

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Monday, October 31, 1983 2:30 p.m.**

[The House met at 2:30 p.m.]

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I have the honor to present to you, and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly, a distinguished visitor to our Assembly today, the Governor of the State of Wyoming, Mr. Ed Herschler. He is accompanied by Mr. John Niland, who is the executive director of the Department of Economic Planning and Development for the state of Wyoming; Mr. Alvin Wiederspahn, attorney and state legislator; and Mr. James Higday, chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Wyoming Travel Commission.

We had a very useful visit today, and the ministers as well, with the governor and his group. The governor has been very responsible for taking the leadership role with the Western Governors' Conference in an exchange with the provinces in western Canada, and in terms of international marketing. It is a very useful exchange, which I'm sure will be followed up. I'm sure all members of the Legislature will join with me in asking these four gentlemen to rise and be welcomed to the Assembly.

head: **PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES**

MR. STILES: Mr. Speaker, the Private Bills Committee has had under consideration Bill Pr. 2, the Society of Management Accountants of Alberta Amendment Act, 1983, and the recommendation of the committee is that the Bill not be proceeded with.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

Bill 99

**Property Tax Reduction
Amendment Act, 1983**

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, on Allhallows Eve it gives me pleasure to provide a bit of a treat by the introduction of Bill 99, which is the Property Tax Reduction Amendment Act, 1983.

Assuming that the Bill will receive the support of all members of the Legislature, by this Bill we would redress the inequity that presently exists between occupied and unoccupied subdivided residential land, by extending the benefits of the Act to such lands.

[Leave granted; Bill 99 read a first time]

Bill 100

**Alberta Income Tax
Amendment Act, 1983 (No. 2)**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Alberta Income Tax Amendment Act, 1983 (No. 2).

The two main purposes of this Bill are: firstly, to increase the Alberta tax rate from 38.5 per cent to 43.5 per cent of federal basic tax, effective January 1, 1984, to reflect sound fiscal management; [interjections] and secondly, to enrich the special Alberta personal income tax reduction for some 500,000 low-income taxpayers, on January 1, 1984.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, there are three somewhat more procedural amendments, one relating to the time for filing a tax credit, another with respect to the payment of interest with regard to the royalty tax credit and the renter assistance credit, and a third, as required by the Canada/Alberta tax collection agreement, with respect to recent amendments to the Income Tax Act of Canada.

MR. NOTLEY: With a Bill like that, all you need is a black hat and a broom.

[Leave granted; Bill 100 read a first time]

Bill 101

**Alberta Corporate Income Tax
Amendment Act, 1983 (No. 2)**

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, as well I request leave to introduce Bill No. 101, the Alberta Corporate Income Tax Amendment Act, 1983 (No. 2). This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant-Governor, having been informed of the contents of the Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill has essentially procedural amendments. It will continue existing Alberta tax benefits as they apply to the small business deduction area, in the light of changes by the federal government in that area. Regarding those proposed changes, I might mention that the federal government has recently announced a number of changes in the area of small business deductions. Our intention in future will be to parallel those, as appropriate, in future amendments to the Act. Secondly, it will more clearly define a corporation's entitlement to the royalty tax credit in the case of amalgamations. Thirdly, it will require that claims for the royalty tax credit be filed within one year of the taxation year. As well, it will clarify other technical matters.

[Leave granted; Bill 101 read a first time]

Bill 98

**Hospitals and Medical Care Statutes
Amendment Act, 1983**

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 98, the Hospitals and Medical Care Statutes Amendment Act, 1983.

This is an omnibus Bill that provides pretty straightforward amendments to a number of Acts that fall under the responsibility of the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care. The Acts being amended are the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act, the Cancer Programs Act, the Health Facilities Review Committee Act, the Hospitals Act, the Provincial General Hospitals Act, and the University of Alberta Hospitals Act.

As I mentioned earlier, a number of the amendments are fairly straightforward. However, there are two that I think will be of particular interest to hon. members. I made reference to one earlier in the Legislature last week, when I said we would by legislation provide blanket authority to all hospitals in the province to go into the user fee program without the necessity of order in council. Secondly, there is fairly extensive legislation dealing with the establishment of hospital foundations, whereby moneys and property secured other than from the provincial government or user fees can be managed by way of properly established foundations.

[Leave granted; Bill 98 read a first time]

Bill 95
Municipal Government
Amendment Act, 1983 (No. 2)

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 95, the Municipal Government Amendment Act, 1983 (No. 2).

The purpose of this amendment is to bring conformity with a change of dates for municipal elections.

[Leave granted; Bill 95 read a first time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 95 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a response to Motion for a Return No. 194. As well, for the information of members, I wish to file details with regard to the Alberta personal income tax special reduction for low-income earners. Copies will be made available for all members of the Assembly.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table copies of the 1982-83 annual report of the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce the Social 30 class from Bow Island, some 21 students, along with two teachers and two other people. The class is in the public gallery with Mr. Brian Moen, Mr. Ernie Van Soest, and Randy and Shelley Cooper. I ask them to rise and the Assembly to welcome them.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of introducing to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 10 students from the grade 10 class of the Calgary Seventh-Day Adventist school, which is located in Banff-Cochrane, immediately adjacent to one of the sites of the 1988 Winter Olympics. They are accompanied by their principal, Mr. Caesar Nawalkowski; their pastor, Mr. Jim Burgess; and one of the student's parents, Mrs. Diana Clark. They are seated in the members gallery. Would they rise and receive the Assembly's welcome.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me today to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assem-

bly, Mr. Bob Hymas. He's from Rosebud, in the heart of the Drumheller constituency, the big country. Bob is chairman of our ADC board in the county of Wheatland No. 16. He is also a farmer member of the reclamation council for the Department of the Environment, and he is a director on our service board.

He is accompanied by his cousin, Mrs. Beverley Ellingson. Beverley happens to be the past chairman of the Block Parent Association for the city of Edmonton. They are seated in the members gallery, and I would like to ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Member for Edmonton Mill Woods, it is indeed a pleasure for me today to introduce the grades 5 and 6 classes from the Meyokumin school in the constituency of Edmonton Mill Woods. They are accompanied by their group leader, Mr. Ross Beggs. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

U of A Building Standards

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education. It's with respect to the safety of the Earth Sciences Building at the University of Alberta. Specifically, I ask the minister what assessment the government of Alberta has made, and the minister in particular, of the report prepared by Fairbairn Brinsmead and Ziola Architects, that indicates ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. If the hon. leader wants to know what assessment has been made of the building, that's fine. But as I have mentioned twice so far in the fall sittings, an assessment of a statement by somebody else is just a matter of argument, even if it's a report and by a very eminent authority. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition wishes to deal with a question of fact in relation to the building, then may I respectfully suggest that he get to that.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. That is precisely the question. I would say, sir, with the greatest of respect to you, that when you're dealing with a report which contains a number of things, it is totally appropriate to be able to cite the conclusion in the report that I want to determine whether or not the minister has had an opportunity to review, and to determine what the government is going to do about it. To be able to cite the conclusion in the report that is relevant is totally within order. I say to you, sir, that you are a little too quick on your feet on this particular score.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is entitled to his opinion. But if he wants to ask the government what action they're going to take with respect to something, that's quite different from what he asked.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, again on a point of order. That is precisely the question. The question is whether or not the minister has read the report, including the conclusion that the Earth Sciences Building represents a high potential risk to the life and safety of Alberta students and teaching body.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of the report which the hon. member has referred to. There may well be some differences of opinion as to the range of choices which

the government has with respect to renovations on that building. But over the past few months, I have said that this is one of the problems we face in Advanced Education, in terms of setting our capital budget priorities, wherein these buildings which require a fairly large amount of rehabilitation are in fact changing our order of capital priorities. It should be recognized that the province builds into the capital budget a formula for funding this sort of thing, rehabilitation.

None the less, while I didn't mean to give the hon. member a lesson on how we set our capital budgets, we are in fact aware of the imminent danger in that building. We're attempting to escalate our capital decisions right now, and we'd like to bring some money forward for the University of Alberta to initiate some planning work so that we can get on with that building. The other option, of course, Mr. Speaker — the renovation program as outlined in that budget suggests something in the order of \$60 million. It may well be that we have to consider the option of a new building.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. What contingency plans has the government in place, given the observation in the Fairbairn report that the Earth Sciences Building represents a hazard to Alberta students and teaching body?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I discussed the contingency plans which the board of governors of the university has put in place. It was my view that if the board of governors wanted to close the building, it was within their jurisdiction to do so, and they would have to find alternative space, whether it be by way of lease or changing the accommodation within the system itself. But the understanding I have from the University of Alberta is that the building is safe, at least over the next year or so, and they would like to occupy the building as they have now done since September 1983. I left it with them as to whether or not the risk is there.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, no choice because they have no money. But the question to the minister is: what assessment has the department made, and the minister in particular, of the safety of at least five other buildings that have been mentioned by the vice-president in charge of this particular aspect of university operations as posing potential danger to students and faculty?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, of course I can't comment on that factor. But I have already made a very broad statement in the House this afternoon, indicating that we're well aware that many of these buildings are becoming obsolete and that if in fact there is a risk there, we would like to assist the universities — not just the University of Alberta. It does set in place a different set of priorities in terms of our capital budget prospects. Of course, that has to be realized by all Albertans. The point is that we are now in the process of evaluating, via the department, which buildings on which campuses are of this order, and that report is coming to me very soon.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister then telling the House that additional funding would be made available for renovating those buildings which are considered to be hazardous and that that funding would be quite apart from the general fiscal policy announced by the Provincial Treasurer the other day in the House?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I can't give any commitment. But if I can find some measurement of the risk — and clearly

the government does not want to expand the risk to students going to a building which is obviously not appropriate for accommodation — then I will make that recommendation once I have that report in my hand.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Minister of Labour. What specific steps has the minister directed the building standards branch to undertake, to assess the safety of the buildings in question and to determine whether relevant building standards and codes are being complied with?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, quite apart from the potential that the university buildings may not be subject to the Uniform Building Standards Act, in the general case — and I cannot today recollect the names of the buildings — there has been communication between the respective officials and, I believe, some evaluation of the reports given. My problem today is that I do not recognize the building by the description given so far, and I am unable to identify for certain whether the communication I'm speaking of reflects on this particular building or on others in the past.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to either the Minister of Labour or the Minister of Advanced Education. Has any specific action been taken by the government of Alberta to assist the university in determining the safety of buildings, building by building, by having adequate inspection to determine whether or not the codes are being complied with?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, again I can reflect on an experience that stands very clearly in my mind, and that has to do with the incidence or possible incidence of asbestos in buildings. There was a very close working relationship between all the respective government officials who should have been involved and the university administration, to assure that those situations were handled with due care.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary on this topic.

MR. NOTLEY: Beyond the question of asbestos, what monitoring system is in place to ensure that there is compliance with building codes and that students and faculty are not put at unreasonable risk due to the capital restrictions of this government?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the buildings in question are very effectively under the responsibility or overview of the fire prevention regulations and fire regulations. Regardless of whether it is exercised directly through a joint committee of officials or through the relationship between fire marshals, whether of the municipality or the provincial government, and the university officers in question, those inspections do occur and those safeguards are in place.

Again I would call to the hon. member's attention the fact that in my earlier response, I indicated a close working relationship, on a shared basis, between several different departments in connection with asbestos. Mr. Speaker, I reiterate that that relationship, having been well identified and exercised in that case, is surely one which would prevail in other cases where there is cause for it to occur.

MR. NOTLEY: Well, that is certainly subject to debate.

