Calgary, a wonderful community-driven project to deal with domestic violence in a most appropriate way, to get people into the system and out of the system as fast as possible, and to get treatment where it's appropriate so people understand the effect of violence on children, the effect of violence on families. The recidivism rate in that HomeFront project shows that we can and will do something about domestic violence in our homes and in our communities and that we can do that if the community pulls together.

But let's not get sidetracked on issues of gender. Violence can happen in any number of different ways, and while the majority of reported instances are instances of men initiating violence against women, we need not get into the bias of that discussion, because violence is violence regardless of whether it's perpetrated by a man, a woman or whether it's in the house or in the community.

The Speaker: Hon. members, today there will be seven members participating in Recognitions, and we'll start in about 30 seconds from now following your approval for Introduction of Guests if that's given. Okay?

[Unanimous consent granted]

head: **Introduction of Guests**
(*reversion*)

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Knight: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It certainly is a great pleasure for me to rise today on behalf of myself and my colleague from Grande Prairie-Wapiti to introduce to you and through you to the Legislative Assembly 28 energetic and talented students from the Sexsmith/La Glace schools junior high band. They're in Edmonton for the Alberta International Band Festival today, and they are accompanied by Mr. Duane Paulson, Mrs. Liz Good-Gerow, Mr. Greg Sandboe, and Mr. Bill Lappenbush and Mrs. Tina Lappenbush. I would ask them all to please rise now and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: **Recognitions**

The Speaker: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

L'école La Mission

Mrs. O'Neill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Tuesday evening the entire school community of l'école La Mission in St. Albert

celebrated with their usual joie de vivre the official opening of the first francophone school in Alberta built exclusively for Charter section 23 students.

I wish to congratulate chairman Claude Duret and the trustees of Le Conseil Scolaire Centre-Nord on the official formal opening of this beautiful and highly functional building. It is truly a facility designed to embody and encourage a high-quality learning environment. I would especially like to commend the parents of l'école La Mission, who have worked so hard over the past 10 years and who have held onto their dreams so tenaciously for a proper school building with all its amenities for their children.

I am very pleased that the constituency of St. Albert that I'm proud to represent in this Assembly has a truly francophone school the environment of which enlivens and enlightens our broader community.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

Zicki Eludin

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to recognize an extraordinary individual from my constituency. On Saturday, March 13, Zicki Eludin was the recipient of a volunteer award granted by the Land Stewardship Centre of Canada. These awards recognize exemplary environmental stewardship efforts by Canadians.

Zicki was awarded this honour in acknowledgment of his leadership excellence with the Lac La Biche Fisheries Enhancement Group and the Lac La Biche Watershed Steering Committee. He has played a key role in the success of both groups. Zicki's leadership abilities, hard work, enthusiasm, and commitment to conservation have greatly benefited the fisheries ecosystems in the Lac La Biche region.

I congratulate Zicki Eludin and would ask all members of this Assembly to join me in commending his accomplishments and his dedication to land and water stewardship.

Thank you.

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

St. Peter the Apostle Parish Choir

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to acknowledge the outstanding performances of the St. Peter the Apostle parish choir, who have been recently recognized in my constituency for their inspirational and compelling dramatic performances and for the sincere generosity and charity that they have shown towards the St. Albert-Sturgeon community.

A couple of weeks ago I had the opportunity of attending the musical play *Mary's Veil* at the St. Albert Arden Theatre. This is the second year of performances to sellout crowds.

It was written by the community's own Sandra Brenneis, who also performs along with her sister the former MLA for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert and chairperson of the West Sturgeon Aging In Place Society Foundation, Ms Colleen Soetaert, who, I might add, gives a compelling and heartfelt performance along with the rest of the parish choir performers.

These performers' depiction and commitment in *Mary's Veil* was poignant and riveting. They displayed a wondrous ability in their craft as well as a sincere generosity, which has been immense considering that all proceeds from the musical will go towards the West Sturgeon Aging in Place Society Foundation.

I would like to congratulate Ms Sandra Brenneis and the entire cast of community volunteers for their service to our community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

World Water Day

Ms Carlson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. March 22 is World Water Day, and this year's theme focuses on water and disasters. We have seen our share of floods and droughts in Alberta, and in a province that has grown so quickly over the years, water has become an issue of grave concern. The water scarcity crisis we are facing has the potential to disrupt the economy, weaken the poor and vulnerable, and impede sustainable development and the reduction of poverty as it has done in so many other countries.

The message imparted by this year's World Water Day theme is to be informed and be prepared, which is precisely what Alberta must do in order to avoid a severe water scarcity crisis. For years now I have advocated the proper stewardship of our water, but questions continue to arise over the government's long-term plans to ensure that our water is safe, clean, and in healthy supply.

We must prohibit the use of fresh water for oil injection and focus on other choices. We must also ensure that our drinking water is being treated and handled with the utmost care and the best technology. We must take action now to ensure a healthy water supply now and in the future. I urge the government to take on this challenge.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Wamer.

Cardston High School Lady Cougars

Mr. Jacobs: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise in this Assembly today to recognize the Cardston high school Lady Cougars, who on Saturday, March 20, won the 3A girls provincial basketball championship. The team is comprised of Haley Fox, Joni Low, Lindsay McMurray, Julie McMurray, Megan Nelson, Alisha Nelson, Kenzie Sheen, Sadie Thomas, Katelyn Toone, Brandie Walburger, Kim Young, and coaches Tim Court and Jason Janisko.

The tournament took place in the newly modernized Cardston high school gymnasium and consisted of the 12 best 3A girls basketball teams in the province. The championship game took place in front of 1,200 fans. The Cardston Lady Cougars faced the Magrath Pandas, another southern Alberta team from the Westwind school division, in the final match.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Cardston Lady Cougars on their achievement in winning this year's provincials and on an outstanding season of 16 and 0. This team has displayed remarkable talent and skill during an exceptional season of basketball.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Leduc.

Black Gold School Division

Mr. Klapstein: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to recognize the Black Gold regional school division for establishing its healthy hearts program. The program is being developed to increase physical activity among staff and students in 14 schools in the division.

Alberta Learning is funding the project through the initiative for school improvement program. The University of Alberta has partnered with the Black Gold school division to provide the

necessary cardiovascular health assessments needed in the program.

The project is certainly a commendable undertaking, particularly because of its emphasis on a healthy lifestyle for staff and students, and I thank the Minister of Learning, the Hon. Lyle Oberg, for his support of the program.

The Speaker: And the hon. member knows he's not supposed to mention members by name.

Mr. Klapstein: Sorry.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

2:40 Tegler Trust and Tegler Foundation

Dr. Taft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Tegler Trust was established in 1921 on the death of businessman Robert Tegler. The trust has supported charities ever since.

In June 1981 the trustees of the Tegler Foundation made a decision to fund a major project, a senior citizens' high-rise apartment building named Tegler Manor. In 1993 the Tegler Trust opened another major project, the 83-suite Tegler Terrace, located in the Edmonton-Riverview constituency at 9918-149th Street. Its construction carries on the Tegler tradition of red brick and stone pillars.

The Tegler Trust is presently working with the John Janzen Nature Centre in Edmonton on their revitalization project, and they're having discussions with the Alberta Safety Council for funding towards a safety village in Strathcona county. The Tegler Foundation has also acquired additional properties for residences for low-income people.

Part of the foundation's philosophy is to provide a safe, secure community while encouraging volunteerism from its residents. I commend the trustees of the Tegler Foundation.

Thank you.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Dr. Pannu: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present a petition signed by 99 Alberta seniors petitioning the Legislative Assembly to urge the government of Alberta to

recognize and value the contributions and sacrifices the seniors have made in building the Province of Alberta, and treat them with due respect and dignity by reversing those policies that cause unnecessary financial hardship for them and undermine their quality of life.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm presenting a petition signed by 202 Albertans petitioning the Legislative Assembly to urge the government of Alberta to "return to a regulated electricity system, reduce power bills, and develop a program to assist Albertans in improving energy efficiency."

head: **Notices of Motions**

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Dr. Taft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm giving notice that at the appropriate time I will rise under Standing Order 40 to propose a

motion. The contents of this have been already distributed to members in the Assembly.

Thank you.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings. The first is a copy of a memorandum directed to yourself from myself but signed by myself as Government House Leader, the Official Opposition House Leader, and the New Democrat Party House Leader. It sets out the schedule which has been agreed to by all three party House leaders with respect to the schedule for Committee of Supply.

Under Standing Order 58(6), of course, it provides that the Leader of the Official Opposition may, by giving written notice to the Clerk and the Government House Leader prior to noon on the day following the Budget Address, designate which department's estimates are to be considered by the Committee of Supply on any Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday afternoon.

Our normal course is to discuss these matters and come up with an agreed-upon schedule, and that's the schedule which I'm tabling today.

I've tabled five copies of that schedule, but I would also note that in the memorandum it indicates that the departments of Revenue and Finance are both scheduled for the evening of April 21, and that requires unanimous consent of the House under 58(2) because under 58(2) of the Standing Orders the number of sitting days that it's called to consider shall equal the number of members of Executive Council. Having two on that one sitting day would require unanimous consent of the House, so I would request the Speaker to ask for unanimous consent of the House for that particular matter in accordance with the schedule as agreed between the House leaders.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I have a question, though, first of all. Not all hon. members in the Assembly have a copy of this particular document. Would my assumption be correct?

Mr. Hancock: Yes.

