

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**head: **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**Title: **Friday, April 15, 1983 10:00 a.m.**

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

**PRAYERS**

[Mr. Appleby in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 223****An Act to Prevent Discrimination  
on the Ground of Political Beliefs**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 223, An Act to Prevent Discrimination on the Ground of Political Beliefs.

The Bill would amend the Individual's Rights Protection Act to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of an individual's political beliefs, except in the case of political parties and other political groupings the primary aim of which is the furtherance of a given set of political beliefs.

[Leave granted; Bill 223 read a first time]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. WOO: Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in introducing to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, a class of 54 grade 6 students who attend Our Lady of Perpetual Help school in the constituency of Edmonton Sherwood Park. They're accompanied this morning by their group leader Mr. Jim Ziebart and teacher Michelle Barrey, with transportation courtesy of Mrs. Betty Ledger. They are seated in the members gallery, and I now ask that they rise to receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to members of the Legislative Assembly a group of 30 grade 6 students from the J.E. Lapointe school located in Beaumont in the Wetaskiwin-Leduc constituency. Accompanied by Mrs. Yearwood, they are in the members gallery. I ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 45 grade 8 students from St. Mary high school in Edmonton Avonmore, the constituency of my colleague the Hon. Horst Schmid. They are accompanied this morning by teacher Mr. Rissling. I'm sorry communications have broken down, because I know they are accompanied by others whose names I do not have. But I would like to ask the students and the adults accompanying them to please rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise members of the Assembly about plans made by the Alberta government to provide for the custody, supervision, and rehabilitation of young persons charged or convicted under the terms of the new federal Young Offenders Act. This Act deals with offences set out in federal statutes. The Attorney General will be introducing a provincial young offenders Act to deal with provincial offences.

In Alberta the responsibility to provide custody, supervision, and rehabilitation programs has been assigned to the Solicitor General. The new federal Act provides the youth court with a wide variety of ways in which cases may be disposed of by the court once a young person has been found guilty of an offence. Among these are community service orders, probation, open custody, and secure custody. Open custody includes admission to community residential centres, group homes, child care institutions, and forest or wilderness camps. Secure custody means facilities specifically designed for the secure containment or restraint of young offenders. Provision is also made for both continuous and intermittent custody, for early release, for day release, and for temporary leave of absence from custody.

The department will provide separate institutional facilities for young offenders who must be kept in secure custody. They will not be housed in adult correctional centres. Some existing facilities now operated by the Department of Social Services and Community Health and agencies it supports will be turned over to the department, and some new facilities may have to be built. These matters will be decided within the necessary time frame, and a committee of senior officials is working on necessary steps to implement this decision.

The Attorney General is developing plans to meet the increased legal services and court-related duties required for prosecution, and to carry cases before the youth court.

Both Social Services and Community Health, and Solicitor General, have drawn heavily on the services of private-sector agencies and citizen volunteers in recent years. Continuing use will be made of these resources, in order to provide good opportunities for the young offender, particularly the young offender who can benefit from community-based programs.

The new Act provides that secure custody is only to be used as a measure of last resort for the protection of society. Open custody is to be ordered whenever possible. The department's province-wide system of probation and community corrections offices and programs will be adapted, where necessary, to provide rehabilitation opportunities and supervision for young offenders.

The new Act establishes a new age category for young persons in conflict with the law, aged 12 to 17 years inclusive. At present in Alberta, those 16- and 17-year-olds are treated as adults in all criminal matters, including custody. Offenders aged 7 to 15 years inclusive are now dealt with under the terms of the federal Juvenile Delinquents Act of 1908 and 1929, which is now replaced by the new Young Offenders Act. In Alberta, custody and supervision of juvenile delinquents has been provided by Social Services and Community Health. That department will continue to be responsible for children under 12, under the provisions of the Child Welfare Act, and for non-offenders up to and including age 17. There will be

close co-operation and liaison between the two departments.

The federal government has announced that the federal Young Offenders Act will be proclaimed in force on October 1, 1983, with respect to offenders aged 12 to 15 inclusive. The Act's application to offenders 16 and 17 must be co-ordinated with the provinces and will take place no later than April 1, 1985.

The federal Act imposes new administrative costs on the province. The federal government has indicated that some assistance will be provided with these costs, but has not as yet indicated what that assistance might be.

Mr. Speaker, this announcement is intended to provide an outline of our plans. Indeed, there are many details still to be worked out, particularly with respect to institutions that will be used for this program.

As plans progress, I will endeavor to keep hon. members informed. They are being developed in a way that is consistent with the philosophy of the new federal Act, which states, at section 3(1)(a):

... while young persons should not in all instances be held accountable in the same manner or suffer the same consequences for their behaviour as adults, young persons who commit offences should nonetheless bear responsibility for their contraventions.

Mr. Speaker, I will be delivering to hon. members a publication entitled *The Young Offenders Act, 1982, Highlights*, put out by the federal government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

##### Hydro-Electric Power Development

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the hon. Minister of Utilities and Telecommunications. It's with respect to questions posed on March 14 concerning the Slave and Dunvegan proposals. In view of the publicly stated position of the Manitoba Minister of Energy and Mines that the province of Manitoba can beat the price, if you like, of power produced from the Slave project, will the government of Alberta renew with the other two provinces discussions which were suspended last summer?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, once the two-year moratorium on discussions, which was agreed to by all three governments, runs out in the summer of 1984, then certainly those discussions will be reinstituted.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister in a position to confirm that the decision to suspend discussions — the moratorium for two years — came at the insistence of the government of Alberta?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, upon reading the news release issued by the three ministers involved, I'm under the understanding that each of the ministers, representing Saskatchewan, Alberta and, indeed, Manitoba, agreed to the deferral of further discussions for two years. In short, I find it hard to accept the accusation by the hon. member that someone was twisting the arm of Manitoba.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. That's not what I said. The question was and is: did the province of Alberta take the initiative in

requesting the other two provinces to defer discussions of a power grid for two years?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, as I was not the minister of the department at that time, I rely heavily on the news release, which was not issued by the Minister of Utilities and Telephones for the province of Alberta in isolation from the ministers from Saskatchewan and Manitoba but which was a joint news release. Therefore I can only come to the conclusion that all three parties agreed to the contents of the news release.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In view of his comments that there would be further information in the budget concerning both the Slave project and the Dunvegan dam project, is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly today when we may expect further information, as the minister promised on March 14?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, under the rules of the Assembly, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has the right to designate a department for estimates on a given Monday. I suggest to the hon. member that if he wants to go into the matter in some detail, he give due consideration to the rules of this House.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, that gratuitous advice may be in fact be accepted. But I put to the minister whether he can tell the House when the studies that were alluded to on March 14 will be released and whether those studies were general in nature as opposed to being specific to the Limestone plant project in Manitoba, on which power costs would somewhat lower.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is again bringing together two issues. The key thing to remember is that Alberta took the initiative with the former government of Manitoba on the question of an western Canada electric grid. We worked very hard with our sister provinces to come to an agreement. We reached a tentative agreement. There was a change of governments in Manitoba, and suddenly the conditions changed very dramatically.

The bargaining position of that government . . . What I'm saying is that the question of the viability of a project in Manitoba has to be carefully considered by the current administration in that province. They've entered into an agreement with us and with Saskatchewan to postpone for two years further discussions on the western intertie, although we certainly think that the concept is good in principle. We are proceeding, as we have committed with the two private utility companies of this province, on the pre-investment and pre-engineering studies on the potential for the Slave River.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could supplement the answers given by the hon. minister insofar as they relate to a western premiers' conference held recently, first of all, and to events that occurred prior to the minister being in the portfolio responsibility that he mentioned.

The first point I'd like to make that is one of the important backgrounds on the western electric grid was that it was conceived as an interprovincial co-operative effort. One of the benefits perceived was that this was a case, in a federal system, in which the provinces would work together co-operatively without the need for sup-

port by the federal government. So that was one of the aspects that originally encouraged us to pursue the concept. When the new administration was elected in the province of Manitoba, they put aside that approach and became involved in discussion with the federal government relative to financing the project, which changed one element of the basic background for our involvement and interest in the western electric grid.

The second supplementary observation I'd like to make for the record is that during the course of the western premiers' conference in Swift Current in February, in discussions with the premier of Manitoba and Saskatchewan I was asked a question as to our general view with regard to the project. Although I stated that there is a two-year period, as the hon. minister outlined here today, and that depending upon circumstances we would be prepared to look at the matter again, we did not want to raise false hopes or expectations by any persons involved, as a result of that answer and of that time frame.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Then is the Premier in a position to advise the Assembly whether it was Alberta's initiative that led to the two-year moratorium last summer? Did the province of Alberta in fact say to Manitoba and Saskatchewan that because we're looking at the Slave and we're evaluating other options, we want this matter suspended for two years?

MR. LOUGHEED: It isn't possible to answer that specifically, because the matter that has been raised by the hon. minister was involved; that is, there was a different approach to the negotiating terms. There was the other matter, which I just raised in my previous answer. But there was clearly the view by the government of Alberta that when one balanced the costs and benefits, the economic activity that would flow from hydro-electric development in this province was important to us. As a result of that, rather than taking the initiative, I'd perhaps put it in a different way. I think we were of the view — with the other provinces, of course — that it was clear that the project should be put on hold for a two-year period and probably presented it on that basis, although I wasn't privy to the actual discussions.

MR. NOTLEY: A supplementary question to hon. Minister of Utilities and Telecommunications. When will it be the intention of the government of Alberta to release not just the working papers related to the general question of power distribution among the three provinces but the background information which was part of the discussions concerning the output of the Limestone project in Manitoba, so Albertans will be able to have information to compare the relative merits of a power grid on one hand, versus major hydro-electric development in Alberta on the other?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, the papers the hon. member is referring to relate to the work leading up to the tentative agreement by the three ministers representing the three governments involved. As I answered in this Assembly, Alberta is quite prepared to release those papers with the concurrence of the other two administrations. That matter is under consideration at this time.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, one final supplementary question. My question is not with respect to the working papers I referred to on the 14th and the minister responded to on the 14th but the discussions which were

based on the output of one particular site-specific project, which would provide power to the three provinces at a more economic price.