Olympic Facilities Development

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pose the second question to the hon. Minister of the Environment, and it's with respect to Mount Allan. Given the authority in the Eastern Slopes policy concerning environmental impact assessments, can the minister inform the House why the government has chosen not to insist on an environmental impact assessment on Mount Allan?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, the matters of environmental impacts are going to be addressed within the master planning process for the development of the ski hill.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. That's nice, but the question is, why no EIA?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, within the responsibilities which have been assigned with regard to the Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act, the land managers who have responsibility with regard to the planning, et cetera, within the green slope area of the province are mandated within the Alberta Forest Service and the public lands division.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes. A supplementary question. Could the Minister of Recreation and Parks advise the Assembly whether any funds have been made available to enable the special committee for the review of wildlife and environmental matters to launch specific studies on the environmental impact of Olympic development, specifically as it relates to Mount Allan?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, we have a committee, under the chairmanship of Tom Mill of Alberta Energy and Natural Resources and with four people on it, that is responsible for environmental concerns of the public. That committee reports to the Olympic secretariat, which in turn reports to me. If the funds are necessary, they'll be funded through the Olympic secretariat fund.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Given the structure of the committee that the minister identified, could he advise why no representatives of environmental groups are on the committee as members, in view of the fact that it has a member from OCO?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, the committee of four people is set up, but we welcome the comments of anybody, whether they be from environmental groups or wherever.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Why would there not be any representation from these groups on the committee itself?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, the Eastern Slopes policy dictates very clearly what can be held within the Eastern Slopes. We have a committee, chaired by Mr. Tom Mill, with Environment, Recreation and Parks, and the Calgary Olympic Organizing Committee on it. As I said before, we welcome the comments of any group, environmentalist or otherwise, to talk to these people. So far, my understanding is that nobody has come forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary on this topic.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, can the minister advise the Assembly what consideration the government proposes to give to this weekend's recommendation by a broadly representative meeting of environmentalist groups, including the Fish & Game Association, that Mount Allan not be proceeded with, that it's not suitable for Olympic skiing, and that the venue should be changed?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of such a report.

Mortgage Foreclosures

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question was to the Minister of Housing, but I'll direct it to the Provincial Treasurer, the minister with Hilda's broom who is sweeping Albertans from their homes with his new ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, it's with regard to the statistics tabled on Friday by the Minister of Housing, which indicate that 1983 mortgage foreclosures have tripled over 1982. I want to know from the Provincial Treasurer whether the minister was aware of those statistics prior to or at the time of announcing the 13 per cent increase in personal income tax.

MR. HYNDMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Those statistics have been and are followed by the government and relevant departments from month to month. In balance, though, I would point out that that figure and those figures which were tabled by the hon. minister probably represent, I believe, less than .5 per cent of the total housing stock in the province.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the minister indicate what studies or what work has been done within the department with regard to other possible foreclosures in 1983 and the effect the 13 per cent tax increase will have?

MR. HYNDMAN: That would be a matter within the jurisdiction of the hon. minister.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Has the hon. Provincial Treasurer done any studies in other areas of our economy in Alberta, such as agriculture, business development, or housing — in which there doesn't seem to have been anything done — that indicate that the 13 per cent increase in personal income tax will not have adverse effects on those basic industries?

MR. HYNDMAN: One of the studies, Mr. Speaker, was of the impact of the heritage fund interest rate shielding program which, it was noted, has benefited 120,000 home-owners around the province. On a review of that, it was found that that has been of material assistance over the last 12 months and over many future months, in ensuring that those who are in homes have a better situation and have less to be concerned about than would otherwise be the case; in addition, of course, the studies which indicated that in retail sales, Alberta sales are the highest in the country; studies on disposable income, which indicated that family disposable income in Alberta is again the highest in the country. Those were three of a number of studies that were reviewed. [some applause]

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. The backbenchers can clap all

they want, pound their desks, but go out and ask Albertans how tough it is to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Let's get to the question.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister: what type of mechanism has the government in place to observe the impact of that 13 per cent increase in tax between now and next spring, when the 1984-85 budget is presented to this Legislature? Or are we again going to have a two-man decision . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. R. SPEAKER: . . . the Premier and the Provincial Treasurer deciding what tax increases.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. If the hon. member wishes to be recognized — and that goes for any other hon. member who asks questions — he's going to have to ask questions that are within the parameters of the question period.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question was within the parameters of the question period . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Part of it was.

MR. R. SPEAKER: . . . in terms of what mechanism is in place, but at a point in time there seemed to be a rather deaf ear . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. R. SPEAKER: On a point of order. I'd appreciate the question that has been placed being answered by the Provincial Treasurer. Beyond that point, if you wish me to withdraw certain remarks, then I'll accept that.

MR. SPEAKER: I don't think we should take up the time of the question period that would be required for me to analyse all the statements and decide which ones have to be withdrawn. The hon. members know what the parameters are; it has been stated over and over again. The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Teachers' Strikes

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Education. Can the minister inform this House if grants to the county of Lac Ste. Anne have been reduced due to the teachers' strike?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, grants are paid monthly to school boards in some cases and quarterly or twice yearly in other cases. But regardless of the kind of grant that is paid, it is the practice of the Department of Education to reduce the payment to any school board that has a strike on its hands. So I can assure the hon. member that grant payments to the county of Lac Ste. Anne will be reduced for the duration of the strike. It is the position of the government of Alberta that neither party should be in the position of benefiting indirectly from a strike and, for that reason, the grants are reduced while a strike is in progress.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Can the minister clarify for me what grants will be forthcoming to

the county of Lac Ste. Anne once the teachers' strike is settled, and will there be any retroactivity?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member is asking whether or not, after the strike finishes, payments retroactively covering the period of the strike would be made to the board. The answer is no. When the grant is reduced because teachers are on strike or locked out, that is not made up to the board after the strike is concluded. Money that is lost, is lost forever.

MR. PURDY: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Labour. Can the minister inform this House as to the outcome of the mediation talks that took place this weekend?

MR. YOUNG: Yes, Mr. Speaker. And regrettably, it won't take very long. The meetings this weekend, which were attended by members of the mediation staff of the Department of Labour, did not result in any kind of agreement and in fact did not result in a change of position of the respective parties.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Has the Minister of Labour any information on when both sides may get back together?

MR. YOUNG: No, Mr. Speaker, I do not have such information. The mediation staff have apprized both parties that they are ready and able to assist whenever called upon. In fact, they are taking the initiative to maintain contact to ensure that if there is any possibility, that would be explored.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Education. Could the minister inform the Assembly if these cutbacks when there is a strike have always been the case within the department? The total amount of teachers' salaries makes up about 75 per cent of the budget. Are they cut back to that percentage, or are they cut back a lesser amount?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I can't tell the House this afternoon when the practice began. I know that it has been the practice of this government for as long as I can remember, and I believe it was in the School Act prior to 1971.

The School Act provides that grants to boards may be reduced by as much as 75 per cent in the event of a strike or lockout. In each case, the field administration staff of the department calculates what would be an appropriate amount by which to reduce the grant so as to ensure that no party enjoys a financial benefit from the strike. Generally speaking, the reduction is by the amount of salaries that would be paid for instructional purposes. As I said a moment ago, the maximum by which grants can be reduced is 75 per cent of what is ordinarily payable.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary Foothills, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary Egmont.

MRS. KOPER: I'm sorry; I withdraw my question.

Northland School Division

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education. In June, assent was given to the Northland School Division Act. Were successful elections held this fall in all communities, and did any group boycott the elections?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, the outcome of the election in Northland School Division suggests that the new Act was very well

received by all the communities. There were contested elections in most of the 27 communities; there are boards in all 27. An organizational meeting will be held shortly to organize the business of Northland School Division. While boycotts were advocated in two or three of the communities, no boycott actually occurred in any community.

DR. CARTER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Have all the local communities appointed their chairmen, who then take their position with respect to the whole Northland School Division?

MR. KING: My information, Mr. Speaker, is that not all of the chairmen have been appointed as yet but that we expect that to happen very shortly. In any case, I will check on the most recent information and provide it to the hon. member in the House tomorrow.

DR. CARTER: A final supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister appointed the superintendent of schools, as provided for in the Act? If so, for what length of term?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, we have made an offer of employment to someone who was successful in the competition for employment. I am not sure that our offer has been accepted, and at this moment I would therefore decline to name the person to whom the offer was made. But again I'll check on the status of that and, when I am able, report to the House.

Rural Hospitals

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. I would just like to identify the report, which is very brief. The recent medical symposium, an authority that works for Touche Ross management consultants, was looking at rural hospitals in this province. My question is: can the minister indicate if there have been any studies done, when we look at rural hospitals, to find out if any padding has been done by medical doctors to make sure that the occupancy rate stays at a high level?

MR. RUSSELL: Well, I don't quite understand the question, Mr. Speaker. Because of the nature of the province and our geography, our rural hospital occupancy rates are generally substantially lower than those in urban areas.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister, for clarification. There has been some suspicion that, on the average, patients stay in rural hospitals longer than they do in city hospitals, so we can keep the occupancy rate at a higher level. I would like to know if the minister or the department has done any studies to find out if, in reality, that practice is in effect.

MR. RUSSELL: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we do have those statistics available annually, by ailment, type of treatment in each hospital, and the average length of stay for each one. Going by memory, I can't recollect any obvious aberration in the statistics.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the minister in a position to indicate if there is any correlation between the amount of occupancy in rural hospitals and the cost of rural hospitals, as opposed to the length of stay and cost in city hospitals?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, the unit cost in the urban hospitals is naturally much higher, however you want to measure

it, because of the broader array of services that are provided and the fact that they do tend to be regional referral centres as you go up through larger and larger communities. So the rural hospitals do have lower per bed and *per diem* operating costs.

The only other factor I can offer that may be of some help on the issue the hon. member is seeking information on, is that we do know that some of the rural hospitals are able to take in auxiliary patients and keep them in their own community, in beds which would otherwise be vacant in active hospitals.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to do with the accreditation of rural hospitals. Can the minister indicate if anything is being done to raise the level of accreditation by the Canadian Council of Hospital Accreditation? Right now, one in three rural hospitals is not accredited. Is that statistic going to increase, so we'll have more hospitals accredited, or is it still holding?

MR. RUSSELL: This may surprise the hon. member, but I've advised several boards not to be too concerned if they lose their accreditation for a period of time, as long as they're convinced they're providing good health care services to the citizens of their community. Hospitals can lose accreditation for a variety of reasons and, notwithstanding that, still be providing excellent health care to the citizens. So I'm not overly concerned if a hospital loses its accreditation.

Pediatric Cardiac Care

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Would the minister advise if the final report on open heart and cardiovascular services in Alberta, as submitted to this government in May 1983 by EHE Ottawa Limited, has been turned over to the Edmonton area hospitals planning commission for review?

MR. RUSSELL: Yes it has, Mr. Speaker, and also to the Calgary regional committee, as far as I know.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister prepared to say why it took from May to October to determine the necessity of turning it over to the hospitals planning commission?

MR. RUSSELL: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: That's a rather amazing answer. A supplementary question. Has the minister put an urgent time frame on the review by the Edmonton area hospitals planning commission and the Calgary area planning commission? If not, will he do so now?

MR. RUSSELL: Well, I suppose I could do that, Mr. Speaker. So far we haven't found it necessary to give those commissions that kind of direction. If I had some idea as to the nature of the specific concern the member has, perhaps I could pass it on to the commissions.

MR. MARTIN: I'll be glad to give it to the minister after.

A supplementary question. The report considers urging the development of one special pediatric cardiovascular centre for Alberta. My question is: what consideration has the minister given to these recommendations, in light of the number of children and babies we fly to Toronto and points in the United States for heart surgery?

