

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTATitle: **Tuesday, November 1, 1983 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 102****Planning Amendment Act, 1983**

MR. KOZIAK: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce Bill 102, the Planning Amendment Act, 1983.

The amendments provide for strengthening of property rights during the course of the subdivision process.

[Leave granted; Bill 102 read a first time]

Bill 88**Ombudsman Amendment Act, 1983**

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I request leave today to introduce Bill No. 88, the Ombudsman Amendment Act, 1983.

The purpose of this Bill is to extend the term of the office of the Ombudsman for a period of up to six months, thereby enabling the Legislative Offices Committee to conclude its deliberations on the question of a successor to the present Ombudsman.

[Leave granted; Bill 88 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. HARLE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the 20th annual report of the Racing Commission for the year ended March 31, 1983.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you, and through you to members of this Assembly, seven students from the Coralwood Academy, the Seventh-Day Adventist private school situated in the constituency of Edmonton Kingsway. These bright and interesting grade 10 students are seven of 115 students attending this academy. The students' names are: Kevin McKay, Troy Zylenko, Lorrie Wearden, Renatta Grosso, Joy Reid, Madhu Enjati, and Lowell Alexander. They are accompanied by their instructor, Mr. John Janes. They are seated in the members gallery, and I would ask them to rise and receive the usual warm welcome from all members.

MR. ALEXANDER: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the House today, 22 grades 5 and 6 members of St. Teresa school in the Edmonton constituency of Whitemud. They are accompanied by their teacher,

Mr. Morley Pinkoski, and by parents Mrs. Glenda Hume, Mrs. Catherine Heslip, and Mrs. Terry McGhee. They are in the members gallery, and I request that they stand and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. JONSON: As their MLA and principal, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 25 grade 10 students from Ponoka Composite high school. They are seated in the members gallery, and they are accompanied today by their teacher, Mr. Gary Anderson, and their bus driver, Mr. Wilfred Massey. I would now ask them to stand and receive the traditional welcome of the House.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Public Service**

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the hon. Minister responsible for Personnel Administration, and ask what is the government policy today regarding the layoff of provincial employees. Is a hiring freeze in place, as announced last spring, or is the government now implementing a new program of layoffs, more comprehensive than the one outlined in the budget speech?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, there is a nine-point program in place.

MR. R. SPEAKER: What is it?

MR. NOTLEY: That's certainly lots of information, Mr. Speaker.

Perhaps we could expand a bit and put a supplementary question to the hon. minister. It's with respect to a letter sent by the Public Service Commissioner to the president of the AUPE, outlining four points — I wasn't aware there were nine points — that would govern policy as it relates to employees and technological change. Could the minister advise the Assembly what specific steps have been taken to retrain or find other positions for health care clerks who are scheduled for layoff?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that the Leader of the Opposition has made reference to a letter, in March, from the Public Service Commissioner to the president of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, which clearly sets out that the government will provide its best efforts to minimize the impact of technological change.

There are four points in the letter. They deal with retraining, placement in vacancies in the department, and assisting employees to find other suitable employment. Finally, if none of those alternatives exists, the letter clearly says that the Master Agreement will be utilized for the abolition of positions, and this government will deal with its employees in a fair and responsible manner.

I said there were nine points, Mr. Speaker. I would be happy to elaborate.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, could the minister then advise the Assembly what the policy is with respect to point four of this letter — that is, the Master Agreement — in terms of casual employees? Will the placement of employees who have been laid off be given priority over the decision to hire casual employees?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care may wish to supplement my answer. But basically

the collective agreement clearly provides for the abolition procedures for permanent employees. They are, of course, the employees that must be considered first and foremost. That agreement clearly specifies the notice that is required to be given and the vesting rights that employee will have, and the government will recognize, in available positions for which that employee will be qualified. In addition, this spring this Assembly approved amendments — over some objections from the Leader of the Opposition, I might add — to the Public Service Act, which provide for the employment of our personnel in positions for which they may not be qualified but for which, through suitable training, they will be qualified.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. I'm dealing with point four. As I understand the minister's answer, that point relates to Article 15 of the Master Agreement. Just a word of explanation is necessary, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that that Master Agreement says that providing people who have been laid off have a year of service, these people should have priority placement over the normal placement process.

My question is: given that as part of the agreement, what is the policy developed by the department of Personnel Administration with respect to hiring casual people as opposed to permanent people, or the substitution of permanent people with casual employees?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, that's a decision that each minister and his or her department make, through the administration of their departments, on the recruitment and selection of employees. Each department must ensure that it meets its budget and program delivery. There may be cases where temporary, casual, part-time, or all other categories of employees can do the job, and we can still live within our budget.

The important point to know is that our government and the people of Alberta recognize technology. We have to be in the market for world trade, and we have to improve our productivity. We are endeavoring to do that by ensuring that our employees have the opportunity to be retrained or relocated, to be given a new opportunity. But if those positions do not exist and if that budget dollar is not there, then the provisions in the agreement for abolishment of their positions will be followed. That is clearly in the agreement, and we will recognize and honor that agreement.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. What discussions took place between the minister and his officials — in particular the Public Service Commissioner — and officials of the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care, with respect to the layoff of employees in that department, especially as it relates to points one, two, and three of the letter to Mr. Booth?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of discussions carried out with not only officials of the Personnel Administration Office, Hospitals and Medical Care, and Alberta health care insurance but the employees themselves, including a recent meeting in this past 10 days, I think. The employees are very much aware that change is about to take place. They are being consulted. It is being discussed with them, and they have been given advice which will correct some of the misunderstandings they have been reading about in the news media.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Can the minister tell the House why the employee representatives

on the employee/management advisory committee which is reviewing layoffs at the health insurance division were not nominated by the union, but rather were chosen by management?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, there has been consultation with primarily the employees and, at the same time, but not in order of priority, with the employees' representatives, the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. In fact, discussions took place about the time of that letter. There has been no conclusion reached with regard to a consultative mechanism. We have not yet heard from the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees as to their wishes, although I have been reading about them in other areas.

The employees concerned are fully able and free to discuss with other employees the concerns and questions that all may have. They are meeting jointly with management officials. The management officials are placing themselves available to be consulted by the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. I don't want there to be any misunderstanding, so I am making particular reference to the employee/management advisory committee in place which is now reviewing the layoffs in the health insurance division. To either the Minister responsible for Personnel Administration or the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care: I would like to know why the employees on this employee/management advisory committee were not representatives of or nominated by the union, the bargaining agent, but in fact were chosen by management.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, my colleague may wish to supplement my answer. But basically, in a number of areas the employer and the employees meet on joint matters. We have several joint committees. Many of them deal with occupational health and technology. This is one of those committees on technological change. The employees within the unit, within the agency, and within the department are best able to present to their employers, who are working side by side with them in a consultative way, the concerns on their work place and their work problems.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. The question is not who is best able; the question relates to how those people are chosen. Why is the process of selection a process which apparently by-passes the bargaining agent and can only create ill will, as opposed to taking representatives suggested by the people working in a given area, who belong to that bargaining agent, through the formal structure of the bargaining agent?

MR. SPEAKER: This is the third time we have had this question. Perhaps it could be the last.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I thought I had made it clear. Again I would indicate that in the work place itself, whether it is a technological matter or an occupational health matter, the employees who have concerns and wish to see those concerns addressed are best able to bring those forward to their colleagues, supervisory staff, or managers, who are jointly determining how to best manage change in a way that is beneficial not only to the people of Alberta, who are paying the bill, but to the employees themselves.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Can the minister then tell the House what the policy of the

government is with respect to dealing with technological change in all departments, not necessarily just the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care? Is it the policy of the government that it will be management who chooses the employee representatives, as opposed to consultation and nomination by the bargaining agent in each given department?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, the question is being framed in such a way that it would suggest that there has been a decision reached. I indicated earlier — and I believe *Hansard* will show — that we have had discussions with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. We do not know whether a consultative mechanism which will be appropriate to both parties can be attained. We have not yet had a response — I say again, no response — from the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees as to that kind of mechanism.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the minister indicate whether this policy with regard to the effect of new technology on layoffs or transfers of employees is being discussed with employees of other departments outside of that now being discussed, the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care, such as the Solicitor General's Department?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, again, my colleague the Solicitor General may wish to supplement my answer. Basically, the policy that was provided to the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees in March clearly applies to all provincial departments. That policy provides for retraining, redeployment, and counselling services. Finally, if none of those are suitable, the position abolishment procedure would be followed. Now, each department has to consider its vacancies and programs. Whether or not positions are filled or filled temporarily is a decision of that department.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary question to either the Minister responsible for Personnel Administration or to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. It again relates to the employee/management advisory committee. I would like to know what, in the absence of consultation with the bargaining agent, the specific route was. Was it ministerial direction? Was it the direction of senior management within the department? If so, who in fact made the decision to have the employees on this committee chosen by management as opposed to the bargaining agent?

MR. RUSSELL: I would like to respond to that, Mr. Speaker, because I am a little perplexed by the line of the questioning. It is my understanding that we have worked very hard to directly involve every employee who has been involved in this and not do it through a committee.