MR. BOGLE: Would the hon. member restate his question so that we're all crystal clear on exactly what he is after? Is he referring to the proposed Limestone project in Manitoba?

MR. NOTLEY: Yes.

MR. BOGLE: If that's the case, the hon. member should be directing his question through one of his colleagues in that province.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister. The question is whether or not this government is prepared to make available information which was the basis of discussions among the three governments concerning the Limestone project and the power produced therefrom.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I answered that question on March 14. I reaffirmed the answer to it earlier today.

MR. STROMBERG: A supplementary to the Minister of Utilities and Telecommunications, Mr. Speaker. In the studies of the merits of the Slave and Dunvegan, I wonder if consideration was given and if any statistics are available as to the number of jobs available to Albertans if the Slave went ahead, compared to a project in Manitoba?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, the studies that were initiated some four years ago to look at the potential of hydro development along the Slave have produced some very exciting opportunities for us in Alberta. There are opportunities not only in the construction phase of the project but, more important, to ensure that the engineering capacities in this province are strengthened, so Alberta can get part of the action in terms of hydro-electric projects not only in our province and this nation but worldwide.

One of the key reasons Alberta was excited about sitting down with the two utility companies, TransAlta and Alberta Power, was to ensure that we could expand that opportunity, that we could work with the engineering capacities that exist in this province and assist them in developing and enriching their abilities so that talent could be marketed in other areas. We're very actively pursuing that matter, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, there's one other item that I could have added on this subject. During the course of our discussions at the western premiers' conference in Yorkton in February, the matter was raised by the premier of Manitoba. I suggested that if there were other customers for the power for the province of Manitoba — and that would obviously be the United States — the government of Manitoba should pursue good relationships with the United States and develop that prospect in the intervening period.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have already had nine supplementary questions on this topic. If we have one more by the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood, that

would probably fit in well with the metric system of counting.

MR. MARTIN: I just have one supplementary question to the Minister of Utilities and Telecommunications. Has the geotechnical study on the stability of the banks of the Peace River been completed? If so, would they release that to the Legislature? If not, when will it be done?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the studies the hon. member referred to are in the final stages of completion. I'll certainly take notice of the hon. member's question and review the exact status of those studies with the departmental officials.

#### Timber Management

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to the hon. Minister of the Environment. It's with respect to proposals to develop the Brazeau timber area. Is the minister in a position to confirm that the Department of the Environment has now handed over responsibility for the environmental impact on forest developments — not the plant development — in the Brazeau area to the Department of Energy and Natural Resources?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, with regard to timber management in the province, and particularly with regard to forest land management, that responsibility lies with the Department of Energy and Natural Resources, in their forest land use branch.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the Minister of the Environment advise why this transfer was made with respect to environmental impact assessments? In view of the information given to people last fall concerning Environment's initiatives in the area, when was the decision made to transfer that responsibility and why?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that with regard to logging operations and the nature of those logging operations, that responsibility has been with the Department of Energy and Natural Resources. There has been no transfer, because that is the department and agency which has traditionally had that responsibility.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either the Minister of the Environment or the associate minister, with respect to environmental impact assessments, the guidelines of which I won't belabor in the House, but the Minister of the Environment would be well aware of them. That being the case, Mr. Speaker, bearing in mind the policy of requiring environmental impact assessments for major projects, and in view of the size of the Atco-Northwood proposal or, for that matter, the Makin proposal, why has no environmental impact assessment of the woods operation involved in that project been undertaken by the government, either the Department of the Environment or the Department of Energy and Natural Resources?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I guess we have to go back to the entire history of this and get into a deep, detailed review. With regard to logging operations, traditionally — and one looks under the Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act — the responsibility in

that area has been with the forest land use branch of the Department of Energy and Natural Resources, with regard to their responsibilities in that particular area under that legislation and under the forestry Act.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. I wasn't asking for a recitation of the Acts; I was asking why the government had not insisted that there be an environmental impact assessment on the woods operations, considering the two proponents making representation at the moment.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources may wish to comment, but those types of impacts are considered by the forest land use branch of the Department of Energy and Natural Resources.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could redirect the question to either the hon. minister or the hon. associate minister and ask either hon. gentleman why no EIA was set out as a requirement for the woods operations?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, I could only respond in a general fashion to the very specific question the hon. Leader of the Opposition is raising, by saying that there is very much consideration of environmental considerations occurring with respect to various applications that have been put forward. There is ongoing communication and interaction between the various departments of government that would be addressing that matter.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either hon. minister. Is the minister saying that there will be an environmental impact assessment as it relates to the woods operations?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, I couldn't respond any more specifically than I have at this time. I'd be happy to take the matter as notice and report back.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources or the Minister of the Environment. What assessment has been made by the government of Alberta with respect to the Atco-Northwood proposal to add to the North Saskatchewan River effluent equivalent to a city of 450,000 people? What evaluation on the impact of water quality of the North Saskatchewan has been made re that particular proposal?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, when a proponent is decided upon, and if there is an industrial operation, surely at that point in time any industrial operation will be required to file the necessary environmental impact assessment with regard to the industrial part of the application.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister's department not reviewing the impact of this kind of discharge of effluent, so the government would have the objective assessment before rendering a judgment on which proponent should be allowed to proceed?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, when a proponent has been selected, the requirement for an industrial operation

— in this case, we're looking at a pulp mill — will be that an environmental impact assessment would have to be filed and assessed at that point in time.

Specifically, yes, we are certainly involved with regard to assessment of the nature of the projects, but the detailed requirements would come when a proponent has been selected and he comes forward with his proposal. We have to address those issues specifically at that time.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the associate minister. Page 4 of the Eastern Slopes policy states very clearly that integrated management plans should be in place before developments proceed on the Eastern Slopes. It's my understanding that such a management plan has not been completed for the Brazeau timber development area. Is the minister in a position to advise the Assembly when such plans will be completed?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, there are quite a number of those plans throughout the province of Alberta. That specific plan hasn't been brought to my attention recently, but I'll take the question under advisement and get back to the member.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister in a position to assure the House that no decision will be made on the proposals with respect to the Brazeau until such time as the completion of an integrated management plan, as set out on page 4 of the Eastern Slopes policy?

MR. SPARROW: As I mentioned before, Mr. Speaker, I have to delay my answer until I look into that specific plan, find out what stage it's at, and have the proper information at hand.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could recast the question and direct it to the hon. Premier. Will the Premier give the House an undertaking that there will be no decision on the two proponents — the Atco and Macon proposals — until such time as the department has completed an integrated, closely managed land-use policy vis-à-vis the position staked out in the Eastern Slopes policy?

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe I could effectively supplement the answers given by the ministers who have responded to this line of questioning and have agreed to report back to the House.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary question to either the hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources or the associate minister. There have been some concerns expressed about the inventory of timber available in the Brazeau development area. There may in fact have been an overstatement of the available supply. My question is, what steps has the department taken to reassess the situation with respect to the supply of timber?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, the question the hon. member poses is based on an assumption that there was an error made in the first instance. I have no personal information that such was the case, except to say that the forestry branch is assessing the inventory of timber in the province on an ongoing basis. Certainly as part and parcel of any final decision-making in respect of the

Brazeau development, we would have the best information available in order to arrive at a decision. That would of course include information with respect to inventory.

#### Telecommunications Companies

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Utilities and Telecommunications. Would the minister confirm that private companies in Alberta are being forced to compete with AGT, specifically Altel Data and mobile business communications, all of which are publicly funded ventures?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, the subsidiary of Alberta Government Telephones known as Altel Data was established approximately 10 years ago. There is no doubt that because of the aggressive marketing of computers and software by Altel Data, it has come into direct competition with some private-sector companies.

As I have copied the hon. member on correspondence sent to various private-sector companies who have written to me protesting the competition, the hon. member is aware that I have made an undertaking that over a six-month period of time, the Alberta Government Telephones Commission will review in detail the role of Altel Data, as well as the other areas where AGT has gone into the competitive market with other companies. It is our expectation that at the end of that period of time — and we are approximately six weeks into it now, Mr. Speaker — the Alberta Government Telephones Commission will be in a position to make some recommendations to the cabinet and caucus so that the matter may be addressed very fully.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I might mention that one of the difficulties all telephone companies find themselves faced with today is increasing competition in what was traditionally viewed to be part of their monopoly. Therefore we've seen the percentage of revenue from what is traditionally referred to as monopoly, shrink not only here in Alberta through Alberta Government Telephones but also with Edmonton Telephones and other telephone companies across the country.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Has the minister given AGT or Altel Data any directives to change their procedures in any way during this six-month period of review?

MR. BOGLE: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, could the hon. minister confirm that through AGT, Altel Data has done a mass mailing to the farm community of this province, advertising two-way radio systems, portable hand-helds, mobile telephones, and reconditioned 84VR mobile phones, that could or could not be paid directly out of public funds in competing with the private sector of this province?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should be aware that the telecommunications industry has gone through a massive change in the last few years. If we were to go back to a time when the hon. member was a member of Executive Council, the monopoly was in place. There was not the ability for interconnect. In other words, an individual could not buy a telephone through a local outlet store, whether it be Woodward's, Radio Shack, or what have you. That's all changed.

So there are areas that have been opened up for the private sector to compete with AGT, primarily in the examples I've given. There are other areas where AGT has come into direct competition with the private sector. As the minister responsible for Alberta Government Telephones, my undertaking is to review, over a six-month period of time with the Alberta Government Telephones Commission, the whole philosophy and thrust and make certain recommendations back to the government and caucus so that the matter may be reviewed, as it's been some 10 years since Altel Data was created.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question in terms of policy. Could the minister confirm that it is the policy of this government to withdraw from fields where the private sector is supplying the service to Albertans at the present time and not continue services such as that? Is that the objective of the review by the minister?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, it's certainly the objective of the government that we should not be either directly or indirectly in competition with the private sector through a Crown corporation. We must be very careful, though, that that general statement is not used as a blanket to prevent AGT, which has a capital investment of over \$3 billion — whereas we as the government are the trustees for all the owners, who are the people of this province, and must ensure that it remains a very viable competitive entity. I'm sure the review that is currently under way will bring to light some options which government will have an opportunity to consider.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. minister give an undertaking to table in the Legislature, at the minister's convenience, the cost and extent of this public advertising that is going across this province to the farm community?