The Speaker: So I will wait until all hon. members have a copy of such document, and I will deal with the question as we proceed with the point of order and the Standing Order 40 application this afternoon. I think that in fairness to all hon. members they should have in their possession such a document.

The hon. Minister of Community Development.

Mr. Zwodzesky: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to table the appropriate number of copies today of a communiqué that I issued on March 19 on behalf of the government and, I hope, all Albertans saluting and recognizing the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which, of course, was yesterday, March 21. In it we are just all reminded that we have a responsibility amongst us to ensure that all fundamental rights and freedoms are safeguarded for Albertans and others in this great world.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you. I have two tablings today. The first is from Chris Callaghan, who's writing to me and making note that this senior couple can afford insurance premiums no longer. Their

insurance will not be renewed. They're also having to curtail other small pleasures "in order to pay for the rising costs of utilities, property taxes, etc." I have the appropriate number of copies to table.

Also, I would like to table five copies of a general notice from Morgex Insurance to members of the Alberta Teachers' Association in which they note that "the Government imposed Rate Freeze of Auto Insurance premiums is not applicable to policies that are being issued with a new insurance carrier." That, in fact, Morgex did in the summer of 2003.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table in the Assembly today on behalf of the Minister of Finance the requisite number of copies of the Report of Selected Payments to Members and Former Members of the Legislative Assembly and Persons Directly Associated with Members of the Legislative Assembly for the year ended March 31, 2003.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Dr. Pannu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings today. I'm tabling five copies of a letter dated January 5, 2004, from Ms Bev McKay, president of Families Allied to Influence Responsible Eldercare, addressed to the Premier. Ms McKay is drawing the Premier's attention to the *Toronto Star's* "recent investigative report on the political neglect of Ontario's long-term care system." She is alerting the Premier to the declining quality of long-term care in Alberta and urging him to take action.

My second tabling is a New Democrat opposition document titled *Scrap Health Premiums: It's Good Medicine*.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, we have a request from the hon. Government House Leader to deal with a motion, but I'm not going to call that until, first of all, hon. members have a copy. Mr. Clerk, were such copies being made available? Okay.

Then we'll deal with the point of order by the Government House Leader first because if the House approves the Standing Order 40 application, there will be no opportunity to deal with such.

The Government House Leader.

Point of Order Referring to Nonmembers

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My point of order is a relatively brief one in nature, and I would refer yourself and members of the House to *Beauchesne's* 493(4) and 493(3). *Beauchesne's* 493(4) indicates that "the Speaker has cautioned Members to exercise great care in making statements about persons who are outside the House and unable to reply."

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona in a preamble to his question referred to the Calgary health authority as being a place for retired Tories and named a former provincial treasurer and a former member – I won't speculate on the constituency because I don't remember it right now – personally but then also went on to name the CEO of the Calgary health authority, Mr. Jack Davis. Now, Mr. Jack Davis was not a member of this House and was a senior deputy minister, in fact, Deputy Minister of Executive Council in this government. While it may be a very honoured designation for many Albertans, it was not appropriate for him to include that person as a retired Tory in his preamble.

I would suggest that the hon. member should be requested to withdraw the reference to individuals not in this House, particularly when he's suggesting that a former civil servant and someone who was the most senior civil servant in the province is a retired Tory.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands on this point of order.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much. I'd like to respond to that briefly, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Government House Leader is quite correct in pointing out the suggestion, but the wording of this section gives quite a bit of latitude to the Speaker with respect to this matter.

2:50

I would submit that the people involved – also the former executive assistant to the Premier was mentioned – are all very closely associated with this government and its policies. The point being made is that there is a certain amount of patronage related to the Calgary health authority. I believe that all people who are mentioned were in fact very closely associated with the government and its policies and have been put in various positions with the Calgary health authority in order to carry out the policies of this government with respect to health care, with which we respectfully disagree.

So I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that it's not a valid point of order. It's simply stating what to us is clearly the case.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Well, hon. members, there are two citations here that should come into play. One thing I sincerely hope is that members will not start to believe that there's considerable latitude given to the chair to be subjective about these things because that would put the chair into a horrendous position.

Let me just quote, first of all, from *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Marleau and Montpetit, page 524.

The Speaker has ruled that Members have a responsibility to protect the innocent, not only from outright slander but from any slur directly or indirectly implied, and has stressed that Members should avoid as much as possible mentioning by name people from outside the House who are unable to reply and defend themselves against innuendo.

I might also point out *Beauchesne* paragraph 493(4), which essentially has the same thing.

Today here is what the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona said; this is the second statement in the question: "It's been turned into a retirement resort for recycled Tories like Jim Dinning, Rod Love, and current CEO Jack Davis." Now, I do know that at least one of these individuals is certainly a former member of this House under the political term Progressive Conservative, the other one never was elected, and the third one certainly didn't fall in that particular situation.

Out of interest over the weekend I was reading something, and it had to do with an interview in one of the major urban papers about one of the current members in the House today. There's a paragraph in there about the hon. member basically saying that he had been an adviser to a former Premier of the province's government – this is not a correct quotation; it's not a disservice, but it sort of sums up to the same thing – and the hon. member said with a big smile on his face: wow, if they'd only known that I'd been a sleeper Liberal for 18 years as an adviser to them. So you can never really be sure what the politics of anybody are.

In the case of the naming of this one particular individual, Jack Davis, former deputy minister, the fact that he may have been a Deputy Minister of Executive Council could not suggest for a

moment that he was in fact one. I found that article rather elucidating.

Certainly, from what I've just quoted from *Montpetit* and I've quoted from *Beauchesne*, that basically we have to protect, it is a valid point of order, Government House Leader, in my view. A valid point of order. In fact, one should be very careful not to bring into question individuals who cannot defend themselves. It's not a good thing to do by innuendo.

I don't know if we want to quarrel and draw the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. He knows better. He'll stand up and say he knows better, and I'll ask him to say that, and then we'll move on.

Dr. Pannu: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I certainly respect your direction, and I won't err next time around. Thank you.

The Speaker: Okay.

Request for Unanimous Consent Committee of Supply Schedule

The Speaker: Now, the pages are going to circulate the document that the hon. Government House Leader referred to. I think that it's important that we deal with this one now. In the event that you give Standing Order 40 application approval, then we would not have a chance to deal with it. So I'll wait a second here to make sure that everybody has this.

Opposition House Leader, do your members have a copy of the document we're talking about? Third party?

So as I understand this – pages, just continue doing as I talk – the Government House Leader, the Official Opposition House Leader, the third party House leader have gotten together, done what they're supposed to do in trying to bridge all the gaps and deal with everything, but there's a requirement now to waive Standing Order 58(2) where it says: "The number of sitting days that the Committee of Supply is called to consider the main estimates shall equal the number of members of the Executive Council with portfolio." This particular scenario that's been agreed to by the three House leaders would have us not really needing that intent.

So the question here is: is the Assembly prepared to waive Standing Order 58(2)? Is there clear understanding? Opposition House Leader, clear understanding? Third party House leader, clear understanding? Okay. Then I'll call the question. Is the Assembly in favour of waiving Standing Order 58(2) so that we might proceed with the 2004 spring sitting of the legislative Committee of Supply calendar as tabled in the House today?

[Unanimous consent granted]

Mr. Hancock: Just on a point, Mr. Speaker. I noted that on the document that circulated, the date is March 23, and obviously it should have been March 22. I wonder if the official document could be corrected in that regard?

The Speaker: Actually, in the question that I gave, it didn't have the date of the document.

Mr. Hancock: No, no. I'm just talking about the document that was tabled.

The Speaker: Yes, I know. But I didn't say that in my motion.

Mr. Hancock: No, you didn't. Okay.

The Speaker: It should be okay. But officially this document is

March 22, not March 23, for all intents and purposes. Anybody opposed to that? Okay.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Calgary Health Region

Dr. Taft:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to appoint an independent, nonpartisan commission under the Public Inquiries Act which shall

- (1) inquire into the circumstances and the effect of government policies, procedures, and practices in the Calgary health region that led to incorrect dialysis solutions being given and subsequently resulting in the deaths of Kathleen Prowse and Bart Wassing,
- (2) examine any issues the commission deems necessary to ensure that health services are being appropriately managed and delivered by the Calgary health region and the government, and
- (3) make findings and recommendations to ensure the appropriate management and delivery of health services in Calgary to protect the health and safety of Calgarians.

Dr. Taft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on a Standing Order 40 application to present a motion to the Assembly.

As you know, Standing Order 40 applications are to be made in case of urgent and pressing necessity. I can think of no matter more pressing than addressing the mismanagement of services that Albertans rely on when they are sick and in need of medical attention.

Mr. Speaker, if this sounds familiar, it's because I asked this Assembly to consider a similar motion less than two weeks ago for a public inquiry into Calgary's emergency health services. This Assembly turned that motion down. Well, here we are two weeks later, and after learning of two more needless deaths in the Calgary health region, I'm again asking this Assembly to consider a public inquiry. This time I'm asking for a public inquiry to look into the circumstances and the effect of government policies, procedures, and practices in the Calgary health region that led to the incorrect dialysis solutions being given to Kathleen Prowse and Bart Wassing.

As well, this public inquiry would examine any issues they deem necessary to ensure that health services are being appropriately managed and delivered by the Calgary health region and this government. This public inquiry is necessary, Mr. Speaker. It is necessary because only six months after the Calgary health region vowed that recommendations made by the fatality inquiry into Maren Burkhart's death would be carried out, Vince Motta died under similar circumstances.