About 10 days or a week ago, Mr. Ozerkevich, the assistant deputy minister responsible for the Alberta health care insurance plan, finished a series of seminars which he personally directed with all the affected employees in small groups. This was done with the concurrence of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. I believe Mr. Booth was involved, although I can't be sure of that. I know he was consulted; I don't know whether or not he was personally present at all of the seminars.

Where did the direction come from? We discussed this at some length at a staff meeting of senior officials: the deputy, the assistant deputy ministers, and myself. We were very concerned as to how the four-step program my colleague referred to could be put in place. I'm confident, and I've been assured

that the employees have been fully informed, that every effort is being made to place them.

Incidentally, just in passing, I should mention that the number of employees is half that reported by one Edmonton newspaper this morning. But other than that, I believe every effort has been made to either retrain or redeploy. In fact, in my own office I have as a receptionist one of the young ladies that was given her notice as a result of the disappearance of her job. She took a little bit of retraining, applied for the job, and is doing an excellent job in her new position.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, any more questions would simply provoke debate, and we certainly wouldn't want to do that. I'm sure all kinds of discussions will occur outside this House, some of which may not entirely coincide with the minister's answer.

Crowsnest Pass Freight Rates

MR. NOTLEY: In the absence of the Premier, let me direct my second question to whomever I gather is Acting Premier. I assume it's the hon. Attorney General. As a result of the turmoil in the House of Commons over the Crow rate, can he advise the House whether or not the government of Alberta did in fact make representation to the federal government concerning the application of time allocation or closure to this very vital piece of legislation for western Canada?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, in the first instance, I would have to take that question as notice. My colleague the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs is away. It may well be that either the Acting Minister of Agriculture or the Acting Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs could respond to that.

MR. MARTIN: Who are they?

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Economic Development, who I know has an interest in the Crow rate. Could the minister advise the House what action the government has taken re the application of closure on this item, or was he simply going to leave it up to his colleague the Minister of Agriculture?

MR. PLANCHE: My answer would be the same as the Acting Premier's, Mr. Speaker. That's an issue that was really 'intra' the federal government. All we could do was put forth an opinion. If my memory serves me correctly we did that, but I'd like to check.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Government House Leader. During the Premier's absence — I gather he's going to New York and to an energy conference — will the Premier be meeting with any federal officials or with the Official Opposition, to discuss the crucial Crow rate and its implications for western Canada?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I think not. On the Premier's absence from the Assembly at the present time, the prime destination is New York. I'm not aware of any plans he may have, in the sense of returning via some other cities.

Alberta Government Telephones

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Utilities and Telecommunications is with regard to the introduction of Altel Data into the microcomputer market. My concern is in light of a statement the minister made to the Assembly

on April 15, in *Hansard*, which indicates the minister's position:

... the objective of the government that we should not be either directly or indirectly in competition with the private sector through a Crown corporation.

My question is: why has the policy changed and we are now competing in the private market of microcomputers in this province?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, the policy hasn't changed. If the hon. Member for Little Bow had gone on in the quotation, he would have noted that I indicated that the telephone and telecommunications business is no longer a monopoly, as it was 10 years ago, and that companies like Alberta Government Telephones find an increasing degree of competition from others. At that time I cited one such example, that today we can purchase a telephone at any number of commercial outlets around the city or other centres in the province, whereas 10 years ago that was part of the monopoly area held by the telephone company.

Mr. Speaker, I did indicate as well that there would be a six-month review of the role of Altel Data, the mobile communications division, and the business communications division of Alberta Government Telephones. After that six-month review was commenced by the Alberta Government Telephones Commission, the city of Edmonton and the province of Alberta received the results of a joint study into a number of matters relating to Edmonton Telephones and Alberta Government Telephones.

The first and most significant recommendation was that a new company should be created by 1988, that that company should acquire all of the assets of both Edmonton Telephones and Alberta Government Telephones, and that — most significantly in my view, Mr. Speaker — members of the public should be given the right to acquire shares in the new company. Shortly after that release, I publicly indicated that the review which had earlier been undertaken on a very small portion of AGT would be put on hold. We further committed that if, for one of a variety of reasons, the recommendations of the joint task-force committee between the city and the province are not accepted, we would then reinstitute the review of Altel Data, business communications, and mobile communications.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. It's an unusual situation, where AGT or Altel Data is continuing to expand. Could the minister indicate whether he personally is interviewing some of the private business men that are in the microcomputer business as well, to see what effect this decision on the introduction by Altel Data of a program into microcomputers, is going to have on their businesses?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, a number of businessmen have contacted me directly, either by telephone or by letter — I believe six over the last eight months or so — and I've given the same response to those individuals that I've just passed on to members of this Assembly; that is, our primary objective is to ensure that we have good and uninterrupted telecommunications service in the province of Alberta. We're looking first at the possibilities of implementing the recommendations of the Milvain committee. If that is not possible, we will go back and reinstitute the more specific review of Altel Data, business communications, and mobile communications.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Can the minister give a commitment to this Legislature that between

now and at least the time of review, Altel Data will not introduce any other programs that compete with the private sector?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the hon. member fully appreciates what he's asking. We're dealing with a highly advanced form of technology that's ever changing. I would be remiss if I gave the hon. member a blanket guarantee that Altel Data will do anything other than carry out the mandate it has been given. That is part of the overall thrust of what I might mention is one of the really bright spots in the whole Alberta Government Telephones system.

MR. McPHERSON: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister explain what efforts are being made to shore down the operating and capital costs of the Alberta Government Telephones?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, for the past year and a half there has been a very concerted effort under way in Alberta Government Telephones to reduce the capital budget and to reduce the manpower within the corporation, to bring it more into line with the economic realities of the day. Over that period of time, through attrition and through an early retirement program, in excess of 1,600 positions in Alberta Government Telephones have been eliminated. That has not been through firing or laying off any staff; it's strictly through attrition and through an early retirement program. In the same period the capital budget of the organization has been cut in approximately half, to the point where it's about \$270 million today.

MR. McPHERSON: Mr. Speaker, can the minister advise the House that had there been an agreement by the Public Utilities Board for an increase, that increase for small businesses would have caused small business costs to soar from \$17.15 a month in March 1982 to \$33.65 in September 1983, which would have represented a 96 per cent increase, and residence services would have increased 48 per cent at the same time?

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat reluctant to respond to rate increases, matters which are regulated under the Public Utilities Board. I think the rate increases sought by Alberta Government Telephones and the subsequent action of the Public Utilities Board are public knowledge.

Physiotherapists' Legislation

MR. LEE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Education, concerning the Chartered Physiotherapists Act. This question arises from representations made to me by constituents who allege that current legislation permits persons to represent themselves as physiotherapists, whether or not they are in fact qualified. Can the minister advise this House whether or not present legislation does allow unqualified persons to call themselves, and use the title, "physiotherapists"?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member, he's asking for an outright legal interpretation. That is not included in the purposes of the question period and is something he might wish to see a solicitor about.

MR. LEE: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. Could the minister advise whether he is aware of representations being made in the province of Alberta by individuals, who are not qualified to do so, that they are in fact physiotherapists, contrary to the present Act?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, we are not aware of anyone acting contrary to the present Act. The situation arises because existing legislation grants an exclusive use of the titles "chartered physiotherapist" or "registered physiotherapist". The word "physiotherapist" by itself is not a title in this province, let alone a reserved title; it's simply a word we find in the dictionary. So at the present time people may hold themselves up to be physiotherapists, and there is no comment implied in that about whether or not they are qualified to do any job or task. The Act, the existing legislation, protects the titles "chartered physiotherapist" and "registered physiotherapist".

MR. LEE: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise this House whether or not he expects to change the Act so that there will not be the possibility of a danger to the public by persons who allege to be physiotherapists?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, no one has made any representations or allegations to us that the public is at risk in this situation. That being the case, as I have mentioned in the House before, having in mind the fact that at the present time I'm dealing with approximately 67 organizations that want legislation of one kind or another, the question of the future of legislation for physiotherapists is not a high priority. The priority would of course change if someone could substantiate to me that the public is in some way at risk at the present time.

MR. LEE: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the Alberta physiotherapist association has asked for a change to this Act since 1975 and in view of the concerns that the association has, would the minister be prepared to meet with the executive committee some time within the near future to discuss their concern of the urgency for an update of this Act?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I am always delighted to meet with anybody who has an interest in meeting with me. If the physiotherapists fall into that class, I'd be delighted to meet with them at the earliest mutually convenient date.

I would only enter the caveat that in the view of the government, professional legislation is in a sense a contract between a professional group and the general public. If anyone wants a contract with the general public, they have to be prepared to honor undertakings inherent in the idea of a contract. It's a two-way street; no one gets something for nothing.

Social Allowance

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health. It's with regard to the report prepared by a coalition of human service agencies in the Edmonton area, entitled *The Unkindest Cuts: The Impact of the Recent Social Allowance Cutbacks*. What consideration has the minister given to the report's indication that social allowance recipients are being forced to spend portions of their food and clothing allowance on shelter? Apparently half of them are doing so.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, the final comment he made is an interesting one. He may have information that I'm not aware of; it's not the information I have.