MR. BOGLE: It seems to me that if an hon. member wishes specific information like that, Mr. Speaker, the Order Paper is the appropriate approach.

MR. NOTLEY: Good luck.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Will the hon. minister table it or not? Certainly a motion for a return can be placed on the Order Paper, and I'll do that.

MR. NOTLEY: Subject to the Horsman amendment.

MR. R. SPEAKER: But this communication has gone to the farm community of Alberta, and I think it's a matter of urgency to know how we're competing in the private market place.

MR. BOGLE: That's why we have an Order Paper, Mr. Speaker, so hon. members may bring their concerns to the government in that way.

#### Education Financing

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Education. On March 21, the minister indicated that he asked the task force on educational financing to meet once again to answer three questions he put to them. Can the minister advise when he expects a final reply of the task force and when he

expects he will be able to make public the task force report?

MR. KING: I cannot, Mr. Speaker, but I will make inquiries and respond to the hon. gentleman early next week. I might advise him that I have signed a ministerial order reconstituting the task force so that they can have that meeting. I will inquire as to when they expect it to be held.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister directed the task force to review the effects on local school boards of the discontinuation of the municipal debenture interest rebate program?

MR. KING: No, Mr. Speaker. We have sufficient information that a review of that area by the task force would not be necessary.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. I suggest it would, because it affects unapproved costs of capital projects.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. MARTIN: Taking that into consideration, would he be prepared to direct them to look at this?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, this is difficult, of course, because neither the hon. member nor I want to debate the question here. Perhaps in some other forum or privately, he could advise me why he feels such a review is necessary, at which time we would reconsider the question.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. Is the minister in a position to confirm that one or more of the questions he put to the task force concerned the recommendation to substantially increase the proportion of provincial contribution for educational finance, perhaps in the neighborhood of an 85:15 provincial/local split?

MR. KING: Like another politician of an earlier age, the hon. gentleman has at least a crystal ball; I won't ask if he has a terrier he talks to.

Mr. Speaker, I told the hon. member that when the report itself is released, I will also release the letter I have sent to the task force. That continues to be my position.

MR. MARTIN: I guess my terrier has pretty good information.

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister received any information which would confirm that since the imposition of the 5 per cent ceiling for education grants, school boards are not hiring replacement teachers and are increasing class sizes, in contrast to recommendations 1, 3, and 8 of the Kratzmann report?

MR. KING: There are some boards that are not hiring teachers, Mr. Speaker, and there are some that are. There are some that have reduced the classroom load, and there are some that have increased the classroom load. Our experience tends to be that with 150 school boards in the province, they each make the decisions that are appropriate and best for education in their community.

MR. MARTIN: I think it reflects directly on the 5 per cent ceiling.

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister

has indicated publicly that he is reviewing the possibility of lengthening the school day and the school year. Given this, can he indicate if any of the Kratzmann recommendations will be implemented?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I invite the hon. member to reread *Hansard*, because I think I was quite clear in saying in this Assembly that we are not considering lengthening the school day or the school year. I think I was quite clear in saying that that suggestion has been made to us by some people — including at least one hon. Member of the Legislative Assembly — and that on the basis of any greater public response, we would be prepared to consider that question, but we are not now.

MR. MARTIN: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I read the chamber of commerce speech, and it was clear in there. But I'll ask the question again: can the minister indicate if he is planning to bring in any of the Kratzmann recommendations?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, the Kratzmann report contained a number of recommendations. Almost immediately after it was made public, I indicated support in principle for a number of those recommendations — seven of them, if I recall correctly. The fact of the matter is that successful implementation of the great part of those recommendations relies upon the initiative of local school boards and local teacher association groups. If those recommendations are to be implemented, that initiative must come from the school board or the local of the Alberta Teachers' Association. When we have seen evidence of that initiative, if provincial government involvement is required, then we will be supportive and we will be involved.

At the same time, and to be very clear, while I accepted in principle a number of the recommendations of the Kratzmann report, there was one recommendation that we rejected — at least on the part of the provincial government — and that related to the so-called 20:20 financial support directly from the provincial government for 20 hours of instruction per week or 20 students in a classroom. For a variety of reasons that I explained before, the government rejected that recommendation.

#### **Telecommunications Companies** (continued)

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Tourism and Small Business relates to a question asked earlier. With the ever-changing telecommunications systems, I wonder if the minister could inform the Assembly how many people were involved in telecommunications, especially the computer types, 10 years ago when Altel Data went into the business in Alberta?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information available.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister could find that information and provide it to the Assembly.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I will attempt to do that.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Could the hon. Member for Barrhead have permission of the Assembly to introduce visitors?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

### **head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS** (reversion)

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to introduce to all Members of the Legislative Assembly a large group of young students who are visiting Alberta from Glace Bay, Nova Scotia. There are some 57 students in all, who form a part of the Glace Bay school senior band. They're visiting their young colleagues in the community of Barrhead on an exchange, courtesy of an Open House Canada grant. Shortly, our young Albertans will be visiting Glace Bay.

Accompanying the young students from Glace Bay are Barbara Stetter and Jim and Joan McNeill. As well, two energetic community leaders from Barrhead, Mr. Leo Schulz and Mr. Richard Martin, are present. The Alberta team leader is Mr. John Leonard, one of Alberta's outstanding band teachers. Mr. Speaker, they're in the public gallery, and I ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

### **head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS** (Second Reading)

#### **Bill 26** **Widows' Pension Act**

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 26, the Widows' Pension Act. The Act will provide assistance to low-income widows and widowers between the ages of 55 and 64 who, through no circumstance of their own, have lost their spouse and generally their major source of support.

Income security, health care benefits, and housing programs comprise the three portions of this program. The income portion of the program is designed to provide similar benefits to those received by senior citizens through the Alberta assured income program, the old age security, and the guaranteed income supplement. As well, the program will supplement the incomes of widows who currently receive some income from private and public pensions or other sources. The program is also intended to phase into these programs once the widow or widower turns 65.

The health care aspect of the program will extend seniors' health benefits to widows, making them eligible for Alberta Health Care, Blue Cross, and other extended health benefits such as eyeglasses, dental coverage, and other medical needs, at no further cost.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

The third aspect of the program extends senior citizens' housing programs to widows and widowers aged 55 to 64. This will make them eligible to apply for the property tax rebate or the renters' assistance grant, the seniors' home improvement program, and the senior citizens' home

heating price protection program.

Thank you.

MR. NOTLEY: In rising to briefly participate in this Act, I want to say at the outset that it will be the intention of my colleague and I to support Bill 26. This is one of the few initiatives that I recall being announced during that 28-day period from October 2 until November 2 on which I've seen any concrete action, and I commend the hon. Member for Calgary North West for seizing an election plank and insisting that her caucus proceed with a pledge made to the people of Alberta during the election campaign.

Mr. Speaker, certainly the principles contained in the Act merit the support of hon. members. We do have the anomalies of widows and widowers caught in that difficult situation between 55 and the time they are eligible to receive their senior citizens' benefits. Over the years, how many of us in our role as members of the Legislature have not had to deal with the rather heart-rending story, especially of a widow — but I note that widowers also come under this particular Bill, and properly so — whose husband has died, and suddenly that particular individual finds herself in a very difficult financial position. So the concept of the Widows' Pension Act is good. It's certainly not going to solve all the financial problems of people in that category of 55 to 64 who've lost a spouse, but it will be of some considerable significance. For that reason, we in the Official Opposition support it.

Mr. Speaker, it is rather interesting that we have Bill 26, which is the one Bill that I think we're dealing with this year which represents a move forward as far as social benefits are concerned. What a sad commentary it is that we are moving backwards in so many other areas, with user fees in our hospitals and these absolutely frightful changes the Minister of Social Services and Community Health is imposing on the shelter assistance ceilings. Of course, we'll have an opportunity to more appropriately discuss those when we get to the minister's department, and I can assure you that we'll take some considerable time to do just that. But it is unfortunate that rather than this Bill being complementary to a government thrust to improve the delivery of social services, including pensions, health care, and what have you, we now find that it stands out as an exception rather than the rule. I guess it would be only appropriate of me to say, during second reading, that I regret that fact very much.

I say to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care that the concept contained in the Widows' Pension Act, an Act which is going to set out free coverage under the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act and not having to pay premiums — that's fair enough. But we now find that in all likelihood there will be some people who may well be caught having to pay user fees. We haven't exempted senior citizens from user fees; we've got ceilings on income. I wouldn't doubt at all whether or not there will some people who would benefit under this proposal who might still be above the income ceiling set out by the minister.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that what we have is an inconsistent approach. In this Act, we have the extension of the benefits to widows or widowers between the ages of 55 and 64, setting out certain rights and entitlements in addition to the pension itself. Then on the other hand, we have a government bringing in a policy of user fees and riot exempting senior citizens. Well, I find that a rather inconsistent way to treat the pioneers of the province of Alberta, especially. I would much prefer that the more

gentle humanity I see contained in the hon. Member for Calgary North West's Bill be the policy for the government in other areas, as opposed to the exception.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I may raise specific questions during committee stage of the Bill, but it is a Bill that represents a step forward. When people from the press approached us during the election campaign, we indicated that in the many initiatives of this government during the campaign to bribe Albertans with their own money — chasing them up one street and down the next and making one promise after another to try to get themselves back into office — in the midst of this multitude of election promises, this was one which in our judgment made a good deal of sense and was a strong plank. In concluding my remarks, I certainly congratulate the hon. Member for Calgary North West on her ability to translate at least one of those many, many promises into legislative action.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support Bill 26, which is going to provide much-needed assistance for a great number of people. We do not always agree provincially with federal programs; however, I applaud the federal government's basic pension and the supplement. The supplement is on a means test, and it provides extra income for those who really need it. Another very good program is the inclusion of the senior's spouse if he or she is between the ages of 60 and 64. The only bad part of that — and I think it's a very unjust exercise that has been practised — is that six months after the senior passes away, the spouse loses all assistance. I believe that at a time like that, the spouse needs it more than ever before, if they needed it when the senior lived. I know of a number of constituents who, at that age, were forced to find some bit of work to be able to exist.