3:00

This public inquiry is necessary because the fatality inquiry into Vince Motta's death found that the Calgary health region provided information that, quote, lent itself to confusion or was capable of misleading the inquiry, end quote. This public inquiry is necessary because the Calgary health region assured us after Vince Motta's death that they would take action to make things better in Calgary's emergency rooms, but things have only gotten worse.

This public inquiry is necessary because just one day after the Calgary health region claimed that similarly labelled chemicals were to blame for the recent medical mix-up, the company that produces the chemicals said that the labelling is actually quite different. This

public inquiry is necessary because this recent dialysis solution mix-up occurred four years after the Calgary health region assured Patricia Evans' family that steps would be taken to prevent this sort of error.

Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, this public inquiry is necessary because Calgarians no longer trust the Calgary health region. The Calgary health region is the largest government body in Calgary, and it is charged with managing and delivering health services. It has proven that it can no longer be trusted to do this.

It's time to end the practice of political patronage appointments in the Calgary health region. It's time to end the Calgary health region's preoccupation with saving face over saving lives. It's time to shed light on the management of the Calgary health region and the role that this government has played in allowing it to deteriorate.

For the health workers in Calgary who work valiantly to keep the system afloat and for the hundreds of thousands of Calgarians who rely on the health services that the Calgary health region provides, Mr. Speaker and all members of this Assembly, I am asking this House to vote to change things for the better.

Thank you.

[Unanimous consent denied]

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Written Questions**

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Proper notice having been given on Thursday, March 18, it's my pleasure to move that written questions appearing on today's Order Paper do stand and retain their places.

[Motion carried]

head: **Motions for Returns**

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Proper notice having been given on Thursday, March 18, it is my pleasure to move that motions for returns appearing on today's Order Paper do stand and retain their places with the exception of motions for returns 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 100, 101, 102, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 159, 160, 162, 164, 165, 166, 167, and 168.

[Motion carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Expenses for Minister of Energy

M3. Mr. MacDonald moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a breakdown of the Minister of Energy's expenses, including but not limited to airfare, food, accommodation, and conference fees, from March 1, 2001, to February 17, 2004.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think it is very, very important that we have a look at these expenses and a breakdown of the Minister of Energy's travels. They have been, to say the least, extensive. We're looking at least at 22 trips, and the

minister has certainly gone beyond Wetaskiwin. There are undisclosed locations in California; Texas with other members of Executive Council; New York City, of course; Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan; Washington, D.C.; Anchorage, Alaska; Dawson City, Yukon; Texas again, this time Dallas; Halifax, Nova Scotia; Kansas; the capital city, Ottawa; again to Washington; San Francisco, California; Portland, Oregon; back to Halifax; Rome; Tucson; back to Texas; Olympia, Washington; Portland, Oregon; Washington, D.C.; Casper, Wyoming; Chicago, Illinois; New Orleans, Louisiana. There are many different places.

Certainly, there is even a trip – and there was quite a famous speech made by the Minister of Energy – to Rio de Janeiro. I believe it was an energy conference. The text of that speech was put on the Department of Energy's website, and it was an interesting read.

So a lot of information would come from this motion for a return in light of, you know, the expenses by this government, by Executive Council. There has certainly been an increase in the level of travel. The taxpayers have every right to know the breakdown of the Minister of Energy's expenses. Certainly, the taxpayers could be of the impression that the hon. minister was travelling extensively looking for a new energy policy because the current one is not working. All these conference fees, accommodations, airfare – I think it's a good idea.

The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General stated two weeks ago in this Assembly, I believe, that he believed that the government was open and transparent and accountable. So now is this government's chance to back that up.

Thank you.

Mr. Jonson: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Energy I'd like to recommend that the Assembly reject this motion since the information sought by the member is available to the general public.

Travel is part of the job of any government. Alberta is an exporting province and relies heavily on capital investment from outside the province. Ministerial missions occur in order to promote Alberta businesses, products, and services to international customers, to attract investment to the province, and they serve also to encourage new businesses to move to Alberta. So it's a given that we have to have contacts. We have to take the initiative in attracting this economic development to this province.

Mr. Speaker, ministers also participate in federal/provincial/territorial ministerial meetings with their counterparts. These meetings are valuable intergovernmental forums to advance the views and priorities of Albertans. There have also been over 130 provincial, territorial, and federal meetings over the time period that is in question. More information on those meetings is available through the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat website at www.scics.gc.ca.

Prior to embarking on any foreign mission, ministers are required to issue a news release which includes itineraries, a list of those travelling, the estimated cost, and the reason for the trip. As well, each year the Minister of Finance tables the report of the selected payments to members and former Members of the Legislative Assembly and persons directly associated with the Members of the Legislative Assembly pursuant to section 37(4) of the Legislative Assembly Act and section 16(1) of the Conflicts of Interest Act.

3:10

Mr. Speaker, in addition to payments being required by legislation to be reported, this report includes other payments to MLAs such as remuneration, benefits and expenses, and payments to former members under the Members of the Legislative Assembly Pension Plan Act and the public service pension plan.

Mr. Speaker, energy-related missions have been very successful lately. They've led to face-to-face meetings with the vice-president of the United States to talk about how Alberta can contribute to the new U.S. energy strategy. They've also led to literally thousands of key decision-makers around the world learning a great deal about the energy sector in Alberta and investment opportunities.

Finally, because the Auditor General of Alberta annually reviews the records of government departments as part of his ongoing responsibilities, if there were any issues concerning inappropriate expenses, they would be identified by the Auditor General's review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I would like to speak in favour of the release of this information. I was quite surprised when the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar itemized the various destinations of the Minister of Energy. That was a tremendous travelogue, I would say.

I reject the arguments put forward by the minister of intergovernmental affairs that we don't need to know this information because they were all valuable and important conferences and meetings. That's not the question. The question is not whether or not these were worth while. The question is: how much was spent in which areas on these trips? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has asked that question, and there is no good reason in my view for a lack of complete transparency on this question, and I really wonder why the minister – I've got to get his title right.

Ms Carlson: Intergovernmental . . .

Mr. MacDonald: Affairs . . .

Mr. Mason: Intergovernmental affairs. That's it?

Ms Carlson: International and intergovernmental affairs.

Mr. Mason: International and intergovernmental affairs. Thank you very much, hon. member.

The Speaker: Actually, it's International and Intergovernmental Relations.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. [interjections] I can imagine what would happen if we had a motion for a return on that.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, you know, the fact that the Auditor General will look at it is not a good argument either because the Auditor General will have a look at it and he will just make sure that everything is in order; that is to say, that it's within the policies and so on and that all things are properly expensed.

The question is whether or not the public would approve of these expenditures. That's the question. It's a political question, not an accounting question. As a result, I would suggest that we ought to reject the hon. minister's proposal and accept this question.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Stevens: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make a few comments with respect to this matter. I think it's fair to say that this Assembly has a procedure with respect to accounts. The question here is with respect to expenses, and expenses are accounts. Both of

the members who have spoken from the opposite side are very familiar with these procedures, namely that we do have a legislative committee dealing with account matters. Indeed, the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar is the chair of that committee, and the Member for Edmonton-Highlands, I believe, is a member of the committee, and that has been so since the last election in March of 2001.

I note that the time period for this particular motion for a return starts in March of 2001, and by my reckoning one of the years in question, the year ending March 2002, would have already been before this committee for questioning. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the procedure is that the minister appears, together with the accounts for the year in question, to answer those questions posed by the members of the committee, and the Auditor General, who has reviewed the accounts of the particular ministry, is available also to answer questions. The purpose of that particular procedure is specifically to allow members of this Assembly to inquire into matters relative to the accounts.

It seems to me that both of the hon. members opposite, perhaps in hindsight, have felt that they have not done all that they should have done in reviewing this particular minister's accounts for that year, but the fact of the matter is that that likely is not so because I know that they are both very, very diligent.

The fact is that the Auditor General has a role. The Auditor General's role is to review accounts. The Auditor General has done that. The Auditor General has commented on it, and he has indicated that there is absolutely nothing untoward.

As it relates to the information of the Minister of Energy and his travel, we have a procedure in this House relative to international travel where press releases are set out before the travel takes place indicating when the travel takes place, where the travel will go, who the minister will meet with, the expenses associated with that travel, who is travelling with the minister, and so on and so forth. There is a great deal of information that is available as you go forward from day to day, from month to month, over the years.

But the short of it, Mr. Speaker, is that in this particular case there is a process. There's an Auditor General who looks into this. This Assembly has a process to look into it. Both of these hon. members have been part of that, and the time that is available to review accounts can be used to specifically ask questions of both the minister and the Auditor General relative to these matters.

Ms Carlson: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to participate in speaking to this particular motion and to respond to the Deputy Government House Leader's participation in the royal runaround, which is what we've been getting from the government since we first started asking these questions about getting details on these particular travel expenses for the minister in question here and other ministers.

The Deputy Government House Leader talked extensively on our ability to access Public Accounts information as if at any point in my history with this Assembly that would have ever resulted in any kind of full disclosure or details. It doesn't, Mr. Speaker, as that member very well knows. Not only are details never made available on expense accounts, Public Accounts only has an hour and a half to examine all details of those particular ministries who, in fact, choose to appear before them. Never in the history that I've been here have all ministries actually made it through the Public Accounts system in any given year. So some are always not available to be scrutinized.