MR. RUSSELL: Some months ago, Mr. Speaker, the University of Alberta hospital board had approved plans and funding for a pediatric intensive care unit specifically for cardiac surgery patients. They haven't been able to implement that plan because of other problems they're having in that part of the building, but they're prepared to go ahead with the physical alterations at the earliest possible date. They also have on hand the funding to fill the position for the specialist that's needed. The position has been vacant for some time, since Dr. Fortune left, but I understand it will be filled within a few months.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to have a chat with the minister about things that are happening over there. But has any assessment been made to determine the cost of sending children on special jets to centres outside Alberta for treatment? We understand they're occurring at a rate of about 300 a year.

MR. RUSSELL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I traditionally table the costs of our air ambulance program annually in the Assembly, and those figures will be made available to hon. members. It's always been the pattern that if service is not available here in Alberta, the patient, whatever age, will be flown or transported to where it can be received.

MR. MARTIN: One final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the minister's previous answers, when will the minister announce the go-ahead on a children's heart surgery centre for Alberta?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I thought I tried to outline for the hon. member the steps that have been approved. As far as I know, no one has yet defined, other than by way of personal observation, what a pediatric cardiac centre might be. If it essentially involves a new, free-standing unit, that would be very difficult to proceed with at the present time. I'm assured that the things that are already in existence and the projects that have been approved for the go-ahead will serve the citizens of Alberta very well.

Public Service Transfers

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister responsible for Personnel Administration. Can the minister advise the House if a policy exists to provide for members of the public service to transfer to positions in another department when such positions become vacant in one department and perhaps are not needed in another?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Ponoka raises the question at a very important time in Alberta's history. We have procedures and recruitment policies in Personnel that provide for redeployment of people to other positions. Where suitable and qualified, and training is adequate, they can also be moved to other positions in other departments.

MR. JONSON: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In light of the previous answer, could the minister advise the House whether, given that all things are equal, so to speak, priority is given to existing members of the public service?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, the Public Service Act and the procedures of departments that have been delegated the responsibility to carry out recruitment and selection, require that wherever possible the most suitable candidate is selected but that preference be given to in-service candidates, which I think is

very important in these times of rewarding good performance and productivity.

MR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Could the minister assure this House that all departments in government are aware of this policy?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that Central Personnel meets regularly with representatives from other departments, and all policies are reviewed from time to time. I would be assured, of course, that deputy ministers, reporting to each minister, are aware of this obligation that is set out in the legislation.

Foreign Investment

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Minister of Economic Development. It relates to a report he tabled in the House the other day on Alberta's largest manufacturing industry, the processed food industry. The minister states that foreign investment is not only welcomed but encouraged. Could the minister advise the Assembly what progress has been made with regard to reviewing or changing the Foreign Investment Review Act, to encourage such investments coming into Alberta?

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, I only wish I could.

MR. GOGO: In view of that, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister could tell us whether the government is reviewing the current policy of not providing grants to industry to establish in Alberta, so they may compete more effectively with other provinces.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, we are participants in the Nutritive Processing Agreement, which does in fact give incentive funding for food processing within a certain distance from the two metropolitan centres, and that has just been renewed for another year. Aside from that we have no policy to give grants and, as far as I know, are not contemplating one.

MR. GOGO: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Why not?

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I think it's important that people who invest in Alberta know that in whatever market they intend to service when they invest 100-cent dollars, there won't subsequently be someone investing 50-cent dollars in the same market. Secondly, it seems to me that the very best kind of diversification activity we can have here is one that has a natural advantage for being here. We do, however, remain concerned about being competitive jurisdictionally, and so we are constantly reviewing that issue.

Ombudsman

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Attorney General, the Government House Leader, is with regard to the selection of a new Ombudsman or the extension of the present Ombudsman's term. Could the hon. House leader indicate whether a legislative committee will be struck to select a new Ombudsman during this session of the Legislature?

MR. CRAWFORD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps I could take the opportunity to deal briefly with what would be two or three of the issues involved. Because of the deliberations of the Legislative Offices Committee, I am aware that some thought

has been given to what all members know is a statutory obligation, prior to April of next year, to deal with the question of a successor for the present Ombudsman.

If not in the course of the committee deliberations, at least in the course of conversations — which I don't think Dr. Ivany would wish me not to refer to today; I think he'd be quite willing to have that — the question of an extension has come up. In order that hon. members will know the intention of the government, a short extension, which I discussed with him, will be proposed. That will require an amendment to legislation because, according to the present Act, the term is strictly five years.

I don't know what other hon. members will think of that, but it would seem to me that it could be considered by many people that both the work of the committee which has to seek a successor and the wrapping up of certain obligations which I know Dr. Ivany has undertaken as Ombudsman, would be aided by about a three- or four-month extension. Then the work of the committee that would be established would be precisely as the hon. member suggests, that of receiving applications from all interested and qualified persons.

Appeal Examinations

MR. McPHERSON: Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Education. Has the department decided whether or not appeal examinations will be provided in March for students who have failed or are not satisfied with their performance in the January examinations?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, the department has given the matter very careful thought. I have discussed the matter with officials of the department, and it has been my decision that we will not provide appeal examinations in March. I might observe to Members of the Legislative Assembly that it is estimated that each appeal exam that might be set, offered, and marked in March would cost in the order of \$100,000.

MR. SPEAKER: I believe the hon. Minister of Education wishes to deal further with a question that was asked earlier in the question period.

Northland School Division (continued)

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, in answer to an earlier question, I am able to advise that the office of superintendent of Northland School Division has been offered to someone currently employed by Northland School Division, Mr. Frank Blonke. He has accepted the offer of employment and takes office as superintendent of Northland School Division on November 1, tomorrow.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (Second Reading)

Bill 81 Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 1983

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move second reading today of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 1983. In so doing, I would like to review several principles of the Bill; then, in closing the debate, answer any questions

that might be raised by members of the Assembly during second reading debate.

Most members will of course be aware that the purpose of the Electoral Boundary Commission, once it has been appointed — and such appointment, incidentally, occurs in the first session after every second provincial general election — is to make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly as to the areas, boundaries, and names of all the electoral divisions in the province.

As I indicated briefly when I introduced the Bill last week, Mr. Speaker, there are, I suppose, three key principles in this Bill, the first of which proposes to increase the number of constituencies in the province, or the number of electoral divisions, from 79 to 83. Outside the House, some of the members have expressed an interest in the reasoning behind the proposed increase in the number of electoral divisions. Simply stated, this proposal reflects the change in population and distribution of population in the province. If I could, I'd like to illustrate to the members that are here this afternoon just what is happening to the province's population.

In the eight years that have elapsed since the last electoral commission was appointed, the population of the province has increased, in round numbers, 500,000 or half a million, from 1.8 million to 2.3 million. It's felt that such a dramatic increase, half a million new Albertans over that eight-year period, more than justifies the addition of four new electoral divisions.

Mr. Speaker, the second principle in the Bill changes the composition of the Electoral Boundary Commission. As I indicated during my brief remarks at introduction, as a consequence of this provision, there will be three government members and one opposition member in the group of four members of the Assembly on the seven-member commission. Not unexpectedly, the Leader of the Opposition has publicly raised, outside the House, his own scepticism as to the merits of this proposal. I would not be surprised to hear such an argument raised again this afternoon and certainly welcome an opportunity to discuss his arguments, such as they may be.

I realize, Mr. Speaker, that when one in the House uses a word like "fairness", it's a highly subjective word and, in itself, engenders debate. But it is the argument of fairness that I would like to advance today. It certainly was the view of the government caucus — and it's a view that I am more than prepared to support — that in view of the fact that 95 per cent of the constituencies of this province are represented by government members, it's only fair that at least 75 per cent of the Legislative Assembly members of the commission be representatives of the government party.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to mention that one important appointment will be the appointment of a citizen-at-large and would like to acquaint members today with the fact that the citizen-at-large is appointed by the Speaker — by yourself, sir — after consultation with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of changes proposed, both to the number and the designation of urban and rural ridings. Bill 81, which is before us this afternoon, proposes that there will be 42 urban ridings and 41 rural ridings. I would like to take this opportunity to explain the changes. Currently, of course, we have 79 electoral divisions, of which 43 are designated urban, and 36 are designated as rural. Within the 43 urban designations, there are Camrose, Drumheller, Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Wetaskiwin, and St. Albert, each with one member of the legislature; Lethbridge with two; Edmonton with 18, including Sherwood Park; and Calgary with 16. That's in the present statute.

Under the proposed legislation, as I mentioned previously, we'll have 42 urban constituencies, and a total of 41 rural constituencies, as follows: the city of Medicine Hat, the city of St. Albert, and the hamlet of Sherwood Park, each with one constituency; the city of Lethbridge and the city of Red Deer, each with two constituencies; the city of Edmonton with 17; and the city of Calgary with 18.

To summarize the changes in designation, the constituencies of Drumheller, Grande Prairie, Camrose, and Wetaskiwin will no longer be designated as urban constituencies but as rural constituencies. Sherwood Park will continue to be designated as urban but it will be, if you like, an urban, stand-alone constituency, whereas before it was considered one of the city of Edmonton's constituencies. As a consequence, Edmonton will now have 17 constituencies but, as I've explained, that is because under this provision Sherwood Park will no longer be considered an Edmonton riding.

In this Bill, Calgary has been increased from 16 constituencies to 18; Red Deer has gone from one to two; and somewhere in the province, a new rural riding will be established. Another change that I would like to draw to members' attention is section 18(2) on page 3, item 7 of the Bill, which will now allow part of an urban municipality to be included in a rural electoral division. But this does not affect the cities of Calgary or Edmonton.

With that brief review of these key principles in Bill 81, Mr. Speaker, I would now indicate to members who are in the House this afternoon that I welcome their comments and, when it's time for me to conclude the debate, hopefully I'll be able to answer the questions that might be raised during debate.

Thank you.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in leading off the debate on what I think is one of the worst pieces of legislation that this government has had the gall to try to inflict on the Legislative Assembly, let me say at the outset that I think that before we examine in detail this cut-and-paste job, we should perhaps ask ourselves what we are doing when we go through the process of redistribution.

Mr. Speaker, as one looks at the history of redistribution in this country — and it's obvious that this government instead of looking ahead is looking back — one finds that there has been partisanship over and over again. Our first prime minister, a Tory not surprisingly, used to talk about redistribution in very cynical terms. He would talk about hiving the Grits. In those days, the process by which ridings were determined was a very partisan process. The Conservatives happened to form a majority in the House of Commons. Without any embarrassment, they used that majority in a way to make it more difficult for the opposition party.

As one looks south of the border, we also have the practices of certain American politicians — whether it be state leaders, city mayors, or politicians wherever — who have developed the art of gerrymandering. As a matter of fact, gerrymandering is named after — don't be defensive, Mr. Speaker; it really has nothing to do with you — a particularly skilled practitioner of the art.

While the Tories have developed that particular art in Canada, as we moved into the 20th century more and more Canadians began to argue the case that redistribution should be done in a non-partisan way. Not all politicians agreed with that, but there was a growing consensus that we should move away from blind partisanship to find some kind of independent method by which we redraw the boundaries. So, Mr. Speaker, in the House of Commons we found both the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party gradually recognizing that the process

of redistribution would be better handled by independent authorities, independent commissions, independent boundary review boards — call them what you like — that we should in fact take partisan politics out of the process of drawing boundaries.