Maybe those widows who have been in the work force for a good number of years will want to continue working. I don't think they're going to start abusing it. No widow would want to leave her work and lose a good income to take advantage of this. However, for those widows who maybe spent their entire lives working as housekeepers or raising a family, after the age of 55 it would be virtually impossible to get any employment other than manual work. Even those who had training at a younger age, if they left their professional work for household duties and to raise a family, after a certain number of years it would be difficult for them to get back to their professional work. They'd probably need some retraining. So I believe this is a very fine program.

I'm also glad to see that those needy ones between the ages of 55 and 64 are going to receive premium-free health insurance and qualify for the home improvement program. I hope and trust that this program will not provide a disincentive for widows of 55 to think of marriage again. I feel that almost everybody in good health at age 55 is quite capable of taking good care of themselves. I trust that even widows of 55 or shortly over could still make good wives, so I hope this will not be a disincentive for that.

Mr. Speaker, I support this Bill, and I hope all hon. members will do likewise.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I too intend to support the Bill. I find it welcome at this particular time. In my riding, there are a lot of older people and certainly a lot of widows who fall into this category. I recall canvassing for a recent provincial election. In one evening, I ran into three women who were in exactly this position, where



their husband was older, had actually retired, and they thought they had enough to live on. The husband died very soon after 65, and they were caught in this position. So I too welcome the Bill.

I'd just point out to the government that the only criticism we've heard from the public so far — and perhaps they have and may want to look into it — is that it discriminates against all kinds of people in this age group. I point out people who have never been married or who are divorced, and people aged 55 to 64 who are married but not poor. Now I recognize that you can't do everything in every Bill, but I pass on to the government that that's perhaps the only criticism we have found about that particular Bill.

The point I would like to leave, while supporting this Bill, is to reinforce what the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party said. We welcome this type of Bill, especially in a recession. We've talked a number of times — and I'm not going to go on at length, Mr. Speaker. But it does seem to be going against the grain of what's happening right now. We seem to have had a rash of anti-people legislation: user fees, higher medicare premiums, the attack on social welfare recipients. All of a sudden, we have a reasonable Bill. I'll compliment the government on this one Bill, and we will continue to fight what we consider anti-people legislation, the other things that are occurring.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to Bill 26, first of all, I believe that today will go down in history as a bench mark in our Legislature, in that we've had the Official Opposition actually endorse a Bill put forward by this government. I think we'll long remember this day, because it's not often that we hear compliments of this nature. One wonders if it's a new strategy by the opposition or simply recognition for a government that's responding to the needs of Alberta and Albertans.

MR. MARTIN: On this one Bill, that's okay.

MR. GOGO: As I say, Mr. Speaker, it's a bench mark in Alberta that we finally have, on one matter, not only a unified indication of support but the indication that there are other members in this Assembly, namely the opposition, who've really come to their senses and said, this is a government that really cares.

AN HON. MEMBER: They've got two members now. Maybe they're twice as smart.

MR. MARTIN: You weren't listening, John.

MR. GOGO: Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I've been listening very closely. As the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood is well aware, I don't stand up to rebut anybody; I look for the best in everybody. And believe you me, I can find something good in everybody. I may have to look a long time, but . . .

References were made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition that he is supportive, but that there are other areas — it's unfortunate that there are user fees, and on and on. Mr. Speaker, although we're not dealing with the minister's estimates at this point, I simply draw to the attention of members of the Assembly that there's some \$1.2 billion in that department, not counting the Bill before us today. It's my view, and I believe the accepted view of many members of not only my party but the

government of which I'm a member, that the role of government is really to help those who cannot help themselves. I think the Bill before us today is an indication and recognition that there are many Albertans out there — some 4,000 I think — who fall into the category of widows or widowers who, for a variety of reasons, through a disaster, because it's a result of a death, simply cannot look after themselves. I think this is action by a government that says, hey, we're prepared to do something.

Mr. Speaker, details of the Bill have already been made. But in addition to the specifics covered in Bill 26 with regard to the proposed income, I'd simply like to point out that there are many other benefits to go along with it. I think it would be important to point out that in all parts of Alberta today, widows are faced with some very significant difficulties. For a variety of reasons — I guess it's reality — we've seen utility costs escalate. Well, I'm pleased to see that those who qualify under this program will receive some assistance from the rebate program with regard to heating costs.

Secondly, this government has long believed, and has long recommended — and the policies of the Minister of Housing have been directed toward that — that we encourage people to stay within their own homes, not go into institutions. As a result, the people who qualify under Bill 26 will also be entitled to the senior citizens' program for repairing their homes. I think that's a plus, Mr. Speaker.

Reference was made by both the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Edmonton Norwood that the user fee was a significant factor. Well I guess the public will judge that. But it's interesting to point out that those who qualify, ages 55 to 64, will also qualify for the extended health care benefits heretofore only extended to senior citizens. They'll also receive Blue Cross benefits, which pay 80 per cent of their drugs. They'll also receive, within the extended health care benefits, other benefits that look after their hearing, sight, and dental work. So Mr. Speaker, I'm not uncomfortable at all when the Member for Edmonton Norwood says, hey, you missed somebody. I don't think it really matters what we do, surely we're going to miss somebody.

One has to question whether those who are spinsters would qualify in the same way, because surely one has to recognize the typical situation. That would be somebody who is now aged 55 to 64 who maybe had two or three children. That person has been a homemaker or a housewife, I guess — if it's not out of order to still use that term — for many years. The untimely death has occurred, and what happens? That person out there really has two, maybe three, options. One is to rely on family. We all know what's happened in this day and age with regard to families supporting members of their immediate family.

Secondly, there's the alternative that they can turn to social assistance. No doubt, many of them have. Bill 26 indicates that it will relieve many of those now on social assistance to receive the widows' pension with a degree of dignity. Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, in my view this Bill doesn't in any way preclude or make it a disadvantage for a widow at that age category to remarry. Certainly they won't continue to receive the benefit, but why should they if they're no longer widows? We've seen far too many examples, in my view, of programs started in this country where people, almost by deliberate action, try to obviate the law in order to continue to receive a benefit.

As to comparing the widow — widower might be a different argument — with either a spinster or one who's

been divorced, I just don't see the comparison. If somebody aged 55 has remained a spinster, one has to question how that person survived all these many years. Invariably they would have a job of some kind, probably — not necessarily — a built-in pension. So there's clearly a delineation, and I have some difficulty accepting the Member for Edmonton Norwood's point that we're being discriminatory. However, it's in fashion in 1983. Discrimination, discriminatory, and all this is, I guess, fashionable. If you can't make an argument to knock a program without using that word, perhaps you can't make a solid argument.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, there are some 4,000 widows across Alberta who, I think, are in dire need of this. The government recognizes that; the people of Alberta recognize that. This government is making some very substantial efforts to relieve the hardships of some 4,000 widows across this province. So in supporting Bill 26, I encourage my colleagues to do likewise.

Thank you.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to rise and participate in the debate this morning on second reading of Bill 26, the Widows' Pension Act. I can think of no more important piece of social legislation that our political party and our government has introduced in the last 11 or 12 years than this very, very progressive piece of legislation. It affects a group of people who, for the most part, have suffered tragedy that they have not planned for; they have been affected by it. I think it is in keeping with our whole philosophy of assisting those who have suffered tragedy.

Our record of very progressive social legislation with respect to senior citizens is unparalleled in the western democratic world. Our commitments to the handicapped and the disabled are unparalleled anywhere, to my knowledge. Now the introduction of Bill 26 at this First Session of the 20th Legislature, the introduction of a political commitment that was made last October 21, I think is most progressive. I applaud the Member for Calgary North West who introduced Bill 26, and I think it's important that we do not overlook the very many positive aspects of this particular Bill, and that's in fact . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member. But since he's just getting under way, I wonder if he might yield the floor for a moment to the hon. associate minister to revert to Introduction of Special Guests.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

#### head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS** (reversion)

MR. SPARROW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my apologies.

It is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to members of the Legislative Assembly a group of 15 students from Clear Vista junior high school located in Wetaskiwin. They're accompanied by their teacher Betty Westfall, who happens to be the sister of Shirley Cripps, the MLA for Drayton Valley. They are located in the members gallery, and I wish they would rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

#### head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS** (Second Reading)

#### Bill 26 **Widows' Pension Act** (continued)

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying just a few minutes ago, in my view, Bill 26, the Widows' Pension Act, is one of the most progressive pieces of social legislation that has been introduced in this Legislature in recent years. Without any doubt, I think it may very well be the most important piece of social legislation that will be introduced during the 20th Alberta Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Widows' Pension Act, the plan, really relates to two types of people, not only widows but widowers as well. If we take a look at the past — and all of us know widows. We've all met widows in our various constituencies and throughout the province of Alberta, and we all recognize that they have experienced a tragedy which none of us would wish upon anyone.

In many ways, perhaps to the women in particular, the difficulty of losing a spouse in the 55 to 64 age group puts many of them in a very disadvantageous position within the whole community. These women have contributed in a very vital way to the building of our province. Their efforts, their energy, and their spirit were needed in the home for the most part. They contributed as mothers. As well, many of them contributed in the work place. Now in their time of need, I think it's extremely important that this progressive form of legislation and this commitment to them is being made. We simply can't let their needs go unheeded.

When we look at Bill 26, I think it's important that, in essence, it provides three types of financial assistance. It's certainly not ever going to be able to replace complete financial assistance that might have been provided by a spouse who was in the market place, who was working. But I think the three aspects dealing with income security, health care, and housing are important and must not go unnoticed by all the Members of the Legislative Assembly and by the people in the province of Alberta. It's really in those three areas that I want to make a few additional comments.

The first aspect of Bill 26 essentially looks at the income portion. What it is designed to do is provide benefits similar to those that are currently received by Alberta senior citizens through the Alberta assured income plan and other federal income security programs. If you look at what is received by senior citizens, there are some maximum benefits, amounting at the current time to upwards of \$604 per month, that will be provided under the widows' pension plan. As well, this Bill will introduce and supplement the incomes of widows who currently receive some income from private and public pensions and other sources, which amounts to less than the figure that has been designated of over \$9,600 per year.