In the first few years that I was here, I was on that committee. We never could get that kind of detail from the ministers. The ministers always say that this is not the most appropriate place to disclose that information; send in a written question or a motion for a return.

Well, we do that, and what do we get? No information. When we ask for the information in question period, what do we get? Once again they say to go to Public Accounts or go to a written question or go to a motion for a return.

My question is: what do they have to hide? If there's nothing to hide here and they're not afraid of the public scrutiny of these expenses, which is truly a political scrutiny that needs to take place, then why don't they just disclose the information?

The Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations stated that perhaps we should be going to the report of the payments made to the members on the trips they've taken. I have before me, Mr. Speaker, the Report of Selected Payments to Members and Former Members of the Legislative Assembly and Persons Directly Associated with Members of the Legislative Assembly, year ended March 31, 2003.

When I go to this particular Minister of Energy that we're asking for the information for, what do I see? I see his remuneration for the year, and then, under the area that you would think we would be able to look and see the details of the expenses for all these conferences and trips and meetings that he went to out of the province, what do I see? I see travel expenses as a minister of the Crown. His kilometre reimbursement. That came to \$48,815. That was for government business for the stuff that he paid for. Then I see kilometre reimbursement as an MLA, \$10,207. Then I see the subsistence allowance to cover the cost of meals while maintaining a temporary residence around session, so once again not on these conference duties, \$20,020.

3:20

So the portion of this that's related to his travel as a minister only discloses that amount of money that he put on his credit card. We know full well from the information that we've gotten around these trips that a great percentage of these monies are not paid directly by the ministers themselves. They're paid by aides or other people along on the trip. So we want a full public scrutiny, a full political review, of how much these ministers are spending on these conferences and these trips.

I'm not saying that it isn't well spent in some cases, but let the people decide whether or not they think that these guys are 'snorferling' at the trough or whether we're getting value for money in this province. So it's worth while to ask this question, and it's politically astute for this government to provide the information, and they are once again stonewalling.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member opposite raised a number of points which I think need a response. First of all, she indicates that not all members of the Executive Council choose to go to Public Accounts. Well, my understanding is that Public Accounts summons ministers of Executive Council and summons the ones that they want to examine. Certainly, I know that I've recently had the opportunity to have been summoned and to appear before Public Accounts, and I didn't understand that I had an option. I understood that when Public Accounts asks a minister of Executive Council, you try and negotiate a day that makes sense, obviously, but if they want you to go, you go.

The other thing that I wanted to mention that wasn't mentioned by the members opposite: sometimes I think members of this House don't realize that every time a document is tabled in the House, it becomes a sessional record, and then it is stored forever as a record of the session. We've tabled documents in this House as though they're important documents – they may have some relevance and

importance to the people who have written them or have sent them in or want their viewpoint on the record – but once they're tabled, they get a sessional record number and they go into the archives and they're stored forever.

So the more things you ask for on the record and the more documents that are tabled, the larger and larger amount of sessional records in storage, and, you know, in many cases, although, as I say, they may have been important in the context in which they were written, they're not an important long-term record for the House.

Now, we have on the Order Paper today 180 motions for returns, and if all of those were answered in the positive, there would be boxes and boxes and boxes of material that will be then numbered as sessional records and stored forever as sessional records of the House. That is not the most appropriate place for those records, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, those records are in the appropriate place for them, and that is in the hands of the financial people. They have been reviewed and can be reviewed by the Auditor General on behalf of the public to make sure that policies have been followed and monies have been expended appropriately. But to bring in a hundred and whatever it was number of questions asking for all the financial records of government to be brought in and marked as sessional papers and then stored forever in the archives of the Legislature is just nonsensical.

The hon. member opposite talked about the filing that was filed to date for the year ended March 31, 2003, and indicated that the minister in question in this particular motion for a return had \$48,800 worth of expenses as a minister of the Crown: kilometre reimbursements for use of personal vehicle for government business, vehicle rentals, airfare, accommodation, meals, taxis, parking, et cetera. So \$48,800, Mr. Speaker.

I don't have the exact number at hand, but I think the revenue from oil and gas, which comes as a result of that particular minister's department and the policies that that particular minister has to take responsibility for and the networking with respect to energy councils and other energy producing states around the world and all of those issues, is close to \$8 billion in the last year, if I recall correctly, and I stand to be corrected whether it was 7 and a half billion dollars, but in order of magnitude a phenomenal amount of revenue.

To suggest that a minister of the Crown ought not be able to spend \$50,000 in travelling, or even more if there's some that hasn't been appropriately accounted for here because somebody else paid for it, although in my experience that's attributed to the member . . . That's a rather modest amount of money for the responsibility and the income that comes to this province from oil and gas revenues.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the question is really one of accountability. The hon. members opposite are suggesting that members of Executive Council ought to be held accountable, and that's absolutely true. The public is entitled to have accountability; they're entitled to know that their money is being spent appropriately. We have policies in place to ensure that that happens, and we have auditors in place to ensure that that happens.

Now, members opposite, I think – and I don't want to attribute motives – the vast majority of these questions seem to have come onto the Order Paper after the federal Auditor General discovered that a senior civil servant was spending money inappropriately. The Auditor General, doing her job, found that there were some places where the policies were not being appropriately followed or where there were inappropriate payments and brought that to light. Mr. Speaker, that's precisely the way the system ought to work.

How it cannot work is for individuals to be held accountable for minute or relatively small expenditures on a case-by-case basis because the first thing that happens when you table these expenses

is that somebody is going to, as we've seen in this House, come back and say: on October 3 you spent \$300 on a dinner; can you tell us who was with you and what you were talking about? Well, Mr. Speaker, that's an inappropriate way to have accountability because what you're doing is suggesting that there's a finite result from every meeting. What you're doing is suggesting that there ought to be absolute disclosure of every single person that's met with and every single topic that's on the table. That can't happen. That would restrict the operation of government in such a manner that you would not be able to actually make good policy.

Ministers of Executive Council and other members of government meet all the time with individuals. They meet within the province; they meet without the province; they go to appropriate conferences. Sometimes you can tell in advance what results you're going to be able to get; sometimes you go in the hopes of getting a result. But you cannot judge appropriate accountability by coming back three years later and saying: you spent \$500 on a conference fee; was that an appropriate expenditure?

Those are judgments that are made in the course of doing business. Whether you are in the private sector or whether you are in government, you have to be in a position to make those judgment calls on a day-to-day basis as you're doing your business and you have to be held accountable to the appropriate policy structure that's in place and you have to be held accountable by an Auditor General reviewing the statements and saying: have you operated within the confines of policy and within the monies that have been voted to you by the Legislature to do your job?

So asking for accountability of the specifics of this nature, asking for records of food and accommodation and airfare to go on the records of the House for time immemorial is an inappropriate way to ask for accountability. There are, as the Member for Calgary-Glenmore pointed out earlier, appropriate ways to do it. The hon. members opposite just haven't found those yet.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenarry.

Mr. Bonner: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make a few comments in regard to the motion for a return as brought forward by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. Certainly, one of the tasks as opposition is accountability. It is a major task of opposition, and it is one of the things that makes democracy work.

Now, we've heard the hon. member across the way say that we shouldn't have to have a breakdown on \$48,000 for kilometre reimbursement for use of a personal vehicle for government business, vehicle rentals, airfare, accommodation, meals, taxi, and parking, et cetera while travelling on government business, that there are people that do this for us.

Certainly, the Department of Energy is responsible for billions of dollars of revenue for Albertans. But at the same time if we were to ask seniors in this province who are on fixed incomes what they could do with \$48,000, they would have to give you a very detailed account of all their expenditures. This is quite a bit. [interjection] That's exactly right. Another example was the forensic audit we had on the Edmonton public school board that was ordered by the minister.

3:30

If we have seniors who wish to apply for the Alberta seniors' benefits, then certainly their expenditures are put forward. They are very detailed, and they are scrutinized to make certain that they qualify. So are we doing anything out of the ordinary; for example, the audit that took place on the Edmonton public school board? No. We also have, Mr. Speaker, the audit that's done on our seniors

when they apply for the Alberta seniors' benefits, and that certainly isn't anywhere in the neighbourhood of \$48,000.

So I think that Albertans not only want to see the breakdown of these expenses; they're entitled to it. As we go through the process in this House and as we continue, whether it be in question period or whether it be in written questions or whether it be in motions for returns, as we follow through this process, every time the question is asked, we get directed to another process as to how we can find answers to these questions. So, yes, this is definitely a case of accountability here, and it is just another dodge by this government to not allow Albertans to see the breakdown of these expenses.

So with those comments, I will take my seat, and I will certainly listen to the comments from other members. Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar to close the debate.

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. Mr. Speaker, I listened to all the speakers with a great deal of interest, and certainly I must say that I'm disappointed that Motion for a Return 3 is to be rejected.

I listened, first, with a great deal of interest, as a matter of fact, to the hon. Minister of Justice. The minister stated that it's just not possible to look at the Order Paper, to look at the motions for returns and the written questions that are on here, that we can't possibly respond to all these questions, these motions because the legislative process would be overloaded with filing, that we would have official responses on each one of these requests, and that somehow there's something detrimental if these responses were to become part of the permanent record of this Assembly.