It is interesting to chart the change in the position of this Conservative Party in the province of Alberta. In 1969 when changes were made in the method by which electoral boundaries were drawn, we had various members of the then opposition stand up and say in firm ways that the government of the day was attempting to gerrymander, was injecting partisanship into the method by which the boundaries were drawn. As a matter of fact, when one looks back — we didn't have *Hansard* in those days, but we do have press reports — some of the comments made by former Deputy Premier Dr. Horner were particularly dramatic, effective, and loud.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, whatever one would say about the shortcomings of the process in 1969, there were a couple of important principles contained in the method by which boundaries were drawn. The former government recognized that we should have some independent people. That's why we have a judge; that's why we normally have the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly; that's why we have people who are outside the political realm. But as I recall the debate at the time, the argument was presented that perhaps there's some argument in having politicians on the boundary commission, people who as elected members actually have to deal with the difficulties of serving constituents, so such things as natural boundaries would be taken into account.

What occurred in 1969 was the recognition that if you're going to have politicians participating in the process, then that participation should be on an equal basis. So the legislation made provision for two members who would be appointed by the Premier, and two members from the opposition: one member from the Official Opposition and the other from the next largest opposition party. The principle was that if you were going to even appear to be fair, then there should be parity between the opposition and the government.

Mr. Speaker, in introducing this particular Bill, the hon. minister talked about the 95 per cent representation the government has in the Legislature. But of course the same argument could have been made in 1969. At that time the Social Credit Party had an overwhelming majority in the Legislature. But they took the view, and it was a proper view, that if politicians were going to participate in this process — even though they could have used the same kind of reasoning we have from the hon. cabinet minister today, they said: no, we will have parity; if we're going to bring politicians into the process, then we will bring them into the process in such a way that not only is there fairness but there appears to be fairness.

In 1976 when we decided to redraw the boundaries — and that was after the mandate of 1975 — the government followed that particular precedent, and properly so. I happened to sit on that particular commission. We had some difficult decisions to make. Nevertheless those decisions were made in a spirit of co-operation; they were made, I think, with a blending of the sort of practical knowledge of sitting MLAs on both sides. Both the Member for Little Bow and I happened to sit on that commission, along with the hon. member at that time from Wetaskiwin-Leduc and the now Minister of Education. I think that the practical knowledge that the members of the Legislature had, complemented by the impartiality of the other people on the commission, allowed us collectively to produce a report which by and large was accepted by the political process in this province. Of course not everybody totally agreed with it,

but when you go through something like redistribution you're always going to have some differences. But by and large the report was accepted, because there was an element of fairness in the process — parity between the opposition and the government — and also the fact that you had the blending of people who were active politicians with those who weren't.

Mr. Speaker, what do we have in this Bill? We have the rules being changed, the rug being pulled out from under the democratic process. We have, if you like, a going back to the good old days. I'm not sure if the minister is a mystic, if he's trying to sort of borrow from Mackenzie King's efforts to look into the past. I almost wonder if he isn't going to a medium someplace, so he can talk to Sir John A. Macdonald and get advice from Sir John A. on how to hivy the opposition. When you read a Bill like this, you wonder. All of a sudden, instead of parity between the government and opposition, we now have three government members and one opposition member.

I have heard some absolutely ridiculous arguments advanced by members of the government caucus who are attempting to explain this outrageous assault on democracy. One is that there are now fewer opposition members. Well, not many fewer; in 1975 there were only six members in the opposition. But at that time the government properly decided that there should be two members. It's interesting, Mr. Speaker. The member introducing the Bill used his arithmetic on the number of members elected in the Legislative Assembly and forgot the popular vote. If we take a look at the popular vote, the Conservative Party had a stronger popular vote in 1975 than they did in 1982. But in 1975 the members of the then caucus were fair enough — or perhaps not so completely arrogant — that even though they had a slightly larger mandate from the people of Alberta, they said: no, it's going to be parity between government members and the opposition.

MR. MARTIN: They've lost their idealism.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, there's no question about idealism lost and crass politics inserted; no question about that at all.

We now have a government that comes to this Assembly and says: despite the fact that we represent a smaller percentage of the popular vote than we did in 1975, despite the fact that the rest of Canada has been moving to a more equitable method of redrawing boundaries, we, in our unbridled arrogance, in our insufferable tendency to want to do everything in a controlled, rigid way — big government as determined by that closed caucus — are going to change the rules of the game.

When the hon. minister introduced the Bill he was cheerful enough. He tried to put a nice face on this kind of retrogressive, shameful practice. I can well imagine that the hon. minister is the kind of person — if the government really gets into trouble, I certainly would recommend to the Premier that they have the hon. minister try to get them out, because he can put a good face on the most outrageous proposition. Mind you, the hon. minister may have quite a career in this government, because there are so many outrageous propositions being presented now. Nevertheless, I certainly give him credit for skill in public relations, although I gather that's his field. It certainly is a skill this government is going to have to call on more and more.

Mr. Speaker, in contrast to the blatant partisanship which characterizes this caucus's effort to redraw the boundaries, let's look at other provinces. In Saskatchewan, even under a Conservative government, their commission consists of a chairman, appointed by the Chief Justice of the province, not appointed by the Premier; the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly — that makes eminent good sense, and I just mention in passing that

one of the most effective members of the commission in 1976 was our present Clerk — and a resident of the province, appointed by the Speaker after consultation with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. Here you have a three-person commission that includes the Clerk, one person-at-large, and the chairman is appointed by the Chief Justice. That's an equitable system.

Let's look at Manitoba. In that province the commission consists of the Chief Justice of Manitoba, the president of the University of Manitoba, and the Chief Electoral Officer. Again, Mr. Speaker, nobody could quarrel with the competence or fairness of those people. Even Ontario — and I don't like to use Ontario as an example of equitability, but compared to this government it certainly is, although I understand that since they have their majority, they're playing around with the rules too; but then they are Tories. In any event, the commission presently consists of the Chief Electoral Officer, a Supreme Court judge, and a professor from an acknowledged university; in the last redistribution it was a professor from Western university.

Mr. Speaker, I use those as three examples of provinces where we have attempted to move beyond partisanship. I think that even acknowledging the examples I've cited, the legislation we had in place in Alberta would have been acceptable had we maintained the ratio of government and opposition members. If that had been continued in this Act, then I think most people in Alberta would have been able to say, well, they're making an effort.

In 1969 when this matter first arose, I recall that the Alberta legislation was referred to as semi-independent, because we had a blending of people from the public domain who weren't politicians, with practising politicians. But at least we had the equitable ratio between government and opposition members. Frankly, I would say that if the caucus had chosen the same structure for the commission, we as the Official Opposition would certainly have been prepared to support it; the Independents would have to speak for themselves. I think most Albertans would have supported that kind of commission and seen it as an equitable way of redrawing constituency boundaries. But I really doubt that many people are going to see this particular Bill as being at all equitable or fair. So over the next several days, as we discuss the Bill, and we will have an opportunity to discuss it in some detail, we will be making that point.

Mr. Speaker, I want to come back to that central principle, but before I do so there are some other aspects of the legislation that I find rather strange; strange is about the kindest word I can use to look at this legislation and analyse it in any way. For example, we have the urban ridings set out here: Medicine Hat, St. Albert, the hamlet of Sherwood Park, two members from the city of Lethbridge, two from the city of Red Deer, 17 from Calgary, 18 from Edmonton. But where is Fort McMurray? Fort McMurray is a city. Are the minister and the government caucus going to tell the people of Fort McMurray that they're not a city, that they shouldn't be considered an urban riding? We have the hamlet of Sherwood Park defined as an urban riding; why not the city of Fort McMurray? As a matter of fact, when one looks at the population, St. Albert has 32,982, Fort McMurray 33,576, a population larger than the city of St. Albert. I think the city of St. Albert should be an urban riding; I have no quarrel with that at all. But to suggest that Fort McMurray should not be an urban riding is completely outrageous.

As a matter of fact, I recall the concerns that were brought to our attention during the public hearings in 1976. I don't know whether or not the Minister of Education was at the caucus meeting. The former member from Wetaskiwin isn't in the

caucus any more, so he probably couldn't enlighten the other members as to some of the discussions that took place in 1976 in the commission. The idea that we are going to have a situation where we have Fort McMurray and then a huge expanse of territory on top of that, makes it almost impossible to service in any sort of reasonable way. Frankly, I think we have to look at the particular problems of northeastern Alberta, and north-western Alberta too, in terms of special ridings that might have substantially smaller populations. To lump Lac La Biche and Fort McMurray and all the communities stretching right up to Fort Smith represents a problem for any commission that has to examine it, but more important than anything else, it's not fair to the people of that part of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the government caucus was when they didn't even define . . . I would consider it an insult to the people in the city of Fort McMurray that it's not considered an urban riding. That is possibly sloppy thinking on the part of the government caucus or sloppy draftsmanship, or perhaps both, but I think it is really quite unacceptable.

I want to come back, Mr. Speaker, to what I think is the central issue. What are we going to be doing? If our democratic society is to meet the challenges it faces in an increasingly complex society, there are certain ground rules that must be followed. One of the most important is that the way in which popular will is translated into power is done in an equitable manner. That's why it's important that the method by which we determine the boundaries of ridings be completely impartial and fair to the best of our ability. What we're doing in this legislation, instead of looking forward, instead of building on the efforts in Canada and in the United States — we couldn't even get away with this in the United States, because the Supreme Court would strike it down; it's so completely outrageous. In Canada we will probably be able to undertake redistribution in this kind of blatant, partisan manner, but it's not right. It's not correct that we should do so.

As I have mentioned, over generations and decades we've begun to move to a more equitable method of dealing with this problem. In this province, we had in place a system which was workable. In this Bill, we're being asked to throw that principle out the window and go to the position where there are three Tories and only one opposition member. Mr. Speaker, 62 per cent of the vote provincially gives them 75 per cent of the MLA members of this committee. It's sure the application of the winner-take-all approach. But more important, it's the erosion of the fairness and the equitability, equitability that must be part and parcel of any sort of redistribution system.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know the government's motives for doing this. It may well be that some of the backbenchers are getting a little restless. Maybe the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry wants something to do and would like to sit on this commission; that's nice. But I would think that the claims of all these Tory backbenchers who want to participate in the commission — if they do — could be rationalized within two appointments by the Premier as opposed to three, and we would maintain the equal ratio between government and opposition.

In reviewing the arguments of the hon. minister, I find that there is just no reason at all for this change". The popular vote was lower in 1982 than it was in 1975, so that argument can't be used. The tendency right across the country and throughout the world has been to move to fairness and equity, so why are we flying in the face, of what is happening elsewhere in the country? If you look at the standards in other provinces, Mr. Speaker, why are we doing this? I wonder if we do not have a sort of secret ambition on the part of the minister over there to be the Maurice Duplessis of Alberta, a 'Paynemaker'.

MR. R. SPEAKER: It's funny but it's not funny.

MR. NOTLEY: It's tragic in this day and age, in 1983 . . .

MR. MARTIN: Close to 1984.