Mr. Speaker, I imagine that at the outset it would be very difficult for anybody to project how many individuals in the province of Alberta might wish to apply for benefits under this program. If you look at the fiscal year 1983, it would be very difficult at this point to determine the average supplement that might be assessed and provided to the widows and widowers who would be eligible for this program. But in all likelihood, that average will

not amount to some \$604 per month, and the average income might be a little less. In subsequent years — I think many of our widows and widowers who will apply, will be ruled eligible and will take advantage of the program — those average costing values might be in the neighborhood of \$7,200 a year and more. Of course there is a provision in here for adjustments, because it is based on the adjustment mechanism that is provided to senior citizens after the various pension schemes applied to them, available not only in Canada but as well in the province of Alberta.

I think the second very important aspect of the Alberta Widows' Pension Act is the extension of senior citizens' health care benefits to widows. In talking to a number of my constituents about this program in the past, they were absolutely amazed that we would have gone so far as to provide not only a pension but also to provide benefits to those people in addition to the pension. I think it's really important that when all members study the exact, specific contents of the Bill, they understand and see that those who are eligible for the new pension program will pay no premiums for Alberta health care and Blue Cross coverage and will receive 80 per cent coverage of prescription drug costs and extended health benefits, which cover such things such as optical, dental, hearing, and other health needs. I think that's a very important provision within the pension Act itself.

A third aspect of the Bill — again many of my constituents, and many of the people in Alberta that I've talked to, were very surprised and amazed that we would have gone as far with the Alberta widows' pension as to provide to widows and widowers in the age group 55 to 64 the benefits currently available to senior citizens under the senior citizens' housing programs. In recent months, this Legislature has found itself making good on the commitments made last fall by the political party that the vast majority of us are members of, in terms of adjustments to senior citizens' home improvement programs: the home improvement assistance capital grant of up of \$3,000 once in four years to help those individuals who own their own homes to continue to live in them; as well, the property tax rebate of \$1,000 that is currently available to seniors will also be applied to those who are eligible under the new provisions laid out in Bill 26. Of course those renting can receive up to \$1,200 a year in a renter assistance grant as well.

Mr. Speaker, I think the simple name given to Bill 26, the Widows' Pension Act, doesn't outline those other two provisions that are extremely important: the provisions dealing with health care and housing. I think they have to be amplified by all members of this Assembly. That type of information undoubtedly will be made available to all the people of Alberta in subsequent weeks, when I'm sure the Minister of Social Services and Community Health will activate a very important public advertising campaign on this, allowing the citizens of Alberta to understand it.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the Bill, I think it's also important to recognize that those who will be eligible under the provisions of the pension plan will not be widows who have had a spouse over the age of 65 who is deceased. They will be individuals whose spouses may have died at an age lower than 65. I think that makes it very unique, when you compare it to other pension programs that are currently in existence in Canada. Unlike any other program, it's progressive in a leadership way. Undoubtedly other legislatures in the country will be coming to Alberta and will be wanting to consult with us

on the provisions of this particular Bill and program, to see how they might choose to implement such a program in their various jurisdictions.

In terms of numbers, no one at this time knows how many Albertans will be applying for this. The best-guessed estimate might be as high as 4,800 Albertans — over 4,000 widows and the remaining individuals being widowers — who will benefit from it.

I think it's important that we look at the basic reason for it: it is to help people who have experienced and suffered a tragic loss in their lives. The tragedy of losing a spouse in the 55 to 64 age group is very traumatic. I've had the experience of meeting a number of women in recent years whose husbands have died. It is a very traumatic time because, needless to say, they are not prepared for the death of their spouse at that age.

Many of the deaths that have occurred, to the women I've talked to, have almost been spontaneous deaths. They've occurred literally out of the blue. They have not been deaths that people would plan for because of types of chronic illnesses, where you are aware that if you are suffering from a certain type of illness, death will come in a matter of months, weeks, or years. For many of the constituents I've talked to, women who have lost a husband, it has almost been the sudden heart attack that occurs on a Monday morning after the loving husband has gone to work, and that's it. Three days later there's a funeral. Four days later the woman has to take up a new life and plan for the future in a way that many of them have never really planned because there was no need to at that point.

I think it's important to amplify the social responsiveness of this government to this group of individuals in the province of Alberta. Undoubtedly there will be some saying we went too far, some saying we didn't go far enough; and some saying, why didn't you do this, and why didn't you do that? I guess that's the basic reason for having a debate on all Bills. Undoubtedly some of these concerns and comments will be raised not only during the second reading of Bill 26 but during committee as well.

Mr. Speaker, I think all of us should be proud of the contents of Bill 26, and particularly appreciative of those members of this Assembly who worked hard in advancing the idea through our caucus, in working and looking at the specifics of the Bill to bring it to the point where, last October, the Premier of Alberta could stand up and say, if we are re-elected, we are committed to doing this, and then several months later being here on this day in April and having a good colleague from Calgary rise and introduce second reading of Bill 26. This is a Bill that I feel is very important. I repeat: it's one of the most progressive pieces of social legislation that this Assembly has had the good fortune of dealing with, and undoubtedly it will be a highlight piece of legislation during the 20th Alberta Legislature.

Thank you.

MR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise and speak in support of Bill No. 26, the Widows' Pension Act. I was a little disappointed that I did not have the opportunity yesterday to speak on Motion 206, the establishment of a task force concerned with the role of women in Alberta society. It was my intent to share my positive views on that motion. But today I'm pleased to have the opportunity to give my whole-hearted support to this Bill, introduced by the hon. Member for Calgary North West.

As some may recall, I stressed in my maiden speech the

numerous programs offered to senior citizens throughout the province of Alberta, programs that all members know assist extensively those over the age of 65 living in our province. It's very intriguing to me that the socialists in this House are having a difficult time supporting many of our policies. I notice they are not in the House, but I surely would comment that they should pick up a copy of Programs for Senior Citizens, dated 1982, by the Senior Citizens Bureau of the Alberta Social Services and Community Health Department. It lists extensively the many, many programs available to senior citizens in this province.

Mr. Speaker, in October 1982, the Progressive Conservative Party promised the citizens of this province a major breakthrough for many of our citizens aged 55 to 64, a unique, innovative, daring, exciting, beneficial, and required widows' pension program. This Act will give needed benefits to widows and widowers throughout Alberta who are aged 55 to 64. This Act offers to this segment of our population a number of benefits that should aid thousands of people.

By visiting many of my constituents in Edmonton Kingsway during the campaign and since, I know that the need is there for those men and women who sadly have had a spouse die, leaving the surviving spouse with little or no funds to continue life in our beautiful province. These people, mostly women, require help: assistance to pay the bills, to buy the basics, to repair their homes, to pay the rent, to obtain needed health aids, and general assistance to enjoy life in Alberta.

Of course, not all widows and widowers will require the varied assistance from the widows' pension plan. Fortunately, many widows and widowers in this age group have some savings, some investments, and/or a pension plan. In the past most women, unlike men, did not work for pay in our society. Among those women who are 55 years of age or older, even fewer worked for pay when they were younger. To be elderly and a woman is usually to be poor. According to some statistics I have in my possession, three-quarters of all female senior citizens in Canada had incomes of less than \$5,000 per year in the late '70s. More often than not, the possibility of retiring after a lifetime of faithful service with a decent pension and some sort of financial security is minimal. More often than not, their reward is to eke out an existence, trying to manage on an income that is below the poverty level.

Mr. Speaker, this sad state of affairs also exists for many women who are aged 55 to 64 and have had their husbands die. Most of these women spent their lives as full-time homemakers, a job for which they received no pay and no pension. They may have expected to benefit from their husbands, but almost half of all working men don't have any pension plan at work. Of those who are enrolled in employer-sponsored plans, only 44 per cent are in plans that provide a widow's pension.

So here is a government the socialists have condemned, a government that has said: let's help these widows and widowers who need help; let's give them some deserved assistance; let's institute a plan, a program, that is definitely unique in Canada and indeed unique in North America. Yes, Mr. Speaker, a program that gives extensive benefits and assistance to 4,200 Alberta widows and some 600 widowers. To those widows and widowers aged 55 to 64 who are of limited means, approximately \$9,400 per year, the following benefits would be made available.

Firstly, the income portion of the program is designed to provide benefits similar to those received by Alberta senior citizens through the Alberta assured income plan

and other federal income security programs. Benefits under this portion will be approximately \$600 per month. As well, the Alberta widows' pension plan will supplement the incomes of widows who currently receive some income from private and public pensions, which is less than \$9,440 per year. It is important to know that adjustments will be made regularly.

The second very important aspect of the Alberta widows' pension program will extend senior citizens' health benefits to widows. Some hon. members have referred to these, but I think I should stress them again. What does this mean? One, they will pay no premiums for Alberta health care. Two, they will pay no premiums for Blue Cross coverage. Three, they will receive 80 per cent coverage of prescription drugs. Four, they will have an extended health benefit package that will cover most or all of the costs for dental, hearing, and other health needs. Mr. Speaker, what a tremendous boon offered to these citizens by their government.

The third area of the widows' pension program extends senior citizens' housing programs to widows and widowers aged 55 to 64 as well. I would like to refer, Mr. Speaker, to a booklet entitled Seniors' Home Improvement Program, put out by the Housing and Public Works Department of the province of Alberta. We can use the term "seniors' home improvement program", but I believe that many of my constituents and, I'm sure, many other Albertans are not truly aware of the many, many benefits under this program, so I would like to allude to some of them. First of all, the seniors' home improvement program commenced December 1, 1982, and provided grants of up to \$3,000 to senior citizens. Now it will extend to widows and widowers aged 55 to 64. These are to assist home-owners in repairing and improving their homes.

Who is eligible?

You must be a homeowner

- only one grant per household is allowable.
- single family dwellings, duplexes, fourplexes, row houses, condominiums and mobile homes are eligible types of homes.
- if you do not possess title or proof of ownership to the home, you may still be eligible ...

and there is a request that people pursue this.

You must be living in your home

- the home must be your place of residence for at least nine (9) months per year.
- you must have been a resident of Alberta for at least one (1) year prior to date of application.
- you must be either a Canadian Citizen or a Landed Immigrant with at least ten (10) years residency in Canada.

But what can you do if you are a home-owner now 55 to 64 years old, a widow or widower?

What items are eligible?

Only those eligible items and services purchased after you have received your Identification Card will be eligible for payment.