In terms of looking at any effects of the changes for social allowance recipients last spring, which went into effect July 1, I have received information from a number of sources, including the particular group the hon. member refers to. I believe I indicated earlier in the session that the overall impression I

have with respect to the changes, specifically with regard to shelter adjustments, is that the changes were just and fair overall. In terms of dealing with individual problems and circumstances, however, we are making special considerations.

The particular study the hon. member refers to — I'm not sure "study" is the right word. It's a report provided by the Edmonton Social Planning Council. The work was done by the Edmonton Social Planning Council; this report was submitted by a coalition. As I understand it, the process was that a number of questionnaires were left in different agencies and social service offices. Any social allowance recipient who had concerns could pick up the form, fill it out, and send it in. In terms of the responses, there were some 177. I must say that in terms of studies or in terms of questionnaires being administered to people, in my opinion it was a very unscientific study. The conclusions in the report that relate to the responses of some 177 people are, I believe, conclusions that cannot be accurately drawn from the information they have. Having said that, however, we are looking into ways in which we can work more closely with the agencies to better deal with any individual concerns that are out there.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. It's the only report I've seen, and I think the minister should take it into consideration much more than what he feels.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. MARTIN: Question, question.

Will the minister outline what provisions he has made for higher utility bills to be covered by his department on behalf of recipients, considering the recently requested TransAlta rate increases and, of course, the onset of winter?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, in terms of overall adjustments to those changes last spring, we've made some adjustments which make it easier to deal with special circumstances, particularly as they relate to problems of those people who are awaiting unemployment insurance cheques, problems related to unmarried mothers in the 16- to 17-year-old category, and in terms of the special consideration dealing with the shelter ceilings.

Utilities are an aspect or a component of the shelter allowance. There have been no changes at this particular time with respect to the utility component. The utility component is still included in the overall; however, we are taking into account some of the concerns that have been expressed, and we'll be looking to see whether or not it's necessary to make any changes.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. What will the minister do if TransAlta is given a rate increase? That's the question.

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps that hypothetical question could await the event.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. Is the minister prepared to reassess the elements of safety and security of social allowance recipients, especially women, in terms of his suggestion that recipients take in boarders to ease the burden of the lowered sheltered allowance?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, that's a very specific kind of a question. I would indicate that overall, we have looked at the concerns related to the effect of the social allowance changes,

and we think we are dealing with those special considerations in the best way we can at the present time. So I really don't see what . . . If the hon. member would like to rephrase his question, maybe I could get a better handle on what he's trying to drive at.

MR. MARTIN: I'll come back to it if I get time. What we're talking about is what it says in the report — if the minister has read it — about the fact that for women to take in boarders could be unsafe, and that was suggested by his department. That's what I'm asking about.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, there were no specific instructions given to social allowance workers, in terms of suggestions to social allowance recipients as to what they should or should not do. Certainly individuals who were in a situation where they had the opportunity to take in a boarder in order to help meet their expenses relative to shelter would be expected to do so.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. That's just not true. I have an important message to social allowance recipients, March 25, which says . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjection] Order please. The hon. member well knows that the question period is for getting information and not giving it. There are of course plenty of opportunities in the House to give information and, in spite of the rule, a considerable amount of it purports to be given during question period.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just trying to help the minister out.

MR. SPEAKER: That's very kind.

MR. MARTIN: Has the minister reconsidered imposing a 20 per cent user fee on recipients' prescriptions, given the hardships imposed by other measures his department implemented . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Outright debate.

MR. MARTIN: I'll try to say it as gently as I can, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Not gently but correctly, properly.

MR. MARTIN: All right. Can I ask this? I'll try this one: is he prepared to allow a prescription budget to social allowance recipients? And I don't want to debate. I'll ask it very gently.

MR. NOTLEY: Take away the user fee, Neil.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, in terms of dealing with emergency situations and special cases, I certainly can't indicate to the House all the rules and regulations that the social workers work by. If the hon. members has seen the manual, it is quite thick.

In terms of the concerns that have been expressed relative to the needs of social allowance recipients, however, the regional and district offices are dealing with the difficult situations on a special-consideration basis. The information I have is that that special-consideration basis is meeting the needs of social allowance recipients.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary by the hon. member.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. Is the minister aware that the city of Edmonton Social Services Advisory Committee has endorsed this program? I wonder if that makes any difference in terms of how serious he pretends this report is.

DR. WEBBER: When the hon. member says they endorse this program, I don't know what he's talking about.

MR. MARTIN: Let me say it slower for the minister, so he understands it. The Edmonton Social Services Advisory Committee has said that this report is correct and urged the minister to do something about it. What will the minister do now?

DR. CARTER: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. How many supplemental is this member going to be allowed to ask this afternoon?

MR. SPEAKER: The number of supplementaries is, as you know, always at the discretion of the Speaker. I try to gauge it according to the number of members whom I anticipate want to ask questions. I realize we've gone on a bit on this one. The hon. Leader of the Opposition had 10 supplementaries, the hon. leader of the Independents added one to that number, and the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood has now had five. We're starting to run short of time, and that's why I asked that this be the last supplementary. However, the question is really not in order. It's just a matter of trying to get the minister and the member to debate something that's somebody else's opinion about something. If the hon. member wants to deal with a question of policy or action, something dealing with fact, then perhaps he could rephrase the supplementary.

MR. MARTIN: This is a fact.

MR. SPEAKER: People's opinions are not facts, except the fact that they give them.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I'll pretend that he asked a question. On that basis, I think it's fair to say that any group or agency is totally free to back whatever report they care to. There's no attempt made on our part to try to stop that. If they want to back a report that I consider to be unscientific, that's their business.

MR. MARTIN: Where's your report?

Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Member for Lethbridge West, in his capacity as chairman of the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission. It follows the distribution of the annual report of the commission. There was a substantial increase in the budget in 1983. Was this incurred by an increase in services to Albertans or by the public media program?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, there was a welcome increase to one of the hardest-working agencies in the government of Alberta. [interjections] It was richly deserved.

To answer the question, it was dealing with treatment of alcohol and drug abuse problems, mainly with the operation of the David Lander Centre in Claresholm.

MR. STROMBERG: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering if the hon. member could explain why that equally

hardworking group, the John Howard Society, was cut out of all funding in this year's annual report.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, there's no obligation on any member of this House to answer a question, and I won't answer that.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the chairman. As many of the programs are informative and preventive in nature, what evaluation is carried out to determine the effectiveness of these programs?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, one of the requirements of the government of Alberta as the funding agent to AADAC, enunciated through the cabinet of Alberta, is that whatever program is put in place should have an evaluation system built into it. The member is asking with regard to the moderation or media campaign being carried out by AADAC, to the tune of some \$2 million. There is a built-in monitoring or evaluation process whereby each year the commission is able to record an evaluation of the effects of that.

In summary, I'd have to say that as chairman of the commission, I'm very satisfied that each program we commence, particularly the media campaign, has built into it an evaluation system.

MRS. EMBURY: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to add that I commend the commission for the publication *Zoot Capri*. Was this media campaign totally developed by staff personnel, or was it contracted out to the private sector?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the media campaign was contracted out to the private sector. I think the reason would be interesting. The staff at AADAC are there to conduct existing programs. Certainly in the area of influencing young Albertans, we look to the private sector as having the expertise to develop creative programs whereby they can indeed influence, primarily through the print and electronic media, positive life styles for our young people.

MRS. CRIPPS: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary on this topic. We're running out of time. The hon. Member for Calgary Egmont wishes to be recognized, and the hon. Minister of Labour is ready to give some further information that was previously requested.

MRS. CRIPPS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Impaired drivers convicted of an offence are often required to take a course from AADAC. How many impaired drivers were required to take that course, and how many actually took it?

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps we could deal with that by way of the Order Paper, since it's a request for statistics.

MRS. CRIPPS: Knowing the hon. member, I imagine he has them.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm not aware of any such arrangement, so I'm just dealing with it in the usual way.

MRS. CRIPPS: I'm not talking about arrangements; I'm talking about his facility for figures.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, my facility for figures has been arranged by the officials at AADAC; they are contained in the

booklet. Of the some 28,000 Albertans convicted last year — the highest in the nation for impaired driving, which is indicative of the good job the Solicitor General does — there were only some 16,000 who showed up to take the mandatory course to get their licences back.

Grain Handling

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Economic Development. Has the calling of the public service strike in British Columbia had any immediate effect upon the ability of the port of Vancouver to handle Alberta exports?

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, not at this time. That's a public service strike, and the longshoremens and others are private-sector unions.

DR. CARTER: Supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Is there any possibility that sympathy strikes might well develop, which would adversely affect the handling of grain on the Vancouver water front?

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member, I think that sort of research should be done outside the House.

Earth Sciences Building

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, last day the Leader of the Opposition asked several questions relative to the Earth Sciences Building. One of the questions had to do with the involvement of Department of Labour staff. I would like to advise today that the building in question is subject to the regulations of the fire codes; however, it is excluded from Uniform Building Standards Act application, in a legal sense. I am pleased to report that following an inspection, on May 17 a review was prepared for officials of the university as to the changes which would be required if the building were to be constructed today, under the 1981 code. We must keep in mind that the building was constructed 30 or 32 years ago, and it is not practical to make a direct comparison.