MR. NOTLEY: Yes, close to 1984. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the commission will start its work in 1984. If George Orwell were still alive, we could have him come and give us a send-off. Let me tell you, this is the kind of frightening legislation that is symptomatic of what is wrong with this government. What are they afraid of with fairness? What are they worried about? Are they worried that equal representation from the opposition is somehow going to sweep away all these seats? No, surely not. Why change? Why change the structure? Give me one good reason to change, other than a determination to go back to the old patronage-ridden way of doing things.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, as the hon. minister goes to his meeting and talks to Sir John A. Macdonald, I'm sure they'll have a good chat because Sir John would be proud. He would say: my boy, you're following in my footsteps; I could hive the Grits; you can attempt to hive what we have of an opposition in Alberta; follow in my footsteps; I'm proud of you. But I don't think that members of this caucus should be proud of this kind of legislation. So during the course of the next few days, we will have an opportunity to spend some time assessing all the implications. It would not be correct to rush into this, because if we're going to throw democracy out the window, bring back and impose on Alberta partisanship and Duplessis-style government, then I think we're going to have to take some time to assess all the implications of that kind of blind Tory approach to snuffing out democracy, trampling on fairness, dismissing the public's desire for equity, in the process of changing the boundaries.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say at this point — there may be other observations later on, no doubt, by some of my colleagues in opposition — that the Bill that we have before us is bad in principle; we intend to vote against it. It is a shameful piece of legislation. If I were a Tory backbencher, I would be cringing at the thought of having the whip placed on me to vote for this kind of legislation. If there is any fleeting sense of fairness left in this caucus, if there's any concern about a little candle of democracy, then they shouldn't, with a gust from 74 members, attempt to blow it out. I say to the members of this House, there is no reason to press ahead with this particular legislation as it stands. Bill 81 is wrong. I say in as friendly a way as I can to my fellow members of the House, before you do something that you're going to regret — gerrymandering never really pays off — think carefully about what you're doing.

In 1969 the Thatcher government in Saskatchewan brought in changes in the boundaries which were just outrageous, and it contributed to the defeat of that government in 1971. I happened to be in the province in 1971 and knew that the way in which the boundaries were drawn and the sense of public outrage about the unfairness of those boundaries was a factor in what happened when the government was defeated in 1971. I'm not suggesting that by itself it's going to lead to the defeat of the government. But I am suggesting that part of a decline for any regime is the perception among the people that we have politicians who don't care, politicians who are so mad and drunk with their own desire for power that they increasingly centralize control. As they do that, Mr. Speaker, they get farther and farther removed from the grass roots. We have a government — with their first-class airline style, with sand to match the mountains, with cedar-clad toilets, and all the rest of it — that is somehow getting out of step with the grass roots.

AN HON. MEMBER: No jeans.

MR. NOTLEY: Yes, as the hon. member quite properly points out, we won't allow people with blue jeans in Kananaskis, the people's park. We have a government, Mr. Speaker, that is losing touch. As an opposition politician, I'll tell you that if they carry on this way — keep up the good work, politically; no question about that.

I want to tell you that this kind of tactic is wrong in principle. I know members of the caucus don't like people telling them that; they only like to hear good news. They only like to hear someone come in and say: oh sure, three to one; isn't that nice? They don't like to hear someone quote what they said about fairness and equity when they were in opposition in 1967, 1968, 1969, and 1970. They don't like any of that at all; they just like to hear good news.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is not good news to the people of Alberta. This Bill deserves to be defeated by the Assembly and, if it's not defeated by the Assembly, the people should defeat the MLAs who have so little sense of regard for democracy that they are prepared to try to fix the rules to determine the boundaries in the next general election.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could briefly speak to the hon. gentleman's case. It's somewhat specious. I wonder if I could refer to a couple of comments. We're speaking in debate on the principles on second reading, and the gentleman suggests that the principles that we're adopting in the representation of the electorate in the Legislature are somehow unfair or inequitable. I think those were the comments he made. I'd like to make the case that last time — and I suggest probably this time, as well — the Electoral Boundary Commission demonstrated fairness in providing certain northern or rural constituencies with a population base much smaller than the average in the province. It's fair to say that in the last election, in the report of the Chief Electoral Officer, the hon. gentleman's own constituency had 9,476 electors. The Member for Little Bow had 8,168. I don't think there's any suggestion on the government's side that we're going to tamper with that. The principle is simply that rural and remote ridings should be balanced off; they should have extra opportunities to have representation as opposed to, say, a city riding.

In my case, the constituency of Edmonton Glengarry is a little smaller than many of the others in the city of Edmonton, but we have almost twice as many electors. The hon. Member for Calgary McCall has almost twice as many as I do. The point being made is simply this: some of the northern and rural ridings do deserve extra consideration and, in striking this committee, there's been no suggestion on the government's side that that would not continue to be the case. If the hon. member wishes to follow the American example, as he was citing in his debate, his riding would disappear. That's not going to happen, because this government, this Legislature, has seen the wisdom of the argument that remote, sparsely populated areas deserve to be represented in the Assembly. If we slavishly followed the principles that the hon. Leader of the Opposition set out, we would have the effect of doing exactly the opposite of what he suggests is desirable. Somehow there is not a logical congruence in the hon. leader's thinking. I'm looking forward, in committee study, to his suggestions of how he would accomplish the objective of representing northern and remotely populated areas while slavishly sticking to the one-man, one-vote principle he was suggesting in his debate.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, if I might have the opportunity to respond and speak to the issue of Bill 81. I might indicate that

I certainly was not going to comment on Bill 81 but, in view of the remarks expressed by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Spirit River-Fairview, it would only be fair that I come forth with a few comments.

I would particularly like to state that I am in a very difficult position, representing the largest geographical constituency in Alberta, some 53,000 square miles. There is some concern, as mentioned by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, with regard to the city of Fort McMurray being excluded as an urban constituency. I've heard some remarks expressed just a little earlier here about the second largest. I'd clarify and ask the hon. member to check his statistics; it is the largest in Alberta. I emphasize that with the population in the city of Fort McMurray being some 34,500, it would be very difficult to try to separate this particular constituency and allocate it as an urban constituency, in view of the fact that some of the communities — and I refer to them as remote and rural communities — would not be serviceable from other areas. In particular, I refer to such communities as Fort MacKay, Janvier, Chip Lake, Garden River, Anzac and Fort Chipewyan. These communities are more readily accessible from the city of Fort McMurray. In some cases, they are isolated and do not have such things as winter roads, but air connections and travel are best serviced from the community of Fort McMurray.

I am sure that the hon. member's remarks would not reflect on my ability to represent the area as M.L.A. I've always felt that being a full-time M.L.A., I could devote time to the major city of Fort McMurray and to Lac la Biche. Mr. Speaker, I've never said that because I live in one particular part of the riding, I would not try to be a representative of all the areas. I've always felt that one cannot help where they live, but if they look upon their duties and reflect on why they were elected, certainly that's what they're there for and would try to do to the best of their ability.

I'm very concerned with the remarks with regard to the number of constituencies that should be changed in 1983 in Bill 81, the Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act. If we were to listen to what the general public had to say, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure they would probably suggest there should only be 30 or 40 M.L.A.s, not the number so indicated. I support the fact that the city of Fort McMurray should continue to be a rural riding, and it should have representation, especially in view of the government's endeavors in regard to decentralization. I think that's important to note as we move some of the government services, which I think citizens of some areas, particularly the rural areas of Alberta, have been entitled to for many years. That's happening only now in government departments and agencies. We see it happening in communities like Athabasca, Barrhead, and others. Certainly that brings forth the need and the demand to have an M.L.A. representing those areas. While that is happening, I certainly believe that we should encourage the committee to review all aspects, the geographical and physical needs of both the M.L.A. and the communities that are being looked at.

I suggest that there is no intent of impropriety on behalf of the government, Mr. Speaker, to delete, as was suggested, the numbers on the committee. I would therefore support the passing of Bill 81 in second reading.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, the St. Albert population is over 35,000; he may wish to update his figures.

I would like to relate a few views that have been voiced to me over the past few months regarding Electoral Boundary Commission appointments and decisions. The St. Albert constituency currently comprises a population equal to an average

urban constituency plus an average rural constituency, if you total all those totals that we have today. The population increase over the last number of years has been dramatic. In fact, since I was nominated in 1978, there has been a 25 per cent increase in the population. In the last provincial election, there were approximately 35,000 eligible voters.

Not only has this constituency been a growth area; it's also a very diversified constituency. It has the city of St. Albert, from which it takes its name; the town of Morinville; the town of Bon Accord; the town of Gibbons; the village of Legal; the major portion of the MD of Sturgeon; a small bit of the county of Parkland; a small part of the MD of Westlock; and the city of Edmonton that was included in the annexation area, in addition to the Alexander Indian Reserve and a number of institutional types of areas to represent: the Namao air force base, Alberta Hospital, and a few other institutions that require additional time of a member representing this area.

The legislation sets out a directive to establish an urban electoral division for the constituency of St. Albert. Taking the city of St. Albert out of this large and diversified constituency, leaves a population larger than that of the Leader of the Opposition and larger than the leader of the Independents. But that's not my concern, because the commission will have to deal with the electoral boundary divisions across this entire province. I do not pretend to be an expert or to try to take away any of the initiative that we have to pass on to that commission. We recognize that it is extremely complex and that they have a very difficult task ahead of them: to look at boundary divisions that are fair and that will give the best form of representation to all Albertans.

I would like to pass on several comments that have been expressed to me over the last number of months, particularly from residents who feel very strongly about electoral boundaries. I would ask, request, implore, or whatever, that the commission give serious consideration to the relationship of communities within a trading area and, secondly, within an employment area. In addition, I would particularly ask that the commission give serious consideration to growth potential within a new electoral boundary area. In this way, we will not get the serious representational distortions that we have in several constituencies that currently exist.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, I would support the establishment of the city of St. Albert as an electoral [division]; it has a fair population. I would also ask that the commission seriously consider the two concerns that I have raised with you this afternoon.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. minister . . .

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I think that would be letting the minister off a little too easy. First of all, I want to say that I have been on the last two boundary commissions that have decided the boundaries of the various constituencies across the province. I want to say that each of those experiences was a very objective experience, attempting to rationalize rural area versus population versus areas of population growth. I don't recall any incident or experience where I felt there was any type of political manipulation going on. The communication between the Leader of the Opposition; the government members on the committee; the judge who sat as chairman of the committee; the citizen appointed, from Calgary, I believe; the Clerk of the Legislature — all looked at their responsibility in a very objective and responsible way. I was well satisfied with that experience. Whether or not I had been on the committee, I would have had to support the decisions that came therefrom.

We had a very difficult decision in the last revision in terms of eliminating one rural seat in the province of Alberta. We looked at the area in the eastern part of Alberta and finally decided that because of the population, we were able to redistribute and eliminate one of the constituencies: a very difficult task, not an easy one. Nobody really wanted to make that decision, but the interaction between the members of the committee took place; we came up with the recommendation. There was some concern after the recommendation became public, but we could sit on the committee — and even as a member of the committee I could go back to my colleagues in my caucus and say: we made the decision; here are the reasons; here is the way the population was distributed in that area, and we had to come up with that decision. I remember the leader of our party at that time, Bob Clark, said: I guess if that's the way it has to be done, we'll have to support it. We were getting a barrage of phone calls and letters from that vicinity of Chinook, Drumheller, Hanna, and further north of that area, from people saying: why did that happen; why did the Conservatives do that to us; why did Mr. Lougheed get involved in the process? We were able to say that it was the decision of an objective committee. It worked well.

About a year and a half or two years ago I attended a meeting in Cardston. The speaker at the event was the chairman of the board of Esso Canada, and the topic of his speech was, if something works, why change it? I've always remembered that speech: an excellent address, very simple, well laid out, but a message that I think applies in the circumstances where we are today. It is working well; why change it? The very objective committee structure was established in my time as a member of cabinet and government. In April 1969 we said that we must look at some fair way whereby we can select the various boundaries and the distribution of population in those boundaries and where many points of view are heard.

I remember a discussion in our caucus at that time from various members saying: look, you're going to give the opposition too many seats; they're going to cause all kinds of havoc on that committee. But the leadership of the party and the members of the caucus at that time said: we must be fair and give everybody as equal representation as possible. That format was established. It has gone through three tests, and it has been accepted by the public of Alberta. That's where we're at. It has been accepted; it works. There wasn't a thing wrong with it. We have certain restrictions within the committee — we had them the last time, and we have them again — in terms of the number of seats in the redistribution, the relationship between urban seats and rural seats. Those are certain restrictions for the committee.