You may receive payment for the cost of repairs or improvements which are considered to be of a permanent nature.

And here is some of the extensive coverage, Mr. Speaker:

- alterations or repairs to the exterior or interior of a home or garage.
- the repair, alteration or rebuilding of a home or garage damaged or destroyed by fire, flood, earth movement or weather, but excluding those costs covered by insurance or disaster funds.

- the purchase, installation, maintenance, repair, cleaning or improvement of heating systems including equipment such as stokers, oil burners, wood, coal, gas or electric furnaces and boilers which are a part of it.
- the purchase, installation, repair or improvement of electric power and gas systems including private lighting and power plants and connections to power lines and gas mains.
- the purchase, installation, repair or improvement of fire detection or control systems.
- the purchase, installation, repair or improvement of security devices including burglar alarms, bolt locks and other security devices.
- the purchase, installation, repair, maintenance or improvement of water heaters, water softeners, sinks, tubs or other plumbing fixtures.
- painting, paper-hanging and general decorating, including the purchase and installation of overall floor covering or carpet made, cut or prepared to fit a particular room, but excluding the purchase or installation of curtains, drapes or other removable items.
- the purchase, installation or repair of stoves, refrigerators, washers, dryers, air conditioners, deep freezers and dishwashers.
- the purchase, construction, installation, repair, maintenance or improvement of a sewage and storm water disposal system, or any portion of it, including a septic tank or connection to public sewers.
- the sinking, making, installation, repair, maintenance or improvement of wells or any type of water supply systems for the house, including connections to a public water system.
- the installation, construction, painting, upgrading or repair of a fence, driveway, sidewalk, ramp, porch or patio.

The socialists sit across this House and say we don't do very much. Come on, have a look at those booklets, hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood.

Mr. Speaker, that is not all. The property tax rebate of \$1,000 for seniors will apply to these people as well. For those renting, the senior citizens' renter assistance grant for those in non-subsidized accommodation will apply to widows and widowers aged 55 to 64 as well, a total grant of \$1,200 per year. For those renting subsidized accommodation, the grant will be \$600. Of course the senior citizens' home heating price protection program applies to these citizens as well.

I know I speak on behalf of the constituents of Edmonton Kingsway when I urge all members of this Legislative Assembly to support Bill No. 26, the Widows' Pension Act, and ask for its swift passage in this session of the Legislature to assist widows and widowers aged 55 to 64.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, I don't think I could add too many words to describe the Bill that is being given second reading this afternoon. I won't try to repeat any aspect of details of the Bill, but I do want to add my words of support to introduction of Bill 26.

In giving a little bit of thought to how important this Bill is to the people who will benefit from it, I came across an article that was forwarded to me some time ago by the Member for Calgary North West, who introduced the Bill. It was an article on widows from the Legion

magazine. If you will bear with me, I'd just like to quote two sentences from this article. It **starts** out by saying:

They too become veterans of a sort. They watch their dearest comrades fall and agonize over the waste of a life in its prime.

But for most there is no organization like the Legion to help pick up the pieces and start anew. There is no one waiting at home to embrace at the end of their ordeal and no one to reminisce with about old times . . .

It lists the number of widows in Canada as close to 1 million, and there are nearly 200,000 widowers. That was in mid-1981. Those figures obviously have grown since then, as the population of our country has grown. But the reason I wanted to read those two comments from an excellent article was to try to put into context the very desperate situation each of us faces during our lives when death touches us. For some people it happens more than once, but for those people recently faced with the [death] of a loved one, one that becomes a veteran of sorts, it can be a devastating experience. There are a number of reasons. One is that the majority of people within our society tend to shy away from death. They don't wish to talk about it and, in many cases, do not wish to have very much close contact with the bereaved person. This is a sad soliloquy on our society. But perhaps many people are just not able to face their own mortality and have difficulty making contact with the person in that circumstance.

Although the Bill is not restricted to women — it includes both widows and widowers — I'm going to mention women primarily. For women most often are in the circumstance of losing a spouse. We know that women tend to live longer than men, and often men die at that important age when they are still earning a salary and providing for their families. For many women who are bereaved, the adjustment can be absolutely immense. Their lives are devastated and, in addition to that, their incomes are often seriously affected. Many women do not qualify for a company pension or for the benefits that a husband, had he lived, would have received when he reached retirement age. The mortgage payments go on, the grocery bills go on, and often children still have to be supported. So in addition to the grieving process, there are financial adjustments and decisions that have to be made.

The grieving widow has to find out what benefits are available to her. Often this is the most difficult time. I guess the best advice that can be given from sources such as the Women's Bureau, which has done some excellent work in this area through brochures, [is to] advise women to ensure that they are fully aware of insurance benefits, of where the safety deposit box keys are, and all the documents that are needed at the time of a death within the family. Any forward planning assists immensely during that time. However, even if a widow knows that information, if she does not have benefits that will keep her from being in most difficult economic circumstances, then Bill 26, the program, the pension plan that's announced, will assist those individuals within our society who are in the greatest need.

It's difficult for a widow or widower 55 or over, who has not had employment for a long period of time, does not have the education, any marketable skills to take out and trade for a weekly or monthly salary, to go through a grieving process in addition to going out and finding suitable employment. I think most women would agree that if they were originally trained, have a basic educa-

tion, and have been out of the work force for a period of time — let's say a period of five, 10, or even 15 years — those women face a very serious loss of confidence. It's difficult to come back into the work force, after being away from it, with the same vitality and enthusiasm that you had when you were very young and entered the work force for the first time. If you magnify that age difference to the person over 55, that crisis becomes even greater. For those who do not have skills and would have to go back and face retraining, who perhaps for some reason were unable to receive training at an earlier age or, for a variety of reasons, weren't able to be retrained at that age, this program is absolutely essential. It keeps those people from the stigma of having to rely completely on social assistance to look after their needs. It's a circumstance whereby the government of Alberta is recognizing that because of the death of their spouse, their financial situation has changed and has made almost impossible the readjustment younger people can make.

This Bill is designed to provide benefits to a targetted group within our province, which will expand the policy of this government to deal with those in greatest need, to assist those who have the greatest difficulty living in our society with dignity, those widows and widowers who have not had the opportunity to participate in the work force and build up the security the rest of us have been able to. This government received a mandate in November of last year based on financial prudence, on good management. This is recognized in our international credit rating, which is tops anywhere in the country. With a worldwide economic recession, not many jurisdictions are able to bring in any new programs. However, this Bill is unique. It provides a pension to those who are in great need. It also provides coverage and benefits for health care. Blue Cross coverage, and coverage of senior citizen housing programs, which was just elucidated by the member sitting on my right. For this reason, Alberta has taken an initiative, even during a difficult economic time, to set priorities to try to continue the policy, which is continued through this Bill, of assisting those people in our society who are least able to care for themselves.

With that, I urge unanimous support of Bill 26.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a few brief comments with respect to Bill 26. As preceding speakers have pointed out the many benefits with respect to the Bill, I won't go over those. But a matter to be underlined is that in the midst of these economic times, here is a government that does care and is able, in terms of good management of its resources, to bring in such a Bill.

In that regard, for the last considerable number of days all of us in the Assembly have heard more than once some of the concerns of the Leader of the Opposition with respect to user fees. He keeps using that issue. The one thing I'd like to point out — and it's brought out by his comments with respect to Bill 26 — is that he seems not to have read the various information available and seems not to be aware of the fact that there are 12 categories of exceptions wherein user fees would be charged and, in that case of course, not be charged. In essence, one-third of all Albertans would not have to pay user fees in any respect. Obviously that's going to relate to a number of people in this category, as well as in other categories.

In his comments with respect to Bill 26, the Member for Edmonton Norwood's words were something about this government's other announcements being an attack on social welfare recipients. I suppose I am naive to

believe that perhaps the member would be a bit more circumspect with regard to his use of encyclopedic words, and that rather than sticking to an attack, he would at least stand back and look at the whole issue as being a rationalization of the system and deal more with the responsibility of persons. Those are a lot of big words being thrown into the debate. But what it really boils down to is that government responsibility is one whereby we have to indulge in programs where we encourage the individual responsibility of persons in our society. Of course that deals with the whole spectrum of the population, and it also deals with persons who, for one reason or another, are social welfare recipients.

It is interesting to note, with regard to Bill 26, that of the estimated 4,200 females and 600 males who will benefit from this Bill when it is passed, it is estimated that 1,000 of those persons who are presently receiving social allowance will be able to move out of that category. And so the government is able to further encourage individual responsibility and, hopefully, self-sufficiency. Out of that will come enhanced feelings of self-worth on behalf of these persons.

With respect to the various program benefits, it is interesting to note in the Bill that the extension of coverage in various areas also includes 80 per cent coverage of prescription drug costs, because medication and how you are going to pay the bill is a constant worry. In the 25 years of my previous occupation, I found that medical problems bring on related stress, because oftentimes widows, in particular, feel they can't afford to go to the doctor because of the ongoing effect of having to pay for prescription drugs. So the extension of coverage in this respect will be most beneficial. Again, we have other extended health care benefits, including optical, dental, hearing, and other health needs. All members in the Assembly have known persons, both male and female, who fall into this age category, and the difficulties they have experienced, probably because of lack of training, but oftentimes more a matter of physical health circumstances and the attendant stress that result, which oftentimes brings on psychosomatic complications.

I am pleased that the extension of the benefits within the ambit of the Bill relates to the home improvement program, rental accommodation assistance, and property rebate assistance. There are a number of persons throughout this province — the estimate is just under 5,000 — who are living on their own. They've raised their families through some very difficult times. If they themselves had had this kind of assistance during the last 15 to 20 years, I am certain it would have been of great benefit to them not only physically but mentally. So it is, Mr. Speaker, that I, along with all the other speakers here this morning, praise the Member for Calgary North West for bringing Bill 26 forward. We realize that it comes from a lot of hard work on behalf of all members of government caucus. We know that we, too, will offer support and hope for speedy passage of the Bill.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to support second reading and endorse the principle of the Widows' Pension Act. I have certainly had more calls requesting information on this Bill than on any other issue we've discussed in this legislative session.