Well, it's only in the last month, if one were to take a quick review of *Hansard*, that the Minister of Finance said in response to a question from this hon. member: well, put it on the Order Paper; have a written question. The same day during the same question period, on February 24, 2004, the Minister of Government Services also told this member to put it on the Order Paper in the form of a written question. There was no concern about the records of the Assembly being overloaded on that day. On March 4 the Premier, in response to a question from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, said: it's a written question. There was no concern about overloading the records of this Assembly.

On March 16 the hon. minister of health made a similar statement in response to a question from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview, and just last week, on March 17, the same minister of health made the same request to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview. So to make the argument a week later that it's going to clog up the records system of the Assembly is, to say the least, lame and does not have any merit.

Now, certainly no one on this side of the House is arguing that all government travel is bad or wrong. I would agree with the hon. minister of intergovernmental relations, his department, that certainly travel is important and necessary not only at the national level but at the international level, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Mason: Moose Jaw?

Mr. MacDonald: No. Moose Jaw was a trip that the Minister of Energy took.

We're not saying that all travel is bad. We want a process that is open and accountable for the expenses and what goes on on these trips and who goes. If there is nothing untoward, as an hon. member across the way said, well, why not release all the documents? We need to know.

Now, if this information is publicly available, as the hon. minister

stated, where is this information? Where is it publicly available? I had a FOIP request on some other trips because not all trips are on the itinerary. Not all trips are listed there. I had a FOIP request on three trips, and I received back a request that was in the hundreds of dollars: come up with the cash; we might give you the information. That is against the spirit and the intent of the FOIP Act.

Mr. Speaker, this particular minister likes to travel more than the others, and these are trips that we know about. Certainly, the hon. Minister of Justice always seems to be at home doing his homework. Two trips are listed here. As I said earlier, I don't know whether the hon. minister is in search of an electricity policy or what the quest is, this Holy Grail – for a good alternative to electricity deregulation he only has to go to www.liberalopposition.com to see what a real electricity policy looks like. He wouldn't have to travel to all these foreign, exotic destinations to find it. He can just click on the Internet, and there it is.

Mr. Hancock: At www.opposition.com.

Mr. MacDonald: No, you're missing it. It's www.liberalopposition.com. You have the habit of missing that "opposition." [interjection] No. This is a travel log. It's not a fairy tale. Twenty-two trips is certainly not a fairy tale, to the Minister of Infrastructure.

Many of these trips are over budget, and if we're to determine how many of them are over budget, we need to have the information that is outlined in Motion for a Return 3. This is only part of the process.

You know, departmental policy seems to be to rack up air miles. The total reported cost of all of the trips that we are aware of was supposedly \$1.1 million, but the government did not publicly provide costs for 26 of the trips, so the actual total may be much higher than that. Whenever these itineraries are made and these press releases are put out on the destination, the cost, and who is going, maybe there are trips that are not officially discussed.

Ms Evans: Not likely.

Mr. MacDonald: Now, the hon. Minister of Children's Services said, "Not likely." Well, the government, our research indicates, failed to provide itineraries for 79 trips. Taxpayers have the right to know who went on those trips and how much money was spent.

I'm sorry. This is incomplete. By responding to this Motion for a Return 3 the government could really be open, really be transparent, and could really be accountable to the citizens, Mr. Speaker.

3:40

That pretty well concludes my statements in regard to Motion for a Return 3, but I would have to say that I'm disappointed. There is a joke making the rounds in the coffee shop at Capilano Mall, and it goes something like this. How do you get eight Tory cabinet ministers into a four-seater Cessna? The reply is: tell them that you're going to open a trade mission in Mexico. That's the public's perception. You can correct that perception by agreeing to this Motion for a Return 3.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[The voice vote indicated that Motion for a Return 3 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:41 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Bonner
Carlson

MacDonald

Mason

Against the motion:

Abbott	Haley	Norris
Ady	Hancock	Ouellette
Amery	Herard	Renner
Broda	Horner	Snelgrove
Cenaiko	Jablonski	Stelmach
Coutts	Kryczka	Stevens
Danyluk	Lord	Strang
DeLong	Lougheed	Tannas
Doerksen	Lukaszuk	Tarchuk
Dunford	Lund	Taylor
Evans	Maskell	VanderBurg
Forsyth	McClelland	Vandermeer
Friedel	Melchin	Woloshyn
Gordon		

Totals: For – 4 Against – 40

[Motion for a Return 3 lost]

Department of Health and Wellness IT Costs

M10. Mr. Bonner moved on behalf of Dr. Taft that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing the total dollar amount spent by the Ministry of Health and Wellness on contracts for information technology services broken down by company and total dollar amount for each for the 2002-2003 fiscal year.

Mr. Bonner: Once again, Mr. Speaker, we are requesting information that deals strictly with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, and again it's an opportunity for Albertans to get a detailed look at information regarding technological services. We are quite concerned as an opposition with exactly how many dollars are being spent in this particular area and not only how those dollars are being spent. We also are looking forward to some answers as to which companies were used and how many dollars were used for each.

Like so many other things in today's world where we start dealing with technology, it can become a black hole. There's no doubt that in order to first of all introduce systems, to get them up and running, to iron out the bugs, to constantly keep updating your equipment so that you can stay abreast of the latest technology, these are extremely expensive propositions. Certainly, we have to have this information in order to compare whether or not Albertans are getting full value for the dollars being spent. We have debated in this House on numerous occasions different bills regarding health information, the collection of health information, how it is used, who it's shared with, who it can be shared with, and certainly with Motion for a Return 10, by allowing us this information, we will have the opportunity to do that type of analysis.

So with those comments, I look forward to hearing debate on both sides regarding Motion for a Return 10. Thank you.

The Speaker: Before I recognize the hon. Minister of Innovation and Science, might we revert briefly to Introduction of Guests?

[Unanimous consent granted]

head: **Introduction of Guests**
(reversion)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Seniors.

Mr. Woloshyn: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly two gentlemen that I had the privilege of meeting with. The first one is Norm

Castiglione, who is the chair of the Wood Buffalo housing corporation. He is accompanied by Tim Walsh, a businessman and developer from Fort McMurray. I'd ask the House to give them the usual welcome.

head: **Motions for Returns**

Department of Health and Wellness IT Costs (continued)

Mr. Doerksen: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of my colleague the Minister of Health and Wellness to address Motion for a Return 10. This government is open to providing information on information technology services. In fact, the type of information sought in this motion for a return and in a number of other motions before the Assembly is made available annually through a document released by Alberta Finance entitled General Revenue Fund: Details of Grants, Supplies and Services, Capital Assets and Other, by Payee.

Mr. Speaker, given the number of additional motions for returns requesting similar information from all other government departments, I move that Motion for a Return 10 be amended as follows and would read that

an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing the total dollar amount spent by the government of Alberta on contracts for information technology services and a listing of vendors providing these services for the 2002-2003 fiscal year.

The amended motion will provide the Assembly with the total amount spent by all government departments on information technology services and a list of vendors utilized to provide these services.

This amendment and its notification have been provided to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview prior to 11 this morning as per procedures, and the amendment has been circulated already to the members of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie on the amendment.

Ms Carlson: Yes, on the amendment. Mr. Speaker, this is an unacceptable amendment, completely unacceptable. We do not want the government to provide the information on all departments lumped together. We want to be able to examine department by department the questions that are coming before the Assembly this afternoon as motions for returns.

So for them to strike out "the Ministry of Health and Wellness" and substitute "government of Alberta," first of all I thought it was a sneaky way to get around taking a look at each of the departments, but really it's just blatant that they refuse to provide the information. So I don't agree with that first part, part (a). And part (b), striking out "broken down by company and total dollar amount for each" and substituting "and a listing of vendors providing these services" – well, the minister who just explained the amendment clearly told us that the listing of vendors is available in another document, so they're duplicating their own services here, which is what we hear repeatedly from this government that they don't want to do. It doesn't help Albertans to scrutinize the government activities if they don't see a dollar amount of those monies paid out to vendors.

This government continually, on a day-to-day basis, talks about the rising costs of health care, but we have little way to determine which parts of those costs are attributed to administration and which parts of those are attributed to direct delivery of services. Now, anyone who has watched the American system over the past decade knows that the greatest rise in cost for them and the greatest reason

why their costs are higher than our costs is administration. That is exactly where vendors providing services come into it.

So we need to start to get to the root of the issue about why health care costs are increasing. This is one piece of that puzzle to start to give us those answers. This government should be accountable and should be quite prepared to tell us who's getting the money and how much they're getting.

4:00

As my colleague from Edmonton-Glengarry stated, we all know that technology services really can be a black hole. We've seen that with other discussions we've had in this Assembly. We need to know that we're getting value for money. The only way we get to see that is by seeing how much money they're actually spending.

So I urge this government to defeat this amendment and to stop ducking the issue and just put their cards on the table and let people see what they're spending.

The Speaker: On the amendment.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

Point of Order

Admissibility of Amendment

Mr. Mason: Point of order, Mr. Speaker, if I may. I'm looking at *Beauchesne's* on page 176, and it's section 579, which states that "an amendment setting forth a proposition dealing with a matter which is foreign to the proposition involved in the main motion is not relevant and cannot be moved."

It would be my submission that by lumping all government departments under this motion by way of this amendment, the government is attempting to introduce other matters which are not directly the subject of the motion which has been moved. Each department may in fact be treated differently by individual motions, and to try to lump them all together is simply an attempt to introduce matters that were completely outside the purview of the original motion which has been moved.

Therefore, I believe that it should be in fact out of order to introduce such an amendment since it is introducing matters that were not considered in the original motion.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader on the point of order.