On August 19, following a certain type of headline in a newspaper in Edmonton, which caused some concern, the head of field services for the building standards branch and the regional administrator personally reviewed the building. Their conclusions were that with a few minor changes, such as increasing the fire rating of certain partitions from 40 minutes to one hour, this building — which is primarily of non-combustible construction and is just slightly over three storeys above ground — would be very safe and, in fact, would offer accommodation as safe as, if not safer than, many buildings in the province.

The end result and the conclusion of the most senior and expert officials in the Department of Labour is that all the building requires, from the point of view of the functions now performed there, is some relatively minor upgrading and that it is a reasonably safe building and certainly poses no potential or immediate harm to the occupants. None of the occupants are in the building for the purpose of sleeping or otherwise.

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps we could save the supplementaries. We have exceeded the question period time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Question No. 203 and motions for returns 207, 209, 210, and 212 stand.

[Motion carried]

head: **WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

205. Mr. Martin asked the government the following question:
What is the best estimate of the Department of Social Services and Community Health as to:
- (1) the number of social allowance recipients who have changed accommodation as a result of the reduction in the shelter subsidy ceilings, showing separate estimates by family size and by reason for assistance;
 - (2) the number of social allowance recipients who are paying shelter costs in excess of the new shelter subsidy ceilings, showing separate estimates by family size and by reason for assistance;
 - (3) the average amount being paid for shelter in excess of the new shelter subsidy ceilings, showing separate estimates by family size and by reason for assistance.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I propose that Question No. 205 be amended by replacing part (1) with "the number of social allowance cases who have changed accommodation, showing estimates of family size and by reason for assistance"; and by replacing "recipients" in part (2) with the word "cases".

MR. SPEAKER: I've not seen a copy of the motion. I'm going to put the question, if the House might agree that it won't be a precedent. Because I have some doubt whether a member's question may be amended in the same way as a member's motion. It is the member's question; he may not want to ask it if it's amended. However, assuming that this will not be a precedent, does the Assembly agree with the motion by the hon. minister?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is adopted.

211. Mr. Martin asked the government the following question:
With regard to the operations of the Cavanagh Board of Review into the child welfare system,
- (a) what is the total cost, paid and payable, of the operations of the board;
 - (b) what is the total cost, paid and payable, of legal counsel secured by the board;
 - (c) what is the name or names of the person or persons paid to supply the board with legal counsel?

AN HON. MEMBER: Agreed.

head: **MOTIONS FOR RETURNS**

195. Mr. Martin moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the 1983 evaluation of the Public Guardian's Office, undertaken by the planning secretariat of the Department of Social Services and Community Health.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, in terms of this motion for a return, the hon. member is requesting a copy of an evaluation of a particular office in the Department of Social Services and Community Health. Such evaluations are internal working reports; therefore I would recommend that it not be tabled.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, once again we get this government showing just how little regard they have for the release of public information. I would say that surely, in the last five years in this province, we have just gone through an

agonizing situation with child welfare legislation. We now have the government admitting that they have to do something about child welfare legislation. Four or five years ago we had members in this House smugly stand up and say everything was fine, till we had that dog food eating incident in Peace River and had to order the Cavanagh Board of Review to examine something where we should have taken action years ago. I know that with respect to the Public Guardian we're not dealing with child welfare legislation, but we are dealing with dependent adults. We are dealing with a very important area of social responsibility. We are dealing with the lives of many, many Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, the reason we're requesting this information is that rumors we get are that this report is an indictment, not of civil servants but of the government and its lack of commitment to follow through. It will be interesting to see how motions 196 and 197 are dealt with too, because I gather ...

AN HON. MEMBER: The same way.

MR. NOTLEY: Somebody says, the same way.

MR. MARTIN: The minister said that.

MR. NOTLEY: It doesn't surprise me at all. But I say that if we as legislators are going to be genuinely concerned about fulfilling our responsibilities, it isn't good enough just to wait until we see the headlines in a newspaper or watch the six o'clock news on television if there's some other horror story in the Department of Social Services and Community Health.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe there is any plausible excuse other than the embarrassment of this government for [not] releasing the information requested. I anticipate we'll have the same story with 196 and 197. If we do, then at the end of the three motions for returns we will find what the government is really saying they're going to do about the Cavanagh Board of Review, the hidden agenda.

I want to make it clear that 195 obviously doesn't relate to child welfare legislation. But it does relate to all the issues that surround those people we have set up legislation to protect. I remember in this House some years ago when we passed the Dependent Adults Act. Mr. Speaker, because there have been some concerns, I think it is not inappropriate at all that this evaluation of the Public Guardian's Office which was undertaken be tabled in the House so that the people of this province can evaluate the way in which this government is handling a social issue before it hits the headlines, rather than reacting to it after the fact.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to stand. I have to admit that I'm not surprised. I expect that if it had been a good document praising the department, the minister would have been only too glad to lay it out for public perusal. But again, by putting these things out in the public now, the whole point is that we can begin to do something about it before it gets to the point where we have to have another Cavanagh commission.

They say that the mark of a civilized society is how we treat the most defenceless in the society, and certainly dependent adults fall into that category. Obviously an important report has been done. What is wrong with us as legislators knowing what is in that report, so that we, the government and the opposition, can begin to make sure that if there are problems, we here — if we're wrong, we don't know, because we can't see the report. But if [they] were brought before this Legislature, in a public forum, we could begin to solve some of the problems. When they're left behind closed doors and nothing

is done, all that problems do is get worse. As my colleague said, the best example was five years ago when we were told everything was great and wonderful till we had the horror stories that were going on.

What we're trying to do is find out exactly what's going on in social services, and the best way would be to lay it out. Lay it out. What is there to hide? We were told by the Attorney General many times that we're such an open government we don't need freedom of information. Why do we keep coming back to these things? A report is done by the Department of Social Services and Community Health and we as legislators in Alberta are not going to be allowed to look at it to try to do something valuable, something that we could do.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I expect that if it had been positive, we'd probably get it. But now all it does is confirm our worst suspicions about what's happening in that area. I would hope — although I'm not holding my breath — that members would start to take their positions here as legislators seriously and vote that this be tabled.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion lost]

196. Mr. Martin moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of Compulsory Care in Alberta, a report prepared by the Department of Social Services and Community Health concerning the compulsory care program for juvenile delinquents.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, Motion for a Return 196 is requesting a report prepared by the Department of Social Services and Community Health. I appreciate the help that's offered by the hon. members of the Official Opposition in terms of improving any particular area of the department. However, I think hon. members would recognize the importance of being able to look at doing assessments and preparing internal documents to assist the department and minister responsible to make decisions and to improve the system.

In terms of the child welfare area, since reference was made to it, hon. members all have copies of the Cavanagh Board of Review report. Certainly that was not work done in isolation from work going on in the department. I indicated to the Assembly that later in this session of the Legislature, we would be putting before the House a new child welfare Act to die on the Order Paper, and for new legislation to be brought in, in the spring. But in order to prepare for that particular legislation, one has to have officials in the department provide information and prepare working documents for the minister. In the case of 196, that is the case, and, since it is an internal working report, once again I recommend that this motion be rejected.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, what we have at this stage is an effort to construe every possible report as the kind of confidential advice a minister would receive from his deputy. No one is suggesting that we want personal files dug out here. What we're talking about is a report that is dealing with the question of compulsory care in Alberta.

Presumably in the next while — the minister tells us, possibly next spring — we're going to deal with legislation regarding child welfare in this province, although knowing this government's ability to procrastinate, I'm not entirely sure we'll actually get around to it. Presuming that the minister is able to convince his colleagues in caucus to agree, we are going to be pressing ahead, and well we should. But how can members of the Assembly press ahead on something as important as changes to a vital piece of legislation if we don't have relevant

material at our disposal? The minister can say we have the Cavanagh Board of Review. But what do we find in the Cavanagh Board of Review? We find that even the board of review had important information withheld from it by this government. The minister said, oh, I didn't think I should make that information available; I didn't want to upset the commissioners of the board of review. Even the board of review people have to say, through Justice Cavanagh, that that kind of action was presumptuous.

Mr. Speaker, here we have the same attitude that the former Minister of Social Services and Community Health took with respect to releasing information to the Cavanagh Board of Review. We have the same attitude that seems to dwell in the mind of the current minister: we're going to keep information away from this Assembly. On what? On compulsory care, an important aspect of juvenile problems in Alberta. I understand that one of the difficulties we have is a vast increase in the number of young people that are put in compulsory care institutions, a process which started with about 150 cases and we're now looking at 1,500 cases a year. That has created problems.

Four years ago I had an opportunity to look at the Westfield institution in the city of Edmonton. One of the concerns I had in travelling through that institution — notwithstanding the public controversy that had been raised in the Legislature — was the genuine problem that the administration had to deal with because this government wasn't giving sufficient attention to properly funding these kinds of institutions. It's fine to say we want a hard, Tory, right-wing position, law and order, lock them up. But what are you going to do with the institutions? To what extent are we going to then find that the casualties are young people whose lives are lost because of this route?