During the 1979 election campaign, I received — as I know many other members did — many representations outlining the difficult circumstances widows suddenly find themselves in. Alone, without income, and long out of the job market, they face un contemplated hardships. It

has long been a concern of mine, along with other members. I was just going through the file of correspondence on this. August 29, 1980, paragraph 4, in a memo to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health at that time:

Why not a 'Widow's Allowance', which would be designed to fit their circumstances? Along with the widow's allowance, we should develop an avenue to get these ladies into a retraining program [if they so desire].

Mr. Speaker, I am especially pleased to see that we have before us today a Bill designed to meet the special needs of this group.

On the other aspect of that paragraph — if I can just digress for a moment from the principle of the Bill — I would like to urge the Minister of Manpower to look at the possibility of retraining programs. The widows' pension plan could provide funding and work in conjunction with the Department of Manpower so that if she chose to, a widow could take a retraining program and re-enter the work force. I hope the Minister of Manpower will work with the Minister of Social Services and Community Health to make this opportunity available to widows and make the information available to them.

I support the remarks of other members, so I won't repeat them. But on behalf of my own constituents, I want to support the Bill and say how pleased they are with a Bill which attempts to meet the needs of a special group. I hope all members of the Legislative Assembly will support Bill 26, as I do on behalf of the constituency of Drayton Valley.

[Motion carried; Bill 26 read a second time]

MR. SPEAKER: Might the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs deal further with a matter which arises from yesterday's discussion of her estimates?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, last night while doing my estimates, in terms of the number of licences that were deregulated last year, I quoted the figure 55. It should have been 55,000. Certainly my hon. colleague who was responsible for that portfolio last year and was so diligent in his exercise of deregulation would have been most dismayed if he had read that.\*

Thank you.

#### Bill 16 Companies Amendment Act, 1983

MR. ALEXANDER: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 16, the Companies Amendment Act, 1983.

This is properly described as a housecleaning exercise. I do not think there are any substantive amendments contained in the Bill. The Companies Act is amended in several ways by this Act. Section 1 is amended by adding a clause to establish a registrar's periodical, which is established under the Business Corporations Act. It is simply an addition to the *Gazette* and contains information not contained in the *Gazette* that is considered to be helpful.

Section 103(3) is added under subsection (2). It simply deals with such things as insider trading in securities, and seeks to fill in a twilight zone between the Corporations Act and the Companies Act in which duplicate recording was required. Under this section, those companies which

have not registered continuance under the new Act would not be required to comply with the Securities Act and thus have two sets of rules, which sometimes are significantly different. The section simply alleviates that pressure.

Section 4 adds, after section 118, sections 119 and 121, whose rationale is to introduce amendments under the Companies Act, removing a requirement for reporting of receivers and managers of companies, which was inadvertently removed. It needs to be put back, pending continuance under the Business Corporations Act. I am informed by the department, Mr. Speaker, that receivers and managers of companies still under the Companies Act have in fact been reporting receivership matters, but they are not required to do so. Sections 119, 120, and 121, removed in error, would effectively redress that legislatively. There is an intention later on to add to section 121 a further paragraph, which I will deal with at the proper time.

Item 5: section 154 is amended to add sections 156, 157, and 159, again to relieve the matter of reporting under two parts of the Act:

Sections 156, 157 and 159 do not apply to the management of a company, a solicitation or a vote, respectively, where the company concerned is a reporting issuer as defined in the *Securities Act*.

For reasons paralleling those in section 2, reporting issuers are thus exempted from provisions here and relieved from the necessity to comply with two sets of laws.

Item 6: section 270(7) is repealed and a substitution is made. The purpose of this amendment is to simplify the method by which Treasury returns money which is beneficially owed by reducing the number of orders in council necessary.

Section 7 corrects an error in reference, striking out "223" and substituting "240". Section 8 has to do with the registrar's periodical, which I mentioned earlier is now being published and is circulated as a separate part of the *Alberta Gazette*. The sections mentioned in this amendment require the publishing of certain information in the *Alberta Gazette*. This amendment will permit the publishing of the notice in the registrar's periodical instead.

[Motion carried; Bill 16 read a second time]

#### Bill 31 Energy Resources Conservation Amendment Act, 1983

MR. LEE: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 31, the Energy Resources Conservation Amendment Act, 1983.

The purpose of this Bill is to remove the limitation on the maximum number of acting members of the ERCB that may be named during any period of time. At present, the Energy Resources Conservation Act provides for the appointment of not more than seven permanent members. At present, there are six. The Act also provides for the appointment of acting members, but it limits the enlargement of the board to no more than nine members at any time. In other words, there could only be two acting members if we had a full board, and at present we could have three acting members.

Mr. Speaker, outside experts are included on hearing and inquiry panels when such expertise is required; for example, a specialist from the medical field or that of environment. I think a good example would be the Lodgepole well blowout inquiry. It will be composed of

\*See Hansard, April 14, 1983, right column, paragraph 6

three members of the ERCB, a member from Alberta Environment, and two medical specialists. This group has already had a pre-inquiry. It won't be held till winter, pending completion of various studies. The workload of the ERCB has been increasing substantially, as evidenced by the fact that there are six panels of inquiry or hearings either under way, having been completed, or about to start.

I won't list them all, except to say that it's important that there be the ability to appoint a sufficient number of new acting members for each of these panels, so these inquiries are not delayed or there be difficulty obtaining quorums. This amendment will enable the appointment of sufficient acting board members principally to allow the ERCB to, one, conduct all the necessary hearings and inquiries on its agenda and, two, do so without delay resulting from an inability to constitute the required panels.

[Motion carried; Bill 31 read a second time]

#### Bill 39

#### Local Authorities Election Act

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to move second reading of Bill 39, the Local Authorities Election Act. While the legislation hon. members have before them in this Bill seems fairly ominous in terms of its size, I should relieve the concerns of hon. members in one respect. To a large degree, we have consolidated into one piece of legislation the provisions that appear in the Municipal Elections Act, the School Elections Act, and the regulations for the election of hospital board members, so as to simplify the documentation and process necessary for local elections which will be taking place under the new legislation for the first time this fall.

I'm very pleased with the process that took place in developing the legislation I presented to you during first reading and which I now commend for your support during second reading. It involved representatives from the departments of Municipal Affairs, Education, and Hospitals and Medical Care. Subsequent to the work of those representatives, it involved workshops in which the constituent groups took a very important interest and provided us with excellent advice and suggestions for further changes, which have now been incorporated in the legislation being debated this morning.

If I were to identify the most salient feature that distinguishes this Bill from the current election legislation affecting local governments in this province, perhaps it would be the date on which the election would be held. I'm pleased to advise hon. members that, supported by resolutions of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, the date has been changed from a Wednesday to a Monday. It's somewhat complicated, in that the original process set the date relative to the nomination date, with the nomination date being the third Wednesday in September and the election being four weeks later. We are now setting the election date as the third Monday in October, with the nomination date being four weeks earlier.

That avoids the difficulty with respect to Thanksgiving. The election day would never fall on that holiday. In addition, it satisfies a long-standing concern of the Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association that the information on election results came at a time when, by the time it could be printed by the newspapers, it was old news. By

changing the date to the Monday, the Weekly Newspapers Association can get the results to their readers — results of probably the most significant local event that takes place, upon which weekly newspapers report in their particular areas — when it's fresh and interesting news.

In all other respects, Mr. Speaker, the provisions in the Act, with some minor changes, follow the concepts that are outlined in the legislation that is being repealed. There are certain areas of flexibility that I should identify. One deals with the preparation of an electoral list, or a list of electors or voters' list. The proposal contained in Bill 39 would be that unless a local authority decides otherwise, it would not be necessary to prepare a voters' list. My understanding is that, in terms of the city of Edmonton alone, the removal of a need to prepare a voters' list could involve a saving of up to \$300,000, which is significant. At the same time, the advice I have received is that the declaration system is a very workable and useful system that permits a proper election to be held without a voters' list and effects some savings for local governments.

With that brief explanation of some of the highlights, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's necessary to go into the details of the legislation. If hon. members have certain concerns or sections they've identified that they would like further discussion on, that can be done during the course of committee study.

I complete my remarks at this point, subject to any questions that might develop or any need to respond on closing the debate, with the request to all hon. members for their support during the course of second reading of Bill 39.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the minister about four or five direct questions that refer to the Act. I'll go through them and give him a chance to reply.

In Bill 39, section 5(1)(a) allows the relevant minister to "give directions governing the conduct of a . . . vote on the by-law". Then there seems to be no other mention of this in the Act until you get to section 161(1)(a), in which the cabinet is empowered to make regulations

prescribing a system for the conduct and procedure of an election or vote that is not provided for in this Act or that is a modification of a system under this Act.

I'd like to point out to the minister that the Municipal Government Act is, of course, the Act which provides for petitioning for plebiscites and for the conditions under which plebiscites can and/or shall be held. Other appropriate sections in the Municipal Government Act are amended by Bill 39. The question is, do sections 5(1)(a) and 161(1)(a) of Bill 39 taken together give the cabinet the power to overrule the Municipal Government Act on the question of rules governing petitions for plebiscites? Along with that, is there any thought by the government — because I know there's been a fair amount of publicity — over restricting plebiscites at the municipal level? That's one area I'd like an answer on.

The other comment I would make: I suppose there's a rationale for it, but under 29(2)(a) there's an increase in deposit from \$100 to \$500. For some candidates, that's probably a significant amount of money. I wonder why they decided to make it more difficult to run.

The other one I would refer to would be 22(1)(e). This prohibits municipal employees from running for office. I would ask the minister why he didn't think of, or put in, just a leave of absence when they are elected? I'd ask him



why, in 22(l)(j), we have to include spouses in this Act. It seems to unnecessarily limit their chances to run.

The other question I would ask comes from the hon. Member for Calgary North Hill who, I believe, has a private member's Bill or motion about campaign spending limits or requirements that candidates for local office reveal the sources of their major funding, as is now the case provincially. Is there any thought by the minister to taking up the Member for Calgary North Hill's motion? Is that in the works, or are they looking at it?