Mr. Hancock: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, the proposed amendment is in order. It doesn't go outside of the purview of the motion at all. The purview of the motion is that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview has requested a motion for a return from this House returning to this House information with respect to technology services broken down by company, et cetera. The amendment essentially recognizes that at least some members of the House would like the same information on other government departments.

In fact, there are 15 government departments for which the identical information is requested. Those departments are reflected in motions for returns 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 61, 62, 70, 71, 72, 73, 103, 122, 123, and 146. If we wait a few more days, I assume the other departments of government for which the information hasn't been requested will be on the Order Paper.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of amending the question is so that all the information which is being requested of the House through a motion for a return can be dealt with. It's the same information with respect to each of those individual departments, and the purport of the amendment is to say that that information for all of government

should be provided. That way we don't deal with 15 different questions on exactly the same topic differentiated only by department but we deal with the one question.

If the members opposite want the information provided in a certain way so that they can differentiate between departments with respect to how much is being spent in each department, I'm sure that that won't be too difficult to discern. I can't speak for the hon. member, but I think that type of information would be readily ascertainable when they get the information.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't make sense to have the House deal with 15 different motions on the same topic separated only by different departments in each case when the amendment would provide quite consistently with the import of the motion in terms of getting information on information technology services by just saying: provide it for all of them.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie on the point of order raised by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

Ms Carlson: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I certainly agree with the point of order raised by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands. As he pointed out and as the Government House Leader just confirmed, we did not ask for information on every department of government. In fact, barely more than half of them were requested.

It is impossible for us to do the analysis which we are asking for, which is to compare the administrative costs within a particular department with regard to technology as compared to other operating expenses, if we get all of that information lumped into one. According to this government's amendment we will never get that dollar value, so we would concur that it defeats the original intention of the motion.

The Speaker: Others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry on this point of order.

Mr. Bonner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to concur with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, who just raised that point. When I look at the point of order and we look at amendment (b), what they wish to insert here is: "a listing of vendors providing these services." There's absolutely no dollar amount indicated in this particular amendment. Therefore, we would not be receiving the information that we have requested, so I do support the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands on this particular point of order.

The Speaker: Okay, hon. members. I want us to be very, very clear on this. There's a point of order raised by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands, which I am going to rule against. As far as I can see in terms of looking at this and following the process and our Standing Orders, we basically have an amendment brought forward to be reviewed by Parliamentary Counsel and then to be sent to other members prior to 11 o'clock this morning.

So I'm ruling the point of order out, but I want everybody to strike from their ears everything else that was added to this debate which has nothing to it. I have no idea of what intent is or anything else. I'm simply looking at a document that has words on it but nothing else.

All we're talking about now is the amendment. Further participation on the amendment? Proceed on the amendment.

Debate Continued

Mr. Bonner: Thank you. On the amendment, Mr. Speaker, striking out "Ministry of Health and Wellness" and substituting "government of Alberta." Again, we have a situation here where the information that we would receive would not be open and transparent. It would

not be in the detail that we would wish where accountability in the ministry of health could be determined. Certainly there's broad overview for the government of Alberta. It's not the specific information that was requested in the original Motion for a Return 10.

As well, section (b), striking out "broken out by company and total dollar amount for each" and substituting "a listing of vendors providing these services": we are not as interested in the vendors providing these services as we are with the dollars that are being spent and how they are being distributed. So I certainly cannot support this amendment to Motion for a Return 10, and I urge my fellow members to vote against this amendment.

Thank you.

The Speaker: On the amendment.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes. Cognizant of your comments relative to the discussion on the point of order I feel it necessary to reiterate, then, on the debate itself that, first of all, the amendment proposes a listing of vendors providing these services. The hon. member in moving that indicated that how much is paid to each individual vendor is a question that is an amount that's published every year by Alberta Finance in general revenue fund details of grants, supplies, and services. It's not that difficult if you know who the vendor is to find out how much a vendor was paid in a given year. So that information is available. This amendment doesn't take away from the opposition or anyone else the ability to find out how much any particular vendor receives in any given year.

By doing this amendment in this fashion, the first and most important part is that there are, as I mentioned earlier, some 180 motions for a return. Mr. Speaker, under any analysis of that we won't deal with all of those motions for returns in this session.

4:10

If the hon. members really want the information that they are requesting, they ought to support this amendment because by supporting this amendment, the motion would then provide for the information to be provided with respect to all government departments, and that would delete the need to deal with motions for returns 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 61, 62, 70, 71, 72, 73, 103, 122, 123, and 146, which are identical motions but with respect to different departments. So by supporting this amendment, we encompass all government departments; the information is there with respect to all government departments.

I would urge people to support the amendment.

The Speaker: The amendment in front of me is the document that I have, and it's very clear that there are no numbers in it. There's a vote on an amendment.

[Motion on amendment carried]

The Speaker: Now we go back to finish the debate on the motion as amended. The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Stevens: Yes, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Minister of Health and Wellness I recommend that we accept the motion as amended.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry to close the debate.

Mr. Bonner: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's still very unfortunate that we cannot support the amended Motion for a Return

10. This amendment certainly takes the heart out of the motion. It takes out the specificity of dealing with one department only, and as well it doesn't allow us to have a detailed look at the numbers that we have requested in the original motion for a return.

As well, we are informed day in and day out in this House during question period when we ask questions to try and get specific information that they would be better handled under Written Questions or Motions for Returns. To amend Motion for a Return 10 in this fashion certainly takes the thrust out of the question and the importance of informing all members of the House as to where the dollars are going in the most expensive department that we deal with in this government.

This amended motion certainly is a travesty when it comes to looking at openness and accountability. It seems that we have a double standard here, Mr. Speaker, that on one point we have minister after minister getting up in this House and saying that we have an open and transparent and accountable government, yet when we do put forward motions for returns in this particular fashion, then we have amendments which cloud the accounting.

Motion for a Return 10 in its original state was a very legitimate request. It was one that all Albertans would have been happy to see unless, of course, they were on the other side of the House. It certainly would have given them an opportunity to see where these very valuable tax dollars are going, and it also would give them an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to analyze comments and statements that are being made by the minister of health, by the Premier that costs for health care continue to escalate.

This original motion for a return would certainly have given Albertans the opportunity to look for themselves to determine if these costs are out of line or whether they're not out of line. It would also give them the information they require to support or not support the Premier's notion that we are pulling ourselves out of the Canada Health Act and going to go it on our own and say goodbye to the over a billion dollars, from my understanding, that the federal government provides towards our health care system here in Alberta.

So this definitely is an amended motion that I can't support. I would hope that all members of this House would reconsider what this amended motion is really doing; that is, not allowing Albertans to see the specific breakdown of where dollars in the largest department in this government are being spent.

Thank you.

[The voice vote indicated that Motion for a Return 10 as amended carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:17 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Abbott	Haley	Melchin
Ady	Hancock	Norris
Amery	Herard	Ouellette
Broda	Horner	Renner
Cenaiko	Jablonski	Snelgrove
Coutts	Jonson	Stelmach
Danyluk	Kryczka	Stevens
DeLong	Lord	Strang
Doerksen	Lougheed	Tannas
Dunford	Lukaszuk	Tarchuk
Evans	Lund	Taylor

Forsyth	Maskell	VanderBurg
Friedel	McClelland	Vandermeer
Gordon		
Against the motion:		
Bonner	MacDonald	Mason
Carlson		
Totals:	For – 40	Against – 4

[Motion for a Return 10 as amended carried]

**Speaker’s Ruling
Amendment to Motion for a Return 10**

The Speaker: Hon. members, before we call the next question, I have to make a comment here. We need some clarification with respect to what happened.

We have under Standing Orders our own process for written questions and motions for returns. Standing Order 34 is very, very clear on the process and the manner in which we deal with this. On the Wednesday or Thursday of each week there’s an opportunity for one of the government House leaders to point out and make comments with respect to motions for returns and written questions and which will be dealt with the following Monday. In our Routine we have time set aside on Monday – it’s also the same afternoon that’s set aside as private members’ day – to deal with these particular matters.

Now, openness and transparency is something that this Assembly by way of the very Standing Orders basically said that it would deal with in this kind of a situation. So we had an amendment that was suggested last Thursday. The amendment was reviewed by Parliamentary Counsel, who basically initialled it, and there was advice provided to, I think, the drafter of the original question by 11 o’clock this morning, so that process was met. Then we had a point of order this afternoon.

4:30

During the debate something else was added to this discussion, and it had to do with the number of other written questions or motions for returns that this was to apply to. That’s not part of the motion. It’s not part of the amendment. I have no idea how the chair is supposed to determine subjectively to which one of these other motions for returns this particular amendment is to apply. That would be a very unfair situation.

There is a process that this Assembly has written for its Standing Orders. There’s a process agreed to as to what the rules would be and not to be open, clear, and transparent with respect to what the intent of the amendment would be. I have no alternative right now but to ask the Government House Leader: what is the intent of this motion as amended supposed to be? We’re going to hear other comments on this as well.

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that because I was about to rise on a point of order to deal with that precise question. Having dealt with a motion, whether it passed or not, which has now included that that information be provided for all government departments, it would be my submission that pursuant to rule 558, which says that

“a question being once made and carried in the affirmative or negative, cannot be questioned again but must stand as the judgment of the House.” Unless such a rule were in existence, the time of the House might be used in the discussion of a motion of the same nature and contradictory decisions would be sometimes arrived at in the course of the same session.