That's the government input. They've said that's the kind of format, the general guidelines, we ask the committee to deal with. We accepted those last time; we'd accept it again. The people of Alberta would accept it again, and they'd go from there. But that's not the way this government works; it's unfortunate.

I heard the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry speaking. I appreciated what he said; I think that was a little bit of common sense. I'm not quite sure he understood what the hon. Leader of the Opposition was saying with regard to representation by population. I think there was maybe a little misunderstanding there. I think we all accept what the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry was saying about the relationship of rural seats to urban seats; there must be some different factors taken into consideration. I think we all accept that, and the people of Alberta accept that at the present time. The hon. Leader of the Opposition accepts that.

The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray outlined his concerns and his case with regard to his constituency: the size

of Fort McMurray, how it has grown, the number of people there. I can remember not too many years ago when the size of Fort McMurray was 4,000 people. The committee must consider that point of view. The member has made a good case, and I'm sure that whoever is selected for this redistribution committee will consider those remarks — good, objective suggestions to the Legislature.

I want to talk specifically — and I think this is the root of our problem in this Legislature right now. As far as I'm concerned, it is ministerial power that in this case — with all due respect to the hon. member from Calgary, I've got to say this. The leadership for this Bill lies with the sponsor of the Bill. The leadership has not taken place in a responsible way.

The hon. member stood up earlier in this Legislature with a Carnegie smile. He tried to give us the impression that everything is great: he's done a good job, don't worry about it, and we'll kind of cover up the issue and the principles in the Bill. That's not good enough. Somebody else could have presented this Bill in the most awkward and difficult way. But if they had stuck to the principle, we could have stood up in this Legislature with respect for the person that would lead us in carrying out what I would feel is a more objective plan, a plan that works and has been tested not only in this Legislature but by the people of Alberta. But here is a minister, given authority and responsibility, who has taken irresponsible steps.

I can recall — and I raised these words in the Legislature in earlier remarks — when I became a minister, my father saying to me: you're going to be given a lot of authority over people's lives, over things you do in your caucus, but don't forget, never misuse that authority; remember that there are minority groups, people in need who need your protection and understanding under conditions like that. I don't know where the rural people of Alberta, farm leaders such as my father and people that didn't have all the formal education that many people in this Legislature have been granted ... But they had wisdom, understanding, and a way to understand how to respect their fellow man and the responsibility that was given to them.

When we look at this Bill that has been presented to us, when the principle has changed from something that's worked to something that only highlights and increases the power of government to control its own destiny in some way, and it feels its destiny is more important than the objectivity of rules or the needs and the representation of Albertans in a fair way, that's unacceptable. As I said, I place the total responsibility on the doorstep of the minister that brought this Bill into the House. From past experience, I know that if the minister had gone into his caucus and said to his caucus members, I believe the plan we used before is acceptable, I recommend it, it's fair, it's just, and it will do the job, support would have come from other colleagues in cabinet, from the 44 backbenchers, and there would have been no question. But this minister wanted to be different; he wanted to maintain that elite power this government loves — power that it forgets belongs to the people, not to those that are elected. Here we have a typical example of it happening.

Mr. Speaker, I have done a bit of lobbying around the Legislature, and I find, from casual conversation — I shouldn't really say this, but just in a general way — that very little discussion went on in caucus with regard to this matter. It wasn't a major discussion or a long two-hour debate. I am told it was a very minor discussion; it didn't take that long. They thought, well, there are only four members in the opposition; let's make it three for government and one for the opposition. That's fair. The score is fair, three to one. In a few minutes, the thing was passed by caucus. But nobody that I know of — and if there are some backbenchers and cabinet ministers that

stood up on principle and said, look, we're not being fair, then stand up in this public Legislature and say it.

MR. NOTLEY: Exactly.

MR. R. SPEAKER: If nobody stands up, then you didn't say it. The hon. Member for Innisfail back there is ohing and ahing. I haven't heard one word from him.

MR. NOTLEY: Where does he stand?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Where does he stand? If he feels that this principle is fair, stand up in this Legislature and say it. I challenge him to say that. But it's like everything else: a minister says something, a minister becomes right because he said it and introduced it into caucus, and you don't want to shake your position because it might defeat your opportunity to get into cabinet or the front bench. Well, when you're finished with politics, that won't be much of a record. Look what's happened: you're supporting something that's wrong in principle. I say that to all of you on the back bench. You are supporting a minister that has misled you and not given you good advice. I think the minister should hang his head.

MR. NOTLEY: Off with his head.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Off with his head — the same thing. I think that a person who has come from the private sector, where negotiations and dealing with your fellow man is done on a fair and equitable basis, why don't we transmit ...

MR. SPEAKER: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but this moralizing about the character of the minister is surely not relevant to the debate. Surely what we're debating here is not whether ministers have various personal attributes but the merit or otherwise of this particular piece of legislation. I would respectfully suggest that the hon. member come back to the topic.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to Bill No. 81, I am pointing out that the minister is not taking his responsibility.

MR. NOTLEY: Exactly.

MR. R. SPEAKER: That's why it's all there. You can relate it to the minister's character or whatever it is, but one is the same as the other. He has not impressed me one bit. The first piece of major legislation that the minister is allowed by the Premier to bring into this Legislature ...

MR. MARTIN: Gerrymandering Bill.

MR. R. SPEAKER: ... is fraught with unfairness and, I would say, total dishonesty to the public of Alberta.

I think the minister's comments with regard to this Bill are equally as revealing. After the introduction of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister said to the general public in a public statement — with regard to having three MLAs and one in the opposition:

"It would be unrealistic to think, with three government members and one opposition, that they won't have in mind past electoral experience and to that extent there is a political element in the process."

MR. PAYNE: Finish the quote, Ray.

MR. R. SPEAKER: That's where it is.

MR. MARTIN: Gerrymandering Bill.

MR. R. SPEAKER: "But Payne added the bill is 'characterized by fairness'." That's a lot of opinion, when you have three from the government side and one from the opposition. Then they get to appoint one person; the Clerk may be objective, and a judge. But when the score is four to three already, there is sure not much chance of fairness in a committee such as that.

AN HON. MEMBER: Trust us.

MR. NOTLEY: Who trusts you?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, what does that quote from the hon. minister say to me? It says that the hon. minister believes playing politics with something that should be objective is a top priority rule in his mind.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Here we go again. Let's analyse the Bill and not the hon. minister. That sort of thing is irrelevant.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister is the one that's saying it's a political Bill, and a Bill that will be able to enact political alternatives for the government.

MR. SPEAKER: Fair enough; he's talking about the Bill. That's what this debate is about.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Right. I am saying it's unfair because it allows the government the power to impose any kind of boundaries it wants in this province. The old cliché, gerrymandering — they can set it up. How ridiculous at a time, and these are the minister's own words, when they have such a high percentage of seats in the Legislature.

MR. MARTIN: They want to keep it that way.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Seventy-four out of 79 are Conservative members, a high percentage. Then they have to have a larger percentage. Why do they? What are they afraid of? When they've got all those seats, are they afraid of losing the next election? They might be. If they are, I suppose they can gerrymander, but I understand that the Conservative votes are spread equally all over the province. There are lots of Conservative votes. Why are we so scared about where the boundaries are going to go? Why do we have to protect the system like that? Well, it's a bit of neurosis. It's a power-hungry government that wants to do that kind of thing and, to me, it's totally unacceptable. There's just no way, under those kinds of ground rules, that I could ever accept a Bill such as Bill No. 81.

You look at other provinces across Canada — and that may have already been mentioned in the Legislature. You look at Ontario, a good Conservative province, and there they have understood the principle of fairness and equity. I understand they are trying to undergo a bit of restructuring, but their commission has consisted of the chief electoral officer, a Supreme Court judge, and a professor from Western university. Manitoba's commission consists of a Chief Justice of Manitoba, the president of the University of Manitoba, and the chief electoral officer. They don't even put any political people on the committees.

In Alberta we've said, let's keep the score equal, two for the opposition and two for government, and both the government and the opposition people will have some input. That's fair; that's been fair historically, and it should still be that way, Mr. Speaker. But that's not good enough for this government. Someday they'll look back and ask: why weren't we fair with all of the power? Why did we always have to overkill the poor little opposition?

I'm not sure where the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud could fit into this debate. I know that the Member for Edmonton Whitemud is fair and objective, and based on principle. A little bit of that could rub off on the row just ahead of him, and I'm sure we could have an amendment to this Bill and a lot more satisfaction and agreement and consensus in this Legislature.

The hon. Member for Lethbridge East certainly has to go to his constituency once in a while so he can understand what his constituents say about this kind of fairness. Possibly close to the next election, he'll make a little trek back to Lethbridge to see what they're doing.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that this Bill should be reviewed and that the government should give it a bit of second thought. I don't think it fits at all with the ground rules, the fairness we're trying to have in this Legislature. I don't think it fits in terms of acceptability to the public of Alberta. I think the Bill should have a second chance for review.

What I'd like to do in light of that is to recommend the following amendment to second reading. Moved by myself that the motion for second reading of Bill 81, the Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 1983, on today's Order Paper, be amended as follows:

By striking all the words after the word "That", and substituting therefor the following:

Bill 81, Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 1983 be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that by making that amendment the Legislature can have another look at what they're doing. Possibly this can be an out for the minister to review the matter and say: well, maybe there should be some other suggestions taken into consideration; maybe we should revert to the former format. I think we should.

In light of that, I don't see where the necessary changes may occur in second reading, but I think that after second thought and possibly more input by the general public, the government could see that there should be a reversion to the original format of that committee.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to address a few comments to the proposed amendment presented by the hon. Member for Little Bow, which I gather is now being distributed to hon. members:

By striking all the words after the word "That", and substituting therefor the following:

Bill 81, Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 1983 be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing.

Mr. Speaker, in dealing specifically with the motion before the House, I won't take time to go over the history of developing the electoral boundaries in this country, as I did when I spoke on second reading, but rather deal with whether or not it is in the interests of this government to refer the Bill to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing.

I believe the hon. Member for Little Bow, the leader of the Independents, made a very good point when he said that it

would be useful for members of the Assembly to take a second look at what we're doing here before we madly rush into a change in the method of redrawing boundaries, which could be interpreted as being unfair. As a matter of fact, not only could it be interpreted as unfair, Mr. Speaker, but in my submission it is blatantly unfair. But I've already made that point. What is now before the House is whether it is in the interests of this government and the government caucus and the Legislature as a whole to take a little time to reflect before we make important changes that will affect the basic principle upon which boundaries in this province are drawn.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that it would be very foolish indeed if members of this government — and maybe they haven't had the opportunity to get the word from the Whip yet — were in such a rush to ram through these arbitrary changes they propose that they would not be prepared to let the legislative process work. One of the things in this Bill is that we have all these MLAs on because supposedly MLAs add so much to the process.

I say to members of the House, let us not change the Act before we complete the parliamentary process within this Legislature. That is what the resolution proposed by the Member for Little Bow would do. It would say that Bill 81 would be referred to a Standing Committee of the Legislature on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing so that an appropriate committee of the Legislature could examine the merits of the Bill and report back before we ram the thing through.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know how any member of the House could rationally be opposed to this proposal. Even those members who support the principle of Bill 81 — although frankly I don't think many of the members of the House in their heart of hearts support the principle of Bill 81. You know, they're caught in it, it's embarrassing, and they've made a statement, the minister has introduced it.