Mr. Speaker, I direct those specific questions to the minister.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. minister conclude the debate? I realize that we're getting into some detail of the kind that is usually dealt with in committee, although that certainly doesn't apply to all the questions that have been asked. But I think we have to recognize that in a Bill of this kind it's pretty hard to sort out the detail from the principle.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the best approach I can use in responding to the questions posed by the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood is to indicate that in our approach to the amendment of the election machinery provisions of the local authority election legislation, we've basically taken the advice of the people involved in the election machinery and those who are to be elected. So when you ask, for example, why there wasn't a change that would permit municipal employees to take a leave of absence to run without having to resign from their positions. I did not receive from the associations directly affected by this legislation a request to make that change, and I hesitate to impose it upon them. I realize what the circumstances are, for example, with respect to employees of the provincial government, who, by taking a leave of absence, can in fact pursue political office if they don't conflict in other respects with their responsibilities.

Provincial government is somewhat different from local government, in that this piece of legislation applies to all levels of local government regardless of size. You can't say that circumstances in the city of Edmonton, for example, apply equally to the village of Blackfalds, or something like that, where the difference in the number of employees is so great. In some municipal governments, the number of employees may be only one or two, and there could be real difficulty if the employee were able to pursue a political career in the municipality where that employee is employed.

The question with respect to eligibility for candidacy, the specific one raising that of the spouse that appears in 22(l)(j). We did not address a change to that regardless of the value or lack of value of such a change, because the local authorities didn't ask us to make a change in that respect. Now I know the local authorities are very interested in whether we can put it all together under one conflict-of-interest heading, and are looking at ways in which legislation can be simplified or more easily understood in this respect. Eligibility for candidacy can probably come under that broad heading I've used. I would not want to make significant changes in that area without their advice.

The question of 161 and the right to overrule, as described by the Member for Edmonton Norwood. I wouldn't describe it as such. These provisions are there in the event that a circumstance arises that is not anticipated by the legislation, but on which a decision is necessary in order to conduct a fair, democratic election. Circum-

stances would permit the minister or the Lieutenant Governor in Council to provide a remedy or procedure which would allow the elections to take place in a fair, democratic environment.

The size of the deposit. The Act outlines maximums, but within those maximums, local authorities can set deposits that are lower. What we're putting forward in this legislation is the opportunity for the local authority to set, for example, in the case of the city of Edmonton, a \$500 maximum deposit; but, by a decision of the city, that can be set at any figure lower than \$500.

The response I gave with respect to the conflict-of-interest provisions, or the specific matter of the spouse which was raised, would be the answer I would provide to the Assembly on the question of expenses during the course of an election, raised by the Member for Calgary North Hill in his legislation. Here again. I have not received a request from the affected associations to include that in this legislation.

[Motion carried: Bill 39 read a second time]

#### Bill 40

#### Alberta Corporate Income Tax Amendment Act, 1983

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 40, the Alberta Corporate Income Tax Amendment Act, 1983.

This amending Bill, like most tax laws, is complex. One would hope that lawyers or economists could devise such Acts so that eventually they might be as simple to understand as the advertisement on a hockey broadcast. But I'm afraid that at the moment, and probably for some years, the complexity of these tax Acts must remain with us. However, at the outset I might indicate that if any hon. members have questions for committee with respect to any clauses or subclauses which would require some homework on my part, if they would let me know in advance, I will endeavor to get answers by the time we reach committee stage.

The purposes of this Act are straightforward and essentially are four in number: firstly, to clarify the provisions of the royalty tax credit which I announced on October 24 last year; secondly, to allow for the refund of income tax instalments where the taxpayer is in a significant financial hardship situation and in fact should not have paid the instalment because the corporate income was not of an amount which would generate a tax. In other words, where there is an overpayment situation, this Bill will enable the government and Alberta Treasury to refund the overpayment of taxes more quickly to a business which is in financial hardship and get that cash back into the company.

Thirdly, the Bill provides for a simplification of the administrative mechanism for determining when books and records of a tax-accounting nature may be destroyed. At the moment, that is essentially an option exercised by the Provincial Treasurer on the initiative of a business. Only in that way can tax records be destroyed. We hope to get rid of some of the paperwork burden of tens of thousands of small businesses by simply saying that in six years those records can be destroyed in any event. Lastly, there are the usual annual technical corrections to parallel this Act with the federal Act and provide a deadline for filing of the rental investment tax credit and make some other clarifications.

[Motion carried; Bill 40 read a second time]

**Bill 41**  
**Alberta Income Tax**  
**Amendment Act, 1983**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 41, the Alberta Income Tax Amendment Act, 1983. This Act deals with personal income tax, as opposed to corporation income tax in the previous Bill.

There are essentially three proposals here: firstly, to implement the commitment made by the government last fall to enrich the renter assistance tax credit for 1983, beginning on January 1 of this taxation year, and for subsequent years. That was announced in October. Members will recall that, for example, the benefits increased for an individual who would pay 30 per cent of his gross income for rent. The current credit would be \$179; under this legislation, the credit would go to \$299. For a family of four paying 30 per cent of gross income for rent, the current credit is \$201 and the proposed credit would be \$376. So what this Act does is implement those benefits for thousands of renters throughout the province.

Secondly, it implements a clarification of the royalty tax credit, paralleling the one I just mentioned with regard to the previous Bill, for those applicants who may be individuals as opposed to corporations. Thirdly, it makes a number of technical corrections and maintains appropriate uniformity under the tax collection agreement between the government of the province of Alberta and the federal government.

[Motion carried; Bill 41 read a second time]

**Bill 42**  
**Tobacco Tax Act**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 42, the Tobacco Tax Act.

This is complete rewrite of previous Legislation. It has essentially five objectives. Firstly, it enacts the new tobacco tax rates, effective March 25, 1983. I say that with some mixed emotions. Having gone to the local store last night to buy some of my favorite small cigars, I found they had increased to a shocking amount by reason of recent tax increases imposed by the Provincial Treasurer. [interjections] The Member for Lethbridge West endorses that though. Those increases, then, with respect to all tobacco products are implemented.

Secondly, it abolishes the retail permit system. This means that some 6,000 existing retail businesses in the province, which now are obliged to fill out forms, five or six pages each, and which have found this to be a drag on their private-sector operations, are now precluded from having to do that, because there will no longer be a retail permit system. That is abolished, and the wholesalers and importers will be paying the tax as collectors for the Provincial Treasurer. There have been discussions with them in order to implement that system.

Thirdly, an appeal mechanism, which is much fairer than was the case in the past, is provided with regard to licence suspensions and cancellations. Appeals are now possible right up to the Court of Appeal of the province of Alberta if any wholesaler, anyone holding a licence, or a tax collector, feels that the approach taken by the administration or the government is not fair and just. As well, there is a strengthening and updating of the penalties for failure to collect and remit tax. They haven't been

changed in many years.

Lastly, there is a general update, improvement, and streamlining of this Act, which was originally passed in 1969 and has not been re-enacted in a new, streamlined form since that time.

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to contribute in one way to this debate. I recall that a politician — I don't remember his name at this moment; it was in another country — went around his electoral district with a cry which I think was quite successful: what this country needs is a good 5-cent cigar. By this Legislation, I don't think that will be happening. However, it does provide certain direction for us smokers. I have been seriously considering quitting since the introduction of this Bill. It has accomplished this, though: it has encouraged me to at least cut down and, who knows, maybe quit at some future date. So from that point of view, I'll support the Bill.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I have taken note of the Provincial Treasurer's comments, and I've heeded that. I would draw the attention of the hon. Minister of [Municipal] Affairs to page 3 of the Bill, under section 3(1)(b). Although we don't get a 5-cent cigar, I'm pleased to note that the tax on the cigar is only 5 cents.

[Motion carried; Bill No. 42 read a second time]

**Bill 9**  
**Consumer and Corporate Affairs**  
**Statutes Amendment Act, 1983**

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 9, the Consumer and Corporate Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 1983.

While there are a number of amendments. I suppose they could be described for the most part as not having a major principle involved. I'll briefly speak to the sections that are there. One of the requirements of the Business Corporations Act, which was proclaimed as of February 1, 1982, is the publication of the registrar's periodical. An agreement has been effected with the Queen's Printer to attach such a periodical to the *Alberta Gazette* and make it part of the *Gazette* in due course. Accordingly, we're proposing that the provincial statutes, which we administer and which have a requirement for publication in the *Gazette*, be amended to allow for their publication in either the *Gazette* or the registrar's periodical. Those statutes named here are the Companies Act, the Credit Union Act, the Co-operative Associations Act, the Religious Societies' Lands Act, and the Societies Act.

The Credit Union Act is also addressed, and of course we refer to the same provision in terms of the publication, but also in a more detailed way, the Credit Union Act. We would like to propose that an amendment would allow the credit unions to offer fixed-term annuities to their customers as a competitive service. Mr. Speaker, I think you will be aware that there are many credit unions established in the province in places and communities where there are no other financial institutions to serve the citizens, so we believe that would be a major benefit to the citizens and the credit unions.

A further amendment would provide for secondary reserves to be set aside in order to strengthen the equity base of the credit unions. We believe most of these to be housekeeping amendments. There is also a provision for the users of the credit unions to overdraw their accounts.

These and other small amendments have basically been requested by the credit unions across Alberta in terms of proposals that have come out of their annual meetings.

Mr. Speaker, the Condominium Property Act will be amended to exempt condominium corporations from the provisions of the Business Corporations Act. This was an oversight in the original Business Corporations Act. Since the condominium corporations are already incorporated under their own Act, it's obvious that they shouldn't be required to do it a second time.

The Insurance Act and the Trust Companies Act are also being amended. Under the present legislation, insurance and trust companies are not authorized to invest their funds in debt instruments or lend their funds where the payment of debt and interest, or repayment of the loan with interest, is insured under an insurance policy. The proposed amendments will provide a new source of funds for small- and medium-sized business loans, for which guarantee of repayment is provided, under insurance policies issued by insurers licenced under the Canadian and British insurance companies Act.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs that the

minor change to the Credit Union Act that she described may be minor in wording, but it's very, very major as far as credit unions are concerned. I would like to say that I'm all for this change and indeed have worked on it for about 15 years, and I appreciate that.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 9 read a second time]

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the business of the House for the day. On Monday it would be the intention to go into Committee of Supply to consider the estimates of the Department of Education. If those are completed, we would continue through Culture and in alphabetical order thereafter. It's not the intention of the House to sit Monday evening.

I move that we call it one o'clock.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 12:38 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 5, the House adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]