Mr. Speaker, we understand — and all we can go on is the basis of a public service which is increasingly not very happy with this government and that from time to time discussion occurs. While I have not seen this report, I understand that it is also critical of the government, and that the major reason — the sort of coffee row speculation — it's not being released is that it's embarrassing to the Department of Social Services and Community Health.

Mr. Speaker, we had a former minister of the Crown with the unmitigated gall to deny information to a board of inquiry, and now we have the current minister standing up and saying, this is information which really shouldn't be shared with the Assembly. This government reacts to crises after they hit the front page of the *Edmonton Journal*. But when in heaven's name are we going to see some leadership in this Legislature in dealing with issues before they become political controversy? If this Assembly is going to have any credibility at all when we deal with changes in child welfare legislation in this province, we have to have all the relevant information made available.

It may be that some of that information is going to make the current minister uncomfortable. It may be that it's going to make the government's lack of action over the last four or five years look as it is — a case of neglect. It may be politically uncomfortable. One of the things that comes with leadership is that you have to be prepared to take the knocks as well as the boosts. If you're going to be flitting off to give a speech someplace, you also have to be prepared to face the criticism that comes when things don't go well. This government can herald good news, but it has a terrible tendency to try to hide bad news. As legislators, our obligation is to find out what the facts are before we make important changes.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would just say that my colleague is asking for information which every single member, whether on the government or opposition side of the House,

should have before we make changes in legislation that will affect the young people of this province.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. member conclude the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I imagine we could make this speech 100 times, but with a big majority, they just sit there on their hands and say public documents are internal documents. I am told that this report on compulsory care was written as a public document; it was not written as an internal document. It has now become an internal document because it's embarrassing to the government. That's the only reason. It was set up as a public document, and the minister knows full well that that's the case. But because it is embarrassing . . . We are told some things — as my colleague said, we are set up for 150 over the whole province to be locked up in compulsory care, and we are now to 1,500 a month. We are told that it may even criticize the judicial system.

Why are we as legislators not given this report, Mr. Speaker? It makes no sense at all if we are to be making policy. Even the backbenchers would probably like to get some information now and again. Why do we not have this? We cannot hide behind internal documents when this was set up to be a public document. I think this is basically a charade, especially when the Attorney General tells us that we do not need freedom of information in this province. If there is any province or any government in Canada that needs freedom of information, it's this one, when we see what's happening right here today.

[Motion lost]

197. Mr. Martin moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of each of two reports initiated in 1981 and prepared by the Department of Social Services and Community Health concerning the foster care system, one entitled Foster Parents in Alberta and the other Foster Children in Alberta.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, for the same reasons as the previous two motions for returns, I would recommend that members defeat this particular one.

MR. NOTLEY: Isn't that surprising?

AN HON. MEMBER: A broken record.

MR. NOTLEY: Someone says "broken record". Yes, it certainly is a broken record if one wants to plead the case for democracy and openness as far as this government is concerned, because we don't get to first base. I think poor John Diefenbaker would be rolling over in his grave if he had to listen to the kind of nonsense that we get from members on the front bench when they don't want to make information available.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's worth . . .

MR. ALEXANDER: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if we might follow the hon. member's earlier suggestion: instead of repeating the same speech 100 times over, he could make us a tape so we could listen to it at our leisure.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Alberta New Democratic Party would be quite happy to sell you tapes, hon. member.

I would like to deal with the motion, however, and just note what we're asking for here. We are asking for information concerning the foster care system. Mr. Speaker, I don't really understand how members on that side of the House can seriously object to the release of information on something as basic to the child welfare legislation in this province as foster care. If any of us had paid any attention to the Cavanagh Board of Review at all — I don't know how many members have even read it.

MR. MARTIN: Not the minister.

MR. NOTLEY: Today I noticed that the minister hadn't even read his own departmental memorandum, which is really quite incredible. I don't know what he's getting a salary for if he doesn't read the rules he's sending out to social workers.

MR. MARTIN: He's on welfare.

MR. NOTLEY: What does he do? Just sign everything that comes on his desk?

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that, by the minister's own admission, we are being asked to look at important changes in legislation in the next year. We have the Cavanagh Board of Review detailing some of the problems with our foster care system in this province — one child gone from one place to another 37 times. Some of the members in this House sneer and sort of catcall and giggle. It's not something to catcall and giggle about when you think of what you're doing to the life of a child — 37 times. How many of us, no matter where we sit, could smirk if that was a child of our own family or someone we knew? That's a shocking thing.

Mr. Speaker, it's time that we as legislators got away from trying to play the high roller role, flitting off to New York to give a speech or having tuxedos or the next best thing to it at Kananaskis park when you play golf. It's time we began to take seriously our duties about the legislation we have direct responsibility for. Changes in child welfare legislation are not something we can blame on Ottawa. It's not Ottawa's fault. It's our responsibility. And we can only make judgments on the basis of the information which has been compiled.

I just want to close by saying that, yes, there has been a similarity, because the three reports we've made reference to this afternoon — all three reports, as we understand it — blast this government for neglect, incompetence, and inaction. Mr. Speaker, I know that politicians don't like to make this information available. I know that it would be nice to be able to say: let's keep away from the public, information which shows we aren't doing a good enough job, because it may mean that we have to pay more money; it won't fit in with the Provincial Treasurer's new gospel of restraint. But if we fail to act, then when those problems occur as they did in 1979 in the Westfield institution, as they did in 1980 in Peace River — all of a sudden we found people who a few months before said there were no problems at all.

Now we have the minister himself saying that our legislation is badly out of date and needs to be overhauled. But the casualties — and not the casualties in this House. If it were the politicians who were the casualties, it would be one thing. But the casualties are the people who need our help. We're talking about foster care, young children who need our help, and we're simply saying, business as usual. Wendy Koenig won't write any more bad articles in the *Edmonton Journal*, so we can go back to sleep. And thousands of young children can pay the price of Tory neglect.

Mr. Speaker, that isn't good enough. Let them produce this kind of information so that all members, regardless of which side of the House they sit on, can take their duties seriously.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I've been involved in this debate since 1971, the very same debate over and over again. I can appreciate the comments of the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud with regard to the repetition of debate such as this. But in light of policy making, I think the point is often well taken in the Legislature that more information, up-to-date information which this certainly would be . . . A new minister has taken over the portfolio. Tomorrow is the first anniversary of the government's new reign, the first year in terms of the minister's responsibilities.

Certainly there were things wrong. In the Department of Social Services and Community Health, there are always going to be difficulties. There are always going to be problems that are not quite solved. But I think it would stand well if the minister — and the government in other responsibilities, but specifically this one — after a year of administration could table in this Legislature documents that say, look, there are some things that are just not right; I'm going to take this next period of time between now and a year from now and, by the second anniversary, I will have some solutions. Not all of them, because you never will; the system will never be perfect. Thousands of years have proven that particular statement. I just urge other members of this government to consider that admission of problems, admission of programs which are not being administered correctly, is often a positive thing. Trying to conceal it and not revealing it in the Legislature often creates an adversary attitude — and that's what's happening right now — that maybe isn't necessary in good positive program development by the government.

I think the minister and others in the government should reconsider when they continue to refuse to give information because it's an internal document. Maybe the document is just a statistical analysis. It would be nice for the minister to say: oh, I've looked it over; sure, it criticizes me and some of the department, but here it is; if you have some positive alternatives, give them to me; but I'm going to try to solve the problem, so get off my back. He could say to the opposition members: leave me alone; if you have positive alternatives to give back to me, then suggest them; I've enumerated the problems, but if you can't give any positive suggestions, I'm going to try to do my best, whatever it is, and after a period of time I'll step down as minister and somebody else can do it. But the material is in this Legislature for discussion. It's open, and I think it would be a rather positive and most likely novel approach not only for this government but for other governments across Canada. It would be so open that it would take away all the defences of many others.

So, Mr. Speaker, in making comments to the minister, I'd appreciate if he'd consider other motions for returns on that basis. I think it would certainly be a step ahead in matters such as this. But I know what's going to happen to this motion, and certainly I'll let the process take its course.

MR. SPEAKER: May the hon. member conclude the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly wouldn't want to bore the new right, so I will be rather short, because I think the arguments have been made. I would say to the minister on these specific reports too: Foster Parents in Alberta and Foster Children in Alberta were intended to be

public documents. They were set out that way; they were not internal documents. The minister shakes his head. Well, if that's the case, show us and I'll take it back. All you have to do is bring it here and we'll take a look at it, before you shake your head. Then we'll be able to know. But until we have evidence, that's what we're told. I think some of our other rumors have been pretty good in terms of the content of the report.

The other point: when we had the Cavanagh report tabled, the minister said he is looking at a new child welfare Act. He is going to ask the Legislature to look at a new child welfare Act, perhaps tabled this fall and brought back in the spring. If we as legislators want to do a proper job there, we should have the evidence to indicate what would make a good child welfare Act. And certainly Foster Parents in Alberta and Foster Children in Alberta were a very big part of the Cavanagh report. If the minister has other evidence — as I say, it started off as a public document — that would be of help to members on both sides of the House, I think that would help make this a better document when he brought it back.