It's always difficult for this government to back off anything. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, why not? Why not let the legislative process examine this Bill? When we had the labor Bill introduced this spring, I thought it was a bad piece of legislation, but at least we referred the legislation to the Public Affairs Committee of the House; we had various groups of people come before the committee and make representation to the entire committee of the House. The government said at the time: before we deal with Bill 44, we want some input from Albertans, and we want the legislative process to work properly.

All the Member for Little Bow is saying is that surely the legislative process should work properly before we give second reading to a Bill that is fundamentally going to alter the method by which we draw constituency boundaries in this province. What I found remarkable is that after the Member for Little Bow moved his amendment, there was absolute, dead silence. Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Speaker, that members of the government caucus think so little of the legislative process that they aren't even going to render an opinion or a judgment on an amendment such as this? Are they in such great haste to ram this thing through that they are not prepared to entertain the possibility that this legislation would be improved by going through a process which has been time-honored and developed, a committee which is structured as part of the standing committees of the Legislature, and surely is a reasonable way to proceed with a Bill that talks about changing the rules of the game? If the hon. minister from Calgary had simply introduced a Bill dealing with certain aspects of redistribution but not the most important of all, which is the way by which we redistribute, if it hadn't been a change that strikes at the heart of the process, then I think you could say, let's get on with it.

I believe it was 1976 when the last redistribution Bill came in. Because the government was taking a fair approach, as opposed to this approach, members of the opposition did not delay the debate. We simply dealt with it because they weren't changing the method by which redistribution is occurring. But, Mr. Speaker, this time the government is deciding that they're going to change the rules of the game. If they're going to change the rules of the game — and what the Member for Little Bow is saying is, at least let's follow the rules before we change the legislation — one of the appropriate ways to deal with controversial pieces of legislation, particularly of a legislative nature, is to assign it to a committee representing both sides of the House that can report back.

Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to fathom why members of the government — as a matter of fact, I half expected the hon. minister from Calgary to leap to his feet and say, we're prepared to accept that amendment; in our spirit of generosity, and not wanting anyone to misinterpret our motives or anything, we'll be prepared to accept that. The whole matter could then have been dealt with fairly, and everybody could have been happy. But there was silence. I don't know if this is the kind of silence that occurred in the caucus when it came up. I suspect the Member for Little Bow was quite right: when it came up, most of the members were asleep at the switch and didn't realize that it had been passed until the thing was printed, and then they had to back the minister no matter what, right or wrong. Into the corner again; always afraid to admit they've made a mistake.

Mr. Speaker, that's not leadership in a real sense. The Member for Little Bow is suggesting to members of the House that on a matter of fundamental importance we take time to evaluate what we are doing. We cannot be concerned about the democratic system if we are not interested in the way by which that system is structured, and one of the most important aspects of that structure is having a fair and equitable method of determining constituency boundaries. I say to hon. members this afternoon that the amendment has a tremendous amount of merit, and I would urge that hon. members endorse it.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment or two this afternoon to make a few comments in relation to the Bill before us, and the amendment. I have been in this Legislature a few years now, and I well remember 1969, when the government at that time looked at setting up an electoral boundaries commission.

Governments are always accused that there may be some gerrymandering. But the practice that every eight years we make boundary changes to reflect the changes in population has been well established in this province. Mr. Speaker, if I were a member of this government, or the minister presenting this Bill at this time, I can only use one word: I would be very, very embarrassed. Because if any legislation that's going to serve the needs of the people comes to this Assembly, that legislation must not only appear to be impartial but must be as impartial as it can possibly be.

If the government wants to do their little gerrymandering, they don't have to worry about the report that's brought before this Legislature. Quite obviously they have the power to reject outright the report of the commission.

MR. SPEAKER: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but we're dealing with an amendment rather than with the merits of the Bill. Perhaps we could — of course the hon. member would have an opportunity to speak on whatever results after the amendment anyway, unless the amendment passes.

DR. BUCK: Yes, Mr. Speaker, that's true, and I will abide by your ruling. But I do want to get to the point that because this legislation is so bad, we have to know what the legislation is that we're talking about. Because it is so bad, that's why it must be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Our so-called friends in the press gallery, Mr. Speaker — everybody in this province should know by now what it is this government is proposing to do. But the pussycat press, the Tory-loving press we have in this province, where are they? [interjections]

I so well remember, Mr. Speaker, when amendments were proposed, the setting up of the committee. We had all the political scientists in the province. We had the media accusing the government of gerrymandering in the establishment of that commission. So when we were setting up commissions such as this one, when we made a faux pas which, if the press were doing its job, every citizen in Alberta should know about, then we would take it back to the committee and the people of the province would say to their back-bench members, look, that is not fair; that is not an impartial commission; take it back to the Committee on Privileges and Elections and redraft it. It would save those backbenchers, the defenders of the right, of fairness, and everything else that before every election they propose to stand up for. They could stand in their place at a public forum and say, look, we know we've made a mistake; we didn't know that the front bench was going to do this, so after we found out about it, we thought it should be sent to the Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe we have set up committees on elections and privileges for some very, very frivolous matters that have come before this House. But this is a matter of major concern. So are we going to have those muzzled backbenchers not standing in the Assembly and telling us where they stand? Surely a matter as important as this should be sent back to the committee for redrafting. Quite obviously it has not had any input from the backbenchers. The minister must have done this. Someone in the front line must have just handed it to him and said, now you're the minister of propaganda; get this through the House.

Mr. Speaker, I am trying to indicate to the government that it is terrible legislation — not just bad; it is gosh-awful terrible legislation — that we are asking this Assembly to pass. My right-wing friend from Edmonton Whitemud smiles.

AN HON. MEMBER: Friends.

DR. BUCK: But, Mr. Speaker, is the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud going to tell his constituents that we've set up this impartial committee made up of three Tories, one opposition member, and a judge, and we want an impartial decision. Surely this government must have some scruples.

MR. R. SPEAKER: He'd like a golfing score judge like that.

DR. BUCK: This government must have some scruples to try to make this committee at least appear impartial. I am sure reason will prevail and the government will accept the amendment. So when we take this back to committee, which is both sides of the Assembly, and thrash it out, we can bring a Bill to this Assembly that we and the people of Alberta can all live with.

Later in the debate, Mr. Speaker, I'll get into the area of why there should be elected people on a commission, because there is no such thing as a commission that has all the answers. At least politicians know something about natural geographic lines when we look at dividing constituencies. I don't think we

should leave that up to some of the learned men on the bench, because they draw lines — and we've all had to live with this — where there doesn't seem to be any rhyme or reason, except that we want a few more numbers on one side and few less on the other. The elected people know there are natural boundaries. The hon. Member for Barrhead may know that there is a main service road or a natural boundary of a river — the people go one way or the other. This is why elected people have a great amount of input when we're looking at drawing electoral lines.

But the whole problem, the reason this should be taken back to the committee on elections and privileges, is that this committee must appear to be impartial. I want to say as sincerely as I can to the hon. minister sponsoring the Bill that it does not appear to be impartial. The Attorney General knows that. The Attorney General is a fair man most of the time. Goodness knows, members on this side certainly don't need any more committees. If you want to devastate the little opposition there is, just keep putting in more committees. We have so many committees, we don't know when they're standing. You can only go to one at one time. With three of them sitting simultaneously, it's a little tough to get to them.

This is one way to get rid of two opposition members: by putting them on this committee. So if you want to keep them running around the province — I learned in the four years I was in government that when you want to keep the Member for Edmonton Glenora, the Member for Barrhead, and the Member for Calgary West busy, put them on a committee. They can't be politicking; they're running around the country trying to select an ombudsman, an electoral boundaries commission, and all these little things you have to do. That's how you get them running around, scurrying about. You put them on a committee. Putting them on the Electoral Boundary Commission would at least solve the political problem, Mr. Speaker. You would have two of them out of your hair for the next 18 months.

It is an issue. The people of this province should be awake to the fact that we are trying to do partially something that should be impartial. We might even get the hon. Member for Edmonton Belmont on one of these things so he would learn what the legislative process is all about. He wouldn't have to learn it from some hardened old pro that's been here many years. He might learn how to serve the public through practical experience, because now all he has to do is get on the true-blue ticket, and he's just an automatic. It doesn't matter if he contributes anything or not; he's an automatic.

As long as you know how to organize the constituency, you can get nominated. You don't have to have any talent.

AN HON. MEMBER: He's living proof.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I've always had this philosophy of the hon. Provincial Treasurer: if you can't control the nominating process, you don't deserve to get elected. You have to know a little bit about how to get around and look after that part of it. But what we're talking about is not getting nominated; we're talking about electoral boundaries so we have people in this Assembly to represent the people of the province.

Of course how you get nominated is an aside, but I think we've all had to go through that. I think we should know how to look after that process, because if we don't know how to look after it we certainly don't deserve to get elected.

Back to the point we're trying to make. This government should really be embarrassed about the set-up of this committee.

MR. MARTIN: You have to have some feelings first.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'm . . .

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member . . .

DR. BUCK: If you would just wait, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I've been waiting very patiently for the last four or five chapters, and I have difficulty finding relevance. I don't know whether the hon. member shares that difficulty, but I'd really like to see him come back to the point.

DR. BUCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. I appreciate that you're trying as diligently as possible to separate the wheat from the chaff.

MR. SPEAKER: What we want is more wheat.

DR. BUCK: I am coming back, Mr. Speaker.

You cannot get this to a committee unless you really know what it is you are trying to do in the first instance. The first instance is that if we refer it back to the committee, we won't make the mistake the minister and the caucus have already made. That is the greatest reason. So if you don't know what the mistake is, how can you refer it to the committee. You have to know what the problem was. The problem was that the committee, as it is now constructed, is not impartial. Therefore the committee of this House is the right body to review the Bill as it is now structured and make recommendations. That's really what we are talking about, and that's why it should go to the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Attorney General is going to tell us why it should not go to that committee. If there is anyone that can put us to sleep for the next 20 minutes and not know what it was he said to us for 20 minutes, the Attorney General has that great facility.

I would like to say to the members of this Assembly that Bill 81, the Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, should be referred to the standing committee on privileges and elections, and let that committee report back to this Assembly. Maybe there will not be any changes. Maybe the minister sponsoring the Bill can convince that committee that it's beautiful, impartial, and that's what Albertans want. But until we go through that process, I don't think any member in good conscience can stand in his place and say, let's pass the Bill as it is.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I would like to say to the Tory backbenchers, who believe so much in fairness, in serving their constituents, in making it appear impartial, that they stand in their place and tell us why it should not go back to the committee. Maybe they can stand in their place and tell us all the discussion they had. Or maybe they will stand in their place and tell us this is a great piece of legislation, they support it 100 per cent, and therefore it shouldn't have to go back to the committee. Maybe that's what they stand for. Maybe that's the kind of democracy they believe in. Maybe that's the kind of government they're proud to belong to. I don't know. Those members will have that opportunity because the amendment is before this Assembly, and I especially welcome all members of the government back benches to stand in their place and tell us why this should not be referred to the committee.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I've waited patiently and now I would like to get to the amendment. I think the amendment makes sense. All we're asking the government to do at this point is not to back off but to clearly give them an opportunity

to be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, to give them time to rethink the Bill.

There's one of two things, Mr. Speaker, that brought across this particular Act. One alternative is that the government is deliberately trying to gerrymander by moving one opposition member down and moving one up. The second alternative is that they didn't think it through very carefully. Now if I were charitable, I would say the last. Unfortunately I do not believe that the hon. minister and the government — while they make a lot of mistakes with the economy and almost everything else, one [way] I do not underestimate them is politically. I certainly don't. So I have to come to the conclusion that if they refuse to support this amendment — we're giving them a chance to back off with this amendment, to take another look at it — frankly it's deliberate. It's a deliberate attempt to gerrymander.