Pursuant to *Beauchesne’s* 558 and the fact that Motion for a Return 10 has now been passed as amended in a form which encompasses all government departments, motions for returns 12, 13, 14, 15, and 18, which are on the Order Paper to be dealt with today, and motions for returns 61, 62, 70, 71, 72, 73, 103, 122, 123, and 146, which are on the Order Paper but not to be dealt with today, all of which are exactly the same motion except for the description of the government department, have now been subsumed by passing Motion for a Return 10 as amended, which deals with all government departments. So it would not be in order, in my humble submission, to deal with those other questions.

We could I suppose deal with a matter of this nature by amending the motion to actually include those numbers in the amended motion, but I think you cover the same ground by saying that if private members have put on the Order Paper a motion for a return which is identical in every respect with the exception of the name of the department and you amend the motion to say that that information relative to all government departments is to be returned, then you’ve subsumed the other motions. So I would ask that motions 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 61, 62, 70, 71, 72, 73, 103, 122, 123, and 146 be struck from the Order Paper as having already been determined by the vote on Motion for a Return 10.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Ms Carlson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would submit that that’s an unreasonable request. He should have named those particular motions and the numbers of those motions in the amendment if that was what his intent was. As it stands, I think that Standing Order 34 takes precedence over what he has just stated and that when we get to those motions – motions for returns 12, 13, 14, 15, and so on as he listed – he has to stand up and say that they’re going to reject them on the basis of this amendment that was just passed.

It is not possible that he could reasonably after the amendment has passed then declare which motions for returns are now going to be subject to that particular rule. Under our orders they are to be accepted or rejected, and I believe that means on an individual basis, and I would expect us to deal with them accordingly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I certainly can understand the dilemma of the chair in respect to this since we’ve now passed a motion which relates to all government departments, but it also limited the scope of the original motion. So I think it’s not possible to argue that it necessarily applies to every other similar motion because this motion that was passed does not include those things asked in the motions for other departments that were excluded by this motion.

So I would submit that when each of these motions is put, it must be incumbent on some member of the Assembly, be it the Government House Leader or someone else, to stand up on a point of order and to argue that that particular motion has been rendered out of order by the passage of the motion that we just dealt with. Then the chair would have to rule on each case as we proceed.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Well, there are two things here that bother me. In this Assembly each week as is per the custom and the tradition of this Assembly the Government House Leader or a Deputy Government House Leader advises the House which written questions will be dealt with in the subsequent week. Last week motions for returns 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and then beyond – there’s no 61

or something else. Other numbers were going so quickly that they went way beyond the chair's ability to write these down. They're not identified as coming up today, and that's a disconcerting thing.

The second thing. There is clearly a definition difference in terms of what the intent of these motions is. I'm going to reserve judgment on this because as far as I understand, the next motion for a return to come up is Motion for a Return 11, and that would be the one that would be called, and it would not fall under the purview of what at least the Government House Leader suggested it should fall under in terms of Motion for a Return 10.

This is unprecedented in our Assembly to my knowledge, and it has some other deviations that I'm not sure all the members really would want to see happen without further contemplation of this. Now, one thing that's becoming very, very clear to the chair – for all intents and purposes one of the most important parts of the Routine was time provided for private members' business in a session, and with an Order Paper as thick as this, it becomes highly unlikely that any private members' business will be dealt with during the duration of this session.

So, Clerk, call the next motion for a return.

Chinook Regional Health Authority IT Costs

M11. Mr. Bonner moved on behalf of Dr. Taft that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing the total dollar amount spent by the Chinook regional health authority on contracts for information technology services broken down by company and total dollar amount for each for the 2002-2003 fiscal year.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Glengarry.

Mr. Bonner: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again the purpose of this motion for a return certainly is to provide a number of different avenues of detailed information on technological services. It also, if passed, would allow Albertans to see the companies with which these contracts are signed and the total dollar amount that goes to each company.

So I would urge all members to support Motion for a Return 11. Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Children's Services.

Ms Evans: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm speaking on behalf of the Minister of Health and Wellness, and he is forced to reject Motion for a Return 11 for the following reasons. In 2002-2003 we had 17 health regions, not 9. Therefore, he cannot provide the requested information for the restructured Chinook regional health authority for the 2002-2003 fiscal year, nor can he provide information by contractor.

His ministry does not require information to be reported by contractor, so these data are not included in the financial statements. However, Mr. Speaker, this fall, after the financial statements for the nine regions are audited, he can provide total dollars spent on information technology services by each of these regions.

Thank you.

4:40

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar on the debate.

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, in regard to Motion for a Return 11 I can't understand why the total dollar amount spent by the Chinook regional health

authority on contracts for information technology services broken down by company and total dollar amounts for each for the 2002-2003 fiscal year couldn't be determined and put before the Assembly. When we look at the next year, 2003-04, there are estimates for the nine different regional health authorities for diagnostic and medical equipment funding, so surely somewhere in the previous fiscal year there would be a breakdown of the information in regard to the provision of information technology services.

As this government expresses more and more of an interest in contracting out and privatizing health care delivery in this province, this Motion for a Return 11 is certainly appropriate. When we look at the detail that is provided not only in the respective budget year but in the respective annual reports that are filed by the regional health authorities, I fail to understand why this information cannot be provided.

Certainly, we're back in the year 2002-2003. There have been a lot of questions asked about how the budgets are finalized for the regional health authorities. Sometimes it's months after the budget is tabled here. But we're going back almost two complete years now, so surely this information can be provided in regard to information technology services.

In other departments there is an increase in the number of service contracts. Certainly, in Government Services for information technology every year there seems to be a step up, so one is only to assume that the same will also apply to not only the department of health but the Chinook regional health authority. I can't believe that we as members of the opposition and taxpayers would be not given that information, and I am disappointed.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I certainly am disappointed, as well, that this would not be agreed to by the government. This is important information that we all should have and the public should have.

I just want to be placed on record as saying that the government doesn't have good reason to deny this request, and I think that the public should, taking a look at this action of the government, raise questions with members of the government and the government caucus as to why this seems to be an ongoing practice of this government.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry to close the debate.

Mr. Bonner: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. members for Edmonton-Gold Bar and Edmonton-Highlands for their input on this very important question. Once again, in order to analyze information, it has to be provided, and by not being given that information, we certainly don't have the accountability that's required on these huge amounts of dollars, so I would urge all members to support Motion for a Return 11.

Thank you.

[Motion for a Return 11 lost]

The Clerk: Motion for a Return 12, Ms Carlson.

The Speaker: Now. Okay, hon. Government House Leader. A point of order, I presume?

**Point of Order
Amendment to Motion for a Return 10**

Mr. Hancock: Yes, Mr. Speaker. You indicated earlier that you were going to reserve decision with respect to the questions that I had pointed out were redundant due to the passage of Motion for a Return 10, so I would ask for your advice and direction. I'm prepared to suggest that the House deal with this motion on a without prejudice basis so that you can continue to reserve or look for your alternate method of handling this particular issue, because this is the first question that comes up.

This question relates to: "do issue for a return showing the total dollar amount spent by the Ministry of Economic Development." Motion 10 was: "do issue for a return showing the total dollar amount spent by the Ministry of Health and Wellness." By amending Motion 10 to include all government departments, it clearly includes the Department of Economic Development, and therefore it is our view that this motion is redundant.

I appreciate the fact that you would like to look at this. I'm prepared to suggest that the House, if it's appropriate, can deal with this motion on a without prejudice basis, come back to and deal with the remainder that we haven't dealt with under your decision, your determination to reserve judgment.

The Speaker: Quite frankly, I think that's the proper approach for the House to deal with this matter.

So the question is there for the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie to move.

Department of Economic Development IT Costs

M12. Ms Carlson moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing the total dollar amount spent by the Ministry of Economic Development on contracts for information technology services broken down by company and total dollar amount for each for the 2002-2003 fiscal year.

Ms Carlson: We don't get enough breakdown of how the dollars are spent in budgets. We certainly don't get enough information on the breakdown of dollars requested in appropriations. We don't get enough information coming forward in the business plans. We can't get the minister to answer the questions in Public Accounts. We can't get the minister to answer the questions in question period, so we are doing what has been in fact recommended to us by many of the ministers and the Premier, particularly in this session; that is, to put it in writing, put it on the Order Paper as a written question.

Given that we have followed their advice on this and followed all other possible alternatives to get in touch with this information, Mr. Speaker, I respectfully request that the government provide this information.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the government and cognizant of the remarks you made earlier about without prejudice to any ruling you might make with respect to the appropriateness of Motion for a Return 12, given the passage of Motion for a Return 10, I would indicate that we would have to reject the motion.

The information that's being asked for will be provided by the Minister of Innovation and Science pursuant to Motion for a Return 10. Members opposite voted against Motion for a Return 10 asking for a complete return from all government departments with respect to contracts for information technology services, but the Minister of

Innovation and Science, who is in fact responsible for technology services for the government, has been I think generous in suggesting that, rather than dealing with each of these motions on a motion-by-motion basis, on a department-by-department basis. Given the need for this House to deal with some 79 written questions and 180 motions for returns that are currently on the Order Paper, it doesn't make sense to deal with them on an individual, motion-by-motion basis.