The minister indicated that he was going to table it because he wanted discussion, and perhaps bring it back in the spring. Well what better way, in terms of foster care, than to table it here in the House so members of the Legislature, from both the government side and from the opposition side, can take a look at it and come up with some alternatives. It seems to me that would make eminent good sense if we wanted a good child welfare Act. The minister indicated that's what he wanted, because he wanted some discussion; I remember him saying that. So I cannot understand why, then, he would refuse to put this in the Legislature so we can take a look at it as a public document. He's going to get more discussion back about it. Even if this specific report about foster parents was damning the government, which I expect it is, the minister would be able to say, look, that's fine, but I'm coming back with a new child welfare Act. He wouldn't even get that much flak at this point. But again, we have this penchant for secrecy, and we're afraid of the truth, no matter what. I expect it's a government too long in power and growing a little inward looking. But hope springs eternal, so we'll have the vote on the motion now.

Thank you.

[Motion lost]

208. Mr. R. Speaker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:
- For each of the prototype expandable hospitals that have been completed or are in construction or planning in the province:
- (a) the location,
 - (b) the capacity,
 - (c) the completion date or anticipated completion date,
 - (d) the proposed use for any previous hospital replaced.

[Motion carried]

head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

204. Moved by Mr. Kowalski:
- Be it resolved that the Assembly express its concern over current employment levels in Alberta and, further, that the Department of Manpower be commended for its innovative and speedy action in implementing substantial job-creation programs to assist thousands of Alberta citizens.

[Adjourned debate March 29: Mr. Hiebert]

MR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Member for Edmonton Gold Bar, I beg leave to resume debate on Motion No. 204. The importance of this motion . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. PAPROSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The importance of this motion is very evident, given the current economic downturn in the Alberta economy. In the last few years the province of Alberta has experienced unprecedented change, affected simultaneously by world economic recession, the national energy program, a fall in the demand for energy, and the overbuilding and excess in-migration caused by the 1970 resource boom. The province must adjust to a new economic environment. In the meantime, the human cost in terms of unemployment must be addressed.

I'd like to commend the Department of Manpower for addressing this problem and implementing numerous job-creation programs. The quickness of this department in reacting reflects its concern and commitment to the current situation for all Albertans. The programs provide work for the unemployed. As well, they provide valuable work experience and emphasize job retraining.

Let me touch upon just a few of the programs that have been made available by this department. First, I'll deal with the programs directed at the province's youth, since they are among the hardest hit by the economic downturn. The Alberta youth employment program is a six-month wage subsidy program in which the government provides funds up to 50 per cent of an employee's wages to a certain limit if the jobs provide skill development or training and are additions to existing jobs. In this particular program alone, \$5 million has been allocated.

Another program aimed at youth is the summer temporary employment program, which I'm sure many members are aware of. This provides jobs for up to 6,000 high school and post-secondary students. The main elements of this program are provincial government department hiring, community employment hiring, and summer farm employment. Each job helps to improve the youth employment level and provide valuable work experience needed to help find future employment. Because of the importance of this program to students, I'm very pleased to see the dramatic increase from \$7.8 million to \$12 million in the funds allocated to STEP this past year.

Under the Canada/Alberta new employment expansion and development program — in short form, the NEED program — the provincial and federal governments have each provided approximately half of the \$22.5 million committed to this program, which is expected to create some 3,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, with a funding commitment of \$25.9 million, the priority employment program will provide employment and training opportunities for approximately 9,200 Albertans during the upcoming winter months. This program provides support for business and farm employment, employer based industrial training, research and development, and work experience for apprentices. As well, another component of this program provides support for training in skill shortage areas in private vocational schools. Each of these areas offers opportunities in distinct fields, yet they have one thing in common: they facilitate job training and career development.

Mr. Speaker, these are some of the more prominent programs that the Department of Manpower has initiated. Of course there are more. Even with this concern and commitment to alleviating

the conditions of the unemployed, there will still be opposition to this motion, based on the belief that the government is still not doing enough. The government could provide more funding, but this is not the total solution. Rather, the key to economic recovery in Alberta will stem from policies that will encourage the private sector. The role of the government should be to develop temporary positions that provide training to help an individual enter the private-sector work place when jobs become available.

This government does not want to manage the economy by excess spending, as this would only create jobs in the short run and, in the long run, destroy the viability of the province's economy. This does not mean that the government should totally rely on the private sector to employ the population. The job creation programs outlined earlier recognize that the private sector, and therefore the provincial economy, is going through a period of adjustment. To lessen the adverse effects of this adjustment on Albertans, the Department of Manpower has accordingly created numerous jobs. The department's innovative initiatives serve to combat unemployment and develop a trained work force that will enable the province to achieve balanced long-term growth.

What we have, Mr. Speaker, is a concern with short-run and long-run viability, and a strong belief that the private sector is the long-run solution to economic growth. The government can facilitate and provide the stimuli for growth, but it cannot replace it. This belief is reflected in the types of job-creation programs implemented, which have a strong private-sector emphasis, upgrading the skills of workers and allowing businesses to start up or complete projects otherwise cancelled or postponed.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, in supporting this motion, I would again like to commend the hon. Minister of Manpower for the measures he has taken not only to aid Albertans in the near future but to contribute to the development of a valuable and variable economy in the longer term.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, if I could just add a couple of words before the question is called, I'd like to commend the Member for Barrhead for bringing forward this most important concern. It's one that I think every member of the Assembly recognizes and shares. It's extremely relevant that it be debated. I think each of us would like to emphasize the concern we have within our own constituencies and commend the government for actions it has taken.

We have a limited amount of time this afternoon, knowing that we have to adjourn in a few minutes and that the mover of the motion may wish to sum up. But I did wish to briefly express the concerns of the constituency I represent, applaud the moves that have been made, and look forward to new initiatives on the part of the minister responsible for manpower development, as he has great challenges ahead of him, which all members of the Assembly, I am sure, will support him.

Thank you.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments this afternoon to speak on the motion, where we're talking about the employment situation as it applies to this province and the great and wonderful things that the government has done to enhance employment.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the Assembly that the government backbenchers especially seem to be living in a wonderland or something. They don't seem to be understanding or listening to the constituents to find out what's going on in the real world. I found it very interesting when the Minister of

Manpower used a set of statistics that told us how many people are employed, not how many people are unemployed. I have to give the minister credit for taking the offensive and trying to sort of water down the facts of how many people we have unemployed in this province. And that, of course, is a direct result of the policies of this government.

I'd like to know if it was the Prime Minister of Canada or the Premier of this province that turned the oil taps off. It was a policy of this government. But it's the policy of this government to always be blaming somebody else for their shortcomings. Had this government had the foresight to divorce Alsands and Imperial Esso in Cold Lake from the energy agreement, this province would not have felt the recession. We went through a recessionary cycle in 1973 or thereabouts. People in other parts of Canada were feeling a downturn in the economy, but not here in Alberta because the oil economy was booming at that time, not because of policies of this government but because OPEC had jacked up the price of world oil and we rode along on that escalation. So let's not stand here trying to twist our arms out of shape patting ourselves on the back for something we didn't do.

Then we have the audacity to turn statistics around and say, look at all the people that are employed. Well most of the time 95 to 97 per cent of the people are employed. But the cold, hard statistic is, how many are unemployed? Mr. Speaker, it's going to be interesting when this government, in its benevolence, is raising the personal income tax 13 per cent. What is that going to do for the unemployed people in this province? Are they going to be proud of that statistic when more businesses go down the tube?

We hear so much from this government — they understand that it's the private sector that generates jobs. But in question period this afternoon, hon. Member for Barrhead, look at how many parts of the private sector this government is getting into. And it's going to be quite interesting to see who does buy PWA. I think we'll probably go ahead and try to convince many private investors to buy PWA, because I don't think PWA is ever going to make a profit.

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh now.

DR. BUCK: Oh now. Fine. It was quite a trick of this government that when they wanted to make the balance statement of PWA look good, they would sell a 707. You know, they've run out of selling 707s. They've run out of airplanes to sell. That used to be a favorite trick of the Minister of Transportation at that time, the hon. Dr. Horner. A great thing. Sell another airplane and make the balance statement look good.

The same thing with the old heritage fund. It's not going to exist in this province in five more years at the present rate this government is squandering the fund. If they were to balance the books or come someplace close, they'd have to take another \$1 billion out of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. So \$2.2 billion times five comes to what the Heritage Savings Trust Fund is. That fund is not going to be there when we're talking about future Albertans. This government's record of providing jobs is not that good. So what is this government going to do? What are they going to do to stimulate the private sector?

The Minister of Manpower well knows what certain stimulations in certain areas can do for an economy. I don't tell tales out of school, but this is one I can tell because I think it concerns us all. The hon. Minister of Culture, myself, and the hon. Member for Vegreville were down in the Maritimes. We saw that with judicious use of the taxpayer's dollar you can stimulate the economy. We saw three provincially funded golf courses, two in Prince Edward Island and one in New Bruns-

wick. They were in an area that stimulated tourist business. They were a stimulator in that part of the country to stimulate the economy.