It's rather an unusual Bill, as has already been mentioned. First of all, the minister talks about fairness, and he uses figures. My colleagues talked about that before, but there are some new figures I'd like to throw out to him. Since 1969, when this was first set up — Mr. Speaker, it has been pointed out that when this was first set up, the government members in opposition at the time thought it was unfair. I wish government members like the Provincial Treasurer would now stand up, as they did back in 1969. If we go back to this committee on privileges, I'm sure the Provincial Treasurer, being a very valuable member of the cabinet, can tell them what they talked about in 1969.

Why this has to be referred, Mr. Speaker, is that opposition representation drops from two people to one, 29 per cent of the commission to 14 per cent of the commission, while government representation rises from two people to three, from 29 to 43 per cent.

MR. COOK: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is speaking about the merits of the Bill. While that's delightful, it should be confined to the discussion on the main motion.

MR. SPEAKER: I was sufficiently optimistic about what the hon. member was saying that I thought he might just be on the point of getting back to the amendment.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'll get back to some of the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry's comments. The point we're trying to make is why it's a bad Bill, why we have to refer it back; it's that simple. Even the Member for Edmonton Glengarry should be able to figure that out.

DR. BUCK: He can't figure that out. He only does what he's told to do.

MR. MARTIN: If we go across Canada, what we are doing is changing the rules — that's already been into. This will be the most partisan Bill we have across Canada. In B.C. they don't seem to have a system, but they're very good at gerrymandering there. But if we go right across — and I won't bore you with all of them — Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, P.E.I., and Newfoundland with this proposed change, this will be the most partisan political Bill across Canada. Now if the hon. members feel that is acceptable, they want to be known in this way, if the minister really wants to be known as gerrymander Bill — I hope not — then that's fine; they'll take the political heat for that. But the point is that it will be the worst Bill in Canada. And by the amendment, Mr. Speaker, we are clearly giving them . . .

MR. COOK: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I'm really having difficulty understanding why the merits of this Bill

should be discussed here rather than the merits of the committee process that he's referring to.

MR. SPEAKER: I have the same difficulty. What we're saying here is: it's a bad Bill; therefore it should go to a committee. That destroys the whole purpose of zeroing in on the amendment. The amendment is . . . The merits of the Bill are not really related to the amendment. Otherwise, we're going to have the whole debate twice. Now that may be the intention, but it's not proper.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I find that really unacceptable, because if we can't say the reason we want to send it back — the purpose of the amendment is that it's a bad Bill. If it was a good Bill, we wouldn't want to have an amendment on it. Surely that's appropriate. We have to explain what's wrong with the Bill. I was trying to point out that almost every other province in Canada has a much different interpretation; that's another reason it should go back to this committee, so they can look at it. Surely those are in order.

MR. SPEAKER: I realize it's an arguable point, and there is some substance to what the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood is saying. But I have to have regard to wasting the time of the House. If we're going to debate the merits of the Bill on the main motion and debate them again on the amendment, I have to question whether that's a proper use of the time of the House. It seems to me that the amendment can be fully debated without going into all the merits of the Bill.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. What we're attempting to do is show what this committee could in fact look at. We have taken the time to look at how they handle their boundary commissions. I'm trying to point this out, that this is one of the most partisan groups; it should take a look at this. And this is surely what this committee could do if we refer it back to the committee. So I would like to proceed by giving them suggestions of what to look at, why we want this put back to the committee. Mr. Speaker, I would just go on to point out . . .

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, if I might, on the point of order. I'm sure that, as is so often the case, I can assist the Assembly by making a reference to *Beauchesne*. What you, Mr. Speaker, have recently been making some observation on is a matter that perhaps the mover of the amendment might have looked at more closely before drafting it in this way. It is true that citation 746(1) in the fifth edition of *Beauchesne* says that

An amendment, urging a committee to consider the subject-matter of a bill, might be moved and carried if the House were adverse to giving the bill . . . a second reading and so conceding its principle.

In other words, if the House does not want to concede the principle, then the subject matter at that point can be referred to a committee. But the motion doesn't purport to refer the subject matter; it purports to refer the Bill. And citation 747(1) comments on what might be done with a referral that would be consistent with citation 746(1). Because under that citation, the referral would be of the subject matter. And under the second citation mentioned, it is noted that the House cannot use the guise of referring the subject matter to also refer certain provisions of the Bill itself. Mr. Speaker, I might conclude on the point of order in this way: when we are speaking of either the motion in referring the Bill rather than the subject matter, or should there be a referral, the ability of the committee to

deal with certain provisions of the Bill itself would seem to be against practice. And if the committee would not be able to deal with the provisions of the Bill itself under citation 747, then clearly in a referral motion those matters can't be debated.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the point of order, I as well would like to refer to page 226 of *Beauchesne*, section 746. The hon. Attorney General read the first sentence of 746(1) and then stopped. I think we must proceed further in the examination for the conclusion of your ruling, Mr. Speaker. This is a very important sentence. It starts where the Attorney General left off in 746(1). It says:

But where further information is desired in direct relation to the terms of the bill before the House, the advantage of referring the bill to a committee could be explained in the second reading stage.

In other words, as I understand that section, referring the Bill to a committee would be acceptable, that further information with regard to the Bill could be derived, the Bill could be better understood, various principles could be discussed at that time, and the information could then be referred back to the House and second reading discussion would continue with a better perspective with regard to the Bill. In making the amendment to the Bill before us, Bill 81, certainly my intent was to put the Bill into a stage of discussion in the Legislature where further information could be derived by that process and, as well, better understanding of the principles within the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER: As I see it, there is an implication in 746(1) that the motion to refer the subject matter of the Bill could be moved only after the vote on second reading. I'm not clear about that, I must confess. I'd like to consider the point. I see a further difficulty on page 227 of the same citation. It says that "the advantage of referring the bill to a committee could be explained in the second reading stage". I would read that as meaning: could be explained without an amendment being moved. In other words, as I understand this at present — and I'd like to consider the point — a person opposed to the motion for second reading of the Bill could make the remarks . . . [interjection] I'm aware of 746(2), but I'm just not clear as to how it fits in with 746(1) in review of the two observations I've made. I'd like to consider the point. We're not sitting this evening, but perhaps I could deal with the matter further when the Bill is called for debate again. In the meantime, I would suggest that without considering or confirming a precedent, we might continue to debate the merits of the amendment.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I will then continue on the amendment, and indicate again why I think this should be referred to a committee. I would like to make my point again on why this committee should take a look at it, because we're setting a precedent. Nowhere else in Canada are they so blatantly partisan as we will be here by changing the numbers on this commission. I have no objections to going all the way, as some of the other provinces have, where they do not have politicians on [the committee], but what I am against is changing the make-up to where it becomes a political committee. As I said, Mr. Speaker, some of them don't have a commission; for example, British Columbia. It's *ad hoc*. And New Brunswick . . .

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, on another point of order. The rules of the House state that a member must not be repetitious in his remarks, and the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood admitted himself that he was stating the facts again. I'm delighted to hear it for the second time around — actually it's about the

fifth or sixth time — but perhaps if he's trying to convince the House, he should develop some new ideas.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I've been interrupted by the Member for Edmonton Glengarry three times, so I keep coming back to the point. If he wants to keep interrupting, we can go on in this debate forever. I know he's having a good time. It's the only time he gets to speak.

To continue with the point, there are two *ad hoc* committees, Mr. Chairman, and nobody is suggesting that. You can't tell from an *ad hoc* committee whether, for example, it's going to be partisan in nature. But in every one of the other committees — Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec — there is not a partisan nature as there would be to this committee if we passed the Bill. Again, that's simply why we want the time to reconsider this.

As I said earlier, there must basically be two alternatives. If you like, we'll give the minister the benefit of the doubt that he did not have time to look at what was happening in other provinces across Canada. For example, he didn't think it through. Surely, to refer it back to this legislative committee and to take the time to look into other jurisdictions would make eminent good sense at this time.

I expect that if members are not prepared to accept this amendment, then we have to come to the second alternative: it's a deliberate attempt to gerrymander. Now if that's the case, we'll be making a case about that later on when we debate the Bill. The point we're making by looking across Canada, by looking at the implications of this Bill, is so serious, Mr. Speaker. When you can get voted down as an opposition on a supposedly non-partisan commission, that has tremendous implications for the democratic process. I know the hon. members know that, and I know the Attorney General knows that. Frankly, we had an example, Mr. Speaker, when you were not there, in the Members' Services Committee where we were voted [down] on budgets. We have very little power. I don't care how able the one member is. When you have a three to one vote and there's that potential for gerrymandering, that is wrong in principle and that's why we should refer it ...

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I'm really having a great deal of difficulty discussing the merits of the composition of the committee, and having a discussion about the merits of referring this Bill to a committee. I think the two are completely distinct.

MR. SPEAKER: I share that difficulty also. It seems to me there must be, in common sense and practice, no repetition, at least to any very substantial extent, between the debate on the amendment and the debate on the Bill. What I'm hearing here is indistinguishable from what might be said on the motion for second reading and on the amendment. I'd respectfully ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the principle of referral.

MR. MARTIN: Well, thank you very much, sir. I appreciate the effort to get up. What I will do to stay totally on the amendment, so nobody's feelings are hurt here, is talk specifically on how wonderful it is to promote it to this committee. We would have very able people on here, like the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry, who is totally fair at all times. We'd have all the hon. backbenchers, who would be totally fair at all times. I know that they would see the error, if you like, of their ways and change this Bill. We want to give the hon. backbenchers a chance to do something useful by referring an important Bill that has implications for democracy right across the country, and giving them a chance, if you like, Mr. Speaker, to participate in meaningful decisions as they were elected to

do. Then I can certainly see the need for this committee. Because they are members of the governing party, I can see that it would save the government a great deal of embarrassment across the country when they bring in this gerrymandering Bill. I think the amendment makes absolutely good sense, and because of that I will support the amendment.

Because of the lateness of the day, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: I realize that if we vote on the amendment now, it will render it unnecessary for me to deal with the question further, but it's up to the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question on the amendment?

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The hon. member has asked permission of this Assembly to adjourn debate. Now we're asking the question: is that permission going to be granted by the overwhelming majority or is it not?

MR. SPEAKER: It's been moved by the hon. member that debate be adjourned. Does the Assembly agree?

[Motion lost]

MR. MARTIN: I will then continue, Mr. Speaker, if I may.

MR. SPEAKER: Having made the motion, the hon. member has spoken.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Those in favor of the amendment, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

[Mr. Speaker declared the amendment lost. Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Buck	Martin	Speaker, R.
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Against the motion:

Adair	Fyfe	Osterman
Alexander	Gogo	Paproski
Alger	Hyland	Payne
Anderson	Hyndman	Pengelly
Appleby	Isley	Planche
Batiuk	Johnston	Reid
Bogle	Jonson	Russell
Bradley	Koper	Shrake
Campbell	Kowalski	Stevens

Clark
Cook
Crawford
Cripps
Diachuk
Drobot
Elliott
Embury
Fischer

Koziak
Lee
Lysons
McPherson
Moore, M.
Moore, R.
Musgreave
Musgrove
Nelson

Stiles
Stromberg
Szwender
Thompson
Weiss
Woo
Young
Zip

Totals:

Ayes — 3

Noes — 53

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, on the assumption, if I might make it, that the Assembly will deem the clock to have stopped at 5:30, I move that the Assembly now adjourn until tomorrow afternoon at 2:30.

[At 5:40 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]