In this case the Minister of Innovation and Science has said that he'll provide the technology contract services pursuant to Motion for a Return 10. That covers what's being asked for in Motion for a Return 12. I'd ask the House to reject Motion for a Return 12.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly in regard to Motion for a Return 12 I listened with interest, and I would remind all hon. members of this Assembly just why this information is necessary and why it should be provided. I would remind the hon. minister of how many times in the last month we on this side of the Assembly have been reminded to ask for this information. To now hear that we may be denied is disappointing.

You go through the budget and look at the fiscal year 2002-03 for the Ministry of Economic Development, and there's just one line, one element, 2.3.1: information management and dissemination, \$2.6 million. That is not good enough, and I'm disappointed at this time that we cannot be provided with that information in the interests of being open and accountable and transparent.

Thank you.

4:50

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie to conclude the debate.

Ms Carlson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I would challenge one of the statements made by the Government House Leader, and that is when he states that the amended Motion for a Return 10 covers Motion for a Return 12. It does not, particularly with regard to the way it was amended in the (b) section.

This Motion for a Return 12 asks for "contracts for information technology services broken down by company and total dollar amount for each for the 2002-2003 fiscal year." Motion for a Return 10 was amended by striking out "broken down by company and total dollar amount for each," and substituting only "a listing of vendors providing these services." So it can't be taken as a precedent for this particular argument at this particular time because it is a different motion.

I would urge all members to please support Motion for a Return 12 as it stands on the Order Paper at this time.

[The voice vote indicated that Motion for a Return 12 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:52 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Bonner	MacDonald	Mason
Carlson		

Against the motion:

Abbott	Haley	Norris
Ady	Hancock	Ouellette
Amery	Horner	Rathgeber

Broda	Jablonski	Renner
Cenaiko	Jonson	Snelgrove
Coutts	Kryczka	Stelmach
DeLong	Lord	Stevens
Dunford	Lougheed	Strang
Evans	Lukaszuk	Tannas
Forsyth	Lund	Tarchuk
Friedel	Maskell	Taylor
Gordon	McClelland	VanderBurg
Graham	Melchin	Vandermeer
Totals:	For – 4	Against – 39

[Motion for a Return 12 lost]

The Speaker: The motion disappears from the Order Paper, never to return.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Department of Environment IT Costs

M13. Ms Carlson moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing the total dollar amount spent by the Ministry of Environment on contracts for information technology services broken down by company and total dollar amount for each for the 2002-2003 fiscal year.

Ms Carlson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, this is information that we need to assess how much money is being spent in the department on administrative-type expenses and whether they're getting good value for money and whether or not they're shortchanging the operations of the department.

When we take a look at the amount of budget cutting that's been done in this particular department over the past 10 years, it's significant. When I hear from people who work within the department, I hear repeatedly that operations on the ground are being cut back, and they're not sure where the money is going. So this is one more way for us to ascertain whether or not this government is getting good value for its money. It is certainly information that should be available for the scrutiny of the Official Opposition and opposition members and, for that matter, all members of the public in Alberta so that they also can ascertain whether or not we're getting good value for the dollars that are spent in Alberta.

Further, we should have asked for even more information on this motion for a return. We should have asked for the kinds of competitive bids and the bidding process that we see in this area because, as we all know, information technology is a very competitive environment at this particular time, and that would be one more piece for us to be able to use to ascertain whether or not we're getting good value for money. We didn't go to that amount of detail, so we respectfully submit that this is a very modest request to be made in order to see whether or not we're getting good value.

Once again, we have asked for this information in a number of other venues: question period, Public Accounts, general debate during the Assembly. None of those questions have been answered, all of us at all times being referred to using other methods for discerning this information. One of those listed by the government themselves is to use motions for returns or written questions. Well, we have availed ourselves of that process and now expect the government to live up to their word and actually provide the information.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, I would renew my objection to this question under rule 558 and, of course, indicate that I understand that you wish to reserve decision with respect to the point of order that was raised earlier. Therefore, it's appropriate to proceed on a without prejudice basis in dealing with this particular question notwithstanding that the ruling may in fact rule it out of order if that's the determination you make.

So in proceeding, then, I would indicate that it would be appropriate for the Legislature to reject this question because the stuff and substance of the question has been dealt with in Motion for a Return 10, and the House has already agreed to a motion for a return requiring the return of the information as was approved in that amended Motion for a Return 10.

Just out of interest's sake, the hon. member, in promoting this motion, indicated that this information has been asked for. I'm going to make a point of going back and reviewing *Hansard* because, while I know that there have been questions asked for and responses made with respect to expenses, I don't recall that similar questions have been asked with respect to information on technology services. So I'm not sure that members of Executive Council have been asked in question period to respond, and even if they were, it would be appropriate to say that there are other ways of dealing with this information.

However, Motion for a Return 10 has been passed. The Minister of Innovation and Science has indicated that he's prepared to provide to the House as a result of that motion all of the information technology services contract information as provided for in that Motion for a Return 10 for all government departments, so this motion is redundant.

There's one last thing that I would like to point out. This afternoon, since Orders of the Day have been called, we have dealt with Motion for a Return 3, Motion for a Return 10, Motion for a Return 11, and Motion for a Return 12, and we're now on Motion for a Return 13. There are 50 motions for returns that are due today. There are another 48 motions for returns which will be due next Monday. We will never get back to discussing private members' business in this House in this session if we deal with each of these questions on an individual basis. So I can only assume that the members opposite, by demanding that we deal with it on a department-by-department basis, are really trying to do away with private members' business instead of getting any information that they want.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie to close the debate.

Ms Carlson: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make two points. The first is that it's inappropriate for the Government House Leader to refer to Motion for a Return 10 as being the basis for why this particular motion for a return should be rejected. For one thing, a judgment has been reserved on that, and for another thing, if this motion is defeated, then it disappears from the Order Paper forever, never to reappear. So it's an inappropriate basis of argument for him to use.

5:10

Secondly, I will not apologize to the Government House Leader if he's getting tetchy because democracy is slow and not to his liking. This is the process that we have in place for dealing with these particular issues. It was up to this member and his government to decide when these motions for returns would come up after their due dates, and that they all come on this particular day is not our fault. This is the process that they have been recommending to us to

find out detailed information, and, Mr. Speaker, we are taking full advantage of it and would like them to reciprocate by actually sharing the information with us.

[The voice vote indicated that Motion for a Return 13 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:11 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Bonner	MacDonald	Mason
Carlson		

Against the motion:

Abbott	Haley	Melchin
Ady	Hancock	Norris
Amery	Herard	Ouellette
Broda	Horner	Rathgeber
Cardinal	Hutton	Renner
Cenaiko	Jablonski	Snelgrove
Coutts	Jonson	Stelmach
DeLong	Kryczka	Stevens
Dunford	Lord	Strang
Evans	Lougheed	Tannas
Forsyth	Lukaszuk	Tarchuk
Friedel	Lund	Taylor
Gordon	Maskell	VanderBurg
Graham	McClelland	Vandermeer

Totals:	For – 4	Against – 42
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[Motion for a Return 13 lost]

Speaker's Ruling

Private Members' Business

The Speaker: Okay. This has been an interesting afternoon to watch and to think and to say, so I'm going to make some comments. Monday afternoon in our Routine is private members' business, very, very important in terms of the history of this Assembly and everything else that we deal with. Now, among the private members' business is the right for written questions and motions for returns. That is just as important as private members' bills. The problem is time. It's finite. It must end by 5:30 in the afternoon.

Now, there's a whole series of different things that can happen in a parliament. Of course, skilled parliamentarians are supposed to try and figure out the rules and deal with the rules and do it in a democratic way in the sense that we all smile at one another as, you know, certain things happen. So let me just throw out some scenarios to you.

We have private members' bills. It turns out, as I look at the

Order Paper, that the first 10 all seem to belong to a private member who belongs to the government caucus.

An Hon. Member: The luck of the draw.

The Speaker: That's right. It was a draw. It was a very, very fair and transparent open draw.

So I suspect that one of the strategies that an effective opposition might do is to make sure that there's never ever any time on the agenda for those bills to come to the agenda. Not suggesting that for a moment. I might also suggest that it could also in some circumstances fall into the game plan of a Government House Leader that if a private member's bill might be of a certain nature – because these are private members' bills. So that might suggest, on the other hand, that opposition members seem to be, at least on this Order Paper that I'm looking at – they're the only authors of the written questions and motions for returns. I do not see any government private members, who have the right to do that, but they haven't. So there's a whole bundle in here.

The way it's going right now is that I sit back and I look here, and my subjective view is that the only private members' bills that will ever reach the floor this session would be government private members' bills, but with all the written questions and motions for returns, if we spend as much time as we did today on five of them, none of those will ever get to the point.

On Wednesday, March 31, 1999, the Government House Leader of the day requested and received unanimous consent of the Assembly to deal with eight motions for returns as a collective. There was also on that same day another government minister in a certain capacity who requested that six motions for returns be dealt as a collective, required unanimous consent. It wasn't granted. So you have all kinds of scenarios.

Now, motions for returns: again, private members most important. Please remember, everybody, that one of the options given to the Government House Leader is to give notice on Wednesday or Thursday of a motion to be dealt with in the Assembly the following Monday: putting all of the motions for returns and all of the written questions in one motion or two motions in this case and dealing with them in one motion, one debate, either to accept them all or to defeat them all. Those are all options.

The Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that wonderful advice.

The Speaker: It was no advice. It was just postulation.

Mr. Hancock: It was advice to the House. In light of that, we should probably all go home and think about it for a while, so I move that we adjourn till 8 p.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:27 p.m.]