If we had taken, as was brought up previously, \$50 million out of some of the waste in Kananaskis, we could have had 50, \$1 million golf courses in this province. The hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud might even have been able to be a touring pro. He'd make more money than he would in his job as a member of the Assembly, I'll tell you that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

DR. BUCK: This government has not spent the taxpayer's money wisely, to create jobs. You can do it that way. You don't have to get involved in the private sector, as we've done through PWA, Cardinal Coal, and AGT. Why does this government not learn to stay out of the private sector? They're supposedly a free-enterprise government. I say "supposedly" because all the things they're doing lead me to believe they've forgotten some of their free-enterprise principles.

Mr. Speaker, I just . . . [interjection] Not as much as I do. What socialism does that come from? I believe in the private sector. If I were a member of this caucus, I wouldn't be sitting back there with a muzzle on letting this government get involved in the private sector as much as it is. [interjections] That's right, and nobody would ever tell me. I don't have to have puppet strings so I know what to say.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that I believe the Assembly wishes to adjourn for the afternoon, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: It is so ordered.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, in order that the members can now attend the meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, I move that the Assembly adjourn until 8 p.m. this evening.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The House recessed at 4:16 p.m. and resumed at 8 p.m.]

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

Bill 81
Electoral Boundaries Commission
Amendment Act, 1983

[Debate adjourned October 31]

MR. SPEAKER: Before the Assembly resumes debate on this Bill, I should make reference to three matters with regard to an amendment to the motion proposed yesterday that the Bill be read a second time. The first was a point of order raised by the hon. Government House Leader concerning whether the

amendment was in order. Secondly, some members indicated privately that the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood should have been recognized again after his motion to adjourn debate on the proposed amendment was rejected. Thirdly, we had a division, or recorded vote, which went beyond the time of adjournment.

Concerning the first, it should be observed that the amendment asked that the Bill be referred. It should have proposed that the subject matter of the Bill be referred. That may be a narrow, technical point, but it is supported by *Beauchesne* and *Erskine May*. Debate on referring the Bill may well be rather indistinguishable from debate on referring the subject matter, but there is more substance to it than that. The debate on the amendment proposed yesterday was very wide ranging indeed. It referred repeatedly to the subject matter of the Bill, even though the amendment itself referred to the Bill.

Ordinarily, as all hon. members know, a Bill coming to a vote on a motion that it be read a second time would either be rejected in principle, and there would then be no further proceedings in regard to the Bill, or it would, if approved in principle, stand referred automatically to Committee of the Whole for examination of its text. As we all know, the Committee of the Whole could propose amendments to the text but not amendments to the principle as approved by the House on second reading.

The proposed amendment would have referred the Bill to a completely different and smaller committee, the Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing. That committee has no power to amend the text. Neither may that committee usurp the function of the House with regard to approval in principle, or even recommend that the House approve or not approve the Bill in principle. Approval in principle is reserved solely to the House. Hence, it is clear to see why, regardless of the similarity of debate, it is the subject matter and not the Bill itself which may be referred to a committee in such an amendment. Both *Beauchesne's* fifth edition at pages 225, 226, and 227, and *Erskine May's* 19th edition at pages 498 to 501 also support this rule concerning referral of the subject matter rather than referral of the Bill. Indeed, *Beauchesne* goes further in Citation 749 by saying that an amendment may not "defer second reading . . . until the subject-matter has been considered by a committee". It may not do that. Without such a deferral, a motion to turn the Bill over to a committee would be impractical and perhaps impossible.

Coming to the second matter — whether a member, having moved adjournment of debate, may be recognized again to re-enter the debate once his motion to adjourn the debate has been defeated: clearly he may not. Some hon. members, again privately, referred to an occurrence here — I think it was on April 14, 1981 — when, after the budget speech had been read, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, instead of following the usual custom of moving to adjourn debate, started his speech on the budget motion and later on asked for leave to adjourn the debate. That motion was rejected by the House. There was some indication by various members urging him to continue with the debate, and he did so, while the Speaker was, shall we say, fidgeting here and wondering whether this was in order and eventually deciding it wasn't. Thereupon there was a motion of the House passed unanimously giving the hon. Leader of the Opposition leave to continue, notwithstanding the defeat of his motion to adjourn. In fact it almost went beyond giving him leave; I think it urged him to do that.

In any case, it's clear that when a member has moved adjournment of the debate, he must then give up his possession of the floor. We say that a person speaking has the floor. A member who moves adjournment must give up the floor,

because otherwise the question on the adjournment may not be put. Once that happens, he has concluded speaking and in order to speak again would have to have unanimous permission to speak twice on the same motion, amendment, or subamendment. That also is clearly supported in *Beauchesne*.

With regard to the third matter, we had a call for a recorded vote, and I went ahead with the recorded vote without first asking the House for leave to continue beyond the appointed time for adjournment.

I'm sorry. Perhaps hon. members would like to take their places.

[Mr. Speaker sat while some hon. members entered the Chamber]

In any event, it was somewhat too informal, and on a future occasion, if we should happen to run into a situation where the taking of a recorded vote is going to take us beyond our normal adjournment hour, it would be my intention to ask the House to decide either to stop the clock or to defer the taking of the vote until debate on that particular item is called again.

I thank hon. members for their attention. In view of what happened yesterday, it seemed that a statement like this might be necessary.

MR. MARTIN: I know we're all anxious for the question, but I think we'd like the debate on a very important Bill to continue. When we decide to dismantle democracy, we want to talk about it a little while.

First of all, on a more technical point, before I get to the main matter, I too would like to make reference to 12, where the commission establishes the various urban ridings, and say to the minister, through you, Mr. Speaker, that it makes good sense to us that something be done with Fort McMurray, for the simple reason that if we look at the populations of Sherwood Park and St. Albert, we find that they have roughly the same populations. That's one part of it. So it would seem that perhaps Fort McMurray is being short-changed.

The other point about the Fort McMurray riding, for anybody that's organized — the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray is not here — but it is a huge geographical area besides. It includes and goes down south past Lac La Biche, which is a major town in the south end with a number of thousands of people, right up to the boundary. So besides a population that is approximately the same size as Sherwood Park and St. Albert, which have city ridings, it is a huge geographical area that probably takes up a fifth of the population, and would make it very, very difficult, I would think, for one member to service well. So I would make representation to the minister to see if they can look at that when the time occurs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'll get back to the main point, the one that bothers us the most. Of course that's where we've decided that somehow — a new change — the opposition is not entitled to the same representation on this commission as the government members. The reason, as I understood the minister when I listened, is that because we have now something like 95 per cent of the members, we'll knock down the seats. Basically, the opposition is smaller; therefore, we should take away their representation in terms of equal representation. That's a very interesting argument, and I heard it before. I heard it on the Members' Services Committee when the opposition budget was decimated, that somehow democracy is determined by how many people in one election get put into the opposition. I suppose we know what happened in the last election. I'm well aware that the total opposition was elected by 1,500 votes. So

I would take it then that if it was the total government — even though the popular vote, 38 per cent of the people, did not vote for the government — from thereon in there would be no opposition around, that we should just put government members on.

I'm not sure that I understand the logic. I see the backbenchers are pounding again, because they're not very fond of democracy anyhow. Frankly, the logic escapes me, because as I pointed out yesterday — and I'm sure I'm now in order — when we go every place else in Canada, except for the two *ad hoc* committees, we are going to be the most political province around in setting our electoral boundaries. The government may feel that this is beneficial to them, Mr. Speaker, that somehow they can gerrymander a boundary here or a boundary there to make sure they have the same number of people elected as they have now. The point is, though, if there's any hope left — and I know that this government, back in '69 talked, about gerrymandering from the old Social Credit government, but at least there was equal representation of the politicians on both sides there. I am suggesting that if this is now the way we determine democracy, by how many members you elect in each different election, then democracy in Alberta is in very sad shape.

I would say to hon. members, and especially to the minister, that if they were sitting over here on the opposition side and this Bill were brought in by, say, the former Social Credit government — if the Member for Little Bow was sitting in their position over there and he brought in this Bill — would they be happy with this Bill? But all of a sudden they say: oh, that makes eminent good sense, because we have the majority of people. Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the minister would be very upset if he were sitting on this side and saw a Bill like that. I'm sure he'd be one of the first to rise to his feet to protest. I'm sure he'd be making a very similar speech to the one I'm making right now.

The point that I really don't understand is, how do we determine this in the future? These electoral boundaries, in my understanding, will go for two elections. Let me throw out the hypothesis that next time, the Conservatives are the opposition. I know that's not a very nice proposition for the members. They may not realize it, but they're not here by divine right. The voters are going to kick them out; it may be the next election. But let's say that they're sitting over here in the next election. Are they going to feel so good about this Bill when they have a new government sitting across there?

I would say this to the government: think ahead to the future, because the next government would certainly have the right to keep the Bill that they brought in. When that Conservative government was in opposition, they'd feel pretty powerless with the new boundaries commission that they'd set up, and they wouldn't be able to talk about it very much either, as the next government could gerrymander them right out of existence.

While I know it seems to the government that they will be here for a long time, Mr. Speaker, when they're bringing in a Bill, if they're really interested in the democratic process, first of all they should honestly analyse if it as a fair Bill. I think the minister knows it's not. I think the minister is a very intelligent man; he knows exactly what he's doing here. The other point that they should always remember is that in a democracy, even with gerrymandering, people eventually rebel, and they could be sitting over on this side. If they were sitting on this side, would they think this was a fair Bill? I suggest that the reaction from this Conservative government, the people that were in opposition, the few that were left — they didn't think even the Social Credit Bill at the time was fair, and they were complaining about it. How would they feel now? I would just

say to hon. members: think about what it would be like — if you would think it was a fair Bill — if you came over to this side.

The other point, and I can come to no other conclusion, is that this is gerrymandering at its best. I said, only half facetiously, that the minister will be known as the gerrymandering minister, because those reputations live with us, as we know from Quebec and other provinces. But the point that I really don't understand is — there they sit, elected in 75 out of 79 ridings; four of us squeaked in by 1,500 votes and all of a sudden we see that they're going to change the rules of the boundary commission, as if they're frightened that they're going to lose a few more seats. I don't understand this sort of overwhelming paranoia that's developing; I really do not understand it. I would think, when they get a mandate like that, people would be gracious and continue with the Electoral Boundary Commission that worked relatively well in the past. It certainly hasn't hurt the Conservatives in terms of the numbers of people they elected in the last election. But no, we see this big government, worried all the time, inward-looking, worried that the people may rebel against them. So they're going to turn all the rules around, even against a small opposition. It's when governments get like this that they really start to run into trouble with the voters.

The voters are not stupid. They wonder why the government had to do this. I've had calls already: why are they doing this; have they not enough seats; do they want all 79; are they so worried about a small opposition that they have to go around and make sure there is no opposition next time; are they that worried about democracy in action?

Mr. Minister, you may be surprised. The mouths of some of the backbenchers work a little ahead of the brains. Some of them have actually told me — and they're quite proud about it — well, there goes Norwood; ha, ha, ha; and there goes Little Bow; ha, ha, ha. You should listen over there. You're saying it's a fair Bill, and these people are saying exactly what you don't want to hear. They're calling it gerrymandering, and they're quite proud of it, Mr. Speaker. You should listen to the comments. I'm saying that maybe they know something we don't. Maybe you'd better tell the backbenchers to handle it in a public relations manner like the minister does. I think that the backbenchers are probably close to what the government is attempting to do.

In conclusion, the point that I try to make is this: governments have tried to gerrymander so obviously in the past, but there is a point when people get angry enough at the government that they're not going to be able to gerrymander all the boundaries, because everybody's going to be mad at them. When they do silly little Bills like this that are unnecessary, it just makes people madder and madder. They can gerrymander all they want, but when the time has come for a tired old government that pulls tricks like this, the people will speak, no matter where the boundaries are. That's something they had better remember, because there have been examples in the past of governments that have tried to gerrymander and got thrown right out in the next election. I hope they keep that in mind.

The point that I'm trying to make is that I believe that if this government had any decency at all, they would be with the small opposition saying, we'll at least keep it even. But no, they've got to cut the opposition down because it's smaller. It would be better if there were two, better if there was one, better if there was nothing, because then we could just go through and pass our Bills with no hassle at all. I believe that this Bill is fundamental to democracy in the future. It may be, as I pointed out, that after the Conservatives are in opposition, they'll wish this Bill wasn't there. The government of the day

is not going to be so generous, because they'll know who brought it in. So I would say that if there is any time at all for them, if they care about democracy, if they care about the future, they should go back and take a look at this. So far we haven't been able to get them to do that.

Because of this, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to bring in an amendment, that I'm sure is totally in order. I move that the motion for second reading of Bill 81, Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 1983, be amended as follows:

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

"this Assembly declines to give a second reading to Bill 81, Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act; 1983, because the Bill is, in principle, inconsistent with the previously accepted democratic norms established by this Assembly for the purpose of reviewing electoral boundaries."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, rising to address a few comments on the reasoned amendment which is presented to the House tonight — and I would just note that if any of the backbenchers are interested they might check *Beauchesne*. The reasoned amendment deals with the basic question of the principle and suggests that the principle is totally "inconsistent with the previously accepted democratic norms established by this Assembly for the purpose of reviewing electoral boundaries".

Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House have asked: what is the government afraid of; why do they have to change the rules? Members in this House have had an opportunity to look back on the history of the process — a gradual process, I might add — of moving toward an equitable method of redistributing constituencies in this province. What we see in this Bill today is an effort to turn back the clock. That is wrong if you accept the democratic principles that I think most of us believe and all of us profess to support.

One of the members today, in a jocular way, made reference to Grenada. I am wondering how far removed we are from the shameful state of affairs in some of these countries where democratic rights are taken away from people. One of the issues that led to the revolution in 1979 was the shabby redrawing of boundaries by the Gairy regime and the practice of gerrymandering.

Mr. Speaker, the question is, what are we going to be doing in Alberta? I'll tell you what we're going to be doing in Alberta. Instead of moving further along the road to an acceptable democratic method of redrawing boundaries, we are taking a step back. We're not only taking a step back, we're taking a giant step back. We are going back to the worst kind of precedent one can find in Canadian history; a precedent where the government uses its legislative majority to so dominate the committee redrawing the boundaries that, in fact, we're going to have not only all kinds of charges of partisanship but there is going to be at least some danger of the reality of partisanship.

Members in the opposition have made reference to some of the catcalls. Some of the members may think they're rather funny. But when they make references about what they are going to do to this riding or that riding, the final solution to the little opposition — perhaps I borrow a phrase that has sort of ugly connotations — one sees in that a change in a practice which was developed and which seemed to work. The Member for Little Bow quite properly raises the point: if you have something that works, why change it?

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the boundary commission seven years ago, a boundary commission that worked . . .

MRS. FYFE: Oh.

MR. NOTLEY: Somebody says, "oh". Why change a boundary commission that worked?

Mr. Speaker, if hon. members wish to make observations now about the report of the boundary commission, fair enough. I don't seem to recall those kinds of statements being made in the House in 1977 when the report was tabled and the Bill was presented. But if there had been eleventh-hour conversions on the road to Damascus about the report in 1977, I would be very interested in hearing observations about that particular report in this debate.

DR. BUCK: The puppets are mute.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, if some of those observations have been made in caucus, they should also be made in this House. What we have is an effort to stack the deck, to manipulate, and to play around with the rules. In the process, we are striking at the heart of our democratic system of government. That is what this recent amendment says in pure, blunt terms, that we are striking at the democratic tradition.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to members of the government caucus that if we're going to move from parity between government and opposition . . . My colleague is absolutely correct: when this idea was first raised in the House, one should have heard the irate Tory opposition. I don't know why, because there was at least parity between government and opposition. But all one has to do is read the news reports of the time, and one gets a very clear picture of their opposition to that legislation. Nevertheless, it provided for parity between government and opposition.

Mr. Speaker, in 1969 the then government didn't have to — if they had used the same sort of logic as our minister advanced in presenting this Bill, there wouldn't have been parity between the opposition and government, because at that time there were six Conservatives, three Liberals, and 56 Social Credit members. So they would have said: oh, no, no, no; we'll have a 3:1 ratio, a 4:1 ratio, whatever it works out. But they didn't, Mr. Speaker. They recognized that if you are going to bring politicians into the process of redrawing the boundaries, there has to be parity between government and opposition. Let me tell you that that took a certain amount of courage. The government didn't have to do that, but they chose to do it. It was one of those things that has always made me an admirer, even though I totally differ with former Premier Strom's philosophical position. He was a man who had an understanding and a respect for democracy, decency, and fairness that few people in this province really understand enough. So under the leadership of Mr. Strom, we had legislation advanced in 1969 that was fair and equitable.

Now, without any arguments being presented by this government, we're changing the rules of the game. Mr. Speaker, the onus is on those people who want to change the rules of the game to articulate the reasons a change must be made. But we haven't had any reasons advanced. The hon. minister from Calgary is an articulate man, but we had one of the fuzziest speeches I've ever heard. Very well spoken, but let me tell you that in terms of presenting logical argument, there was none at all. During the course of this debate — we have all these backbenchers; one would have thought that they would have stood up one by one. If some of them had quarrels with the redistribution commission in 1976 and '77, they would have told us why it didn't work then; why we have to make changes; why the hon. Member for Little Bow and I were so impossible to deal with that they had to reduce our represen-

tation. I don't think they would find the learned judge or any of the other members on the commission agreeing with that position, but there has to be some reason we have this move to slash opposition representation. But none of the humpty-dumpties on the wall are prepared to say anything on this issue — just slavishly follow the position that I have no doubt at all swept past caucus; probably came up five minutes before everybody wanted to adjourn for lunch; nobody thought about it.

MR. SPEAKER: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. leader, but it would see to me that humpty-dumpties on the wall is getting pretty close to the line. I wonder if he might think of something more flattering.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I won't make any other reference other than it would have been unflattering if they had fallen off the wall, but I certainly wouldn't want to refer to them as humpty-dumpties. I was probably ... [interjections]

MRS. CRIPPS: We just consider where it comes from.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that there is no doubt in my mind that we had an eleventh-hour discussion in caucus just before adjournment, and this thing swept by. I cannot imagine that members of this government caucus would agree to such an unfair Bill. What they do in caucus is their private preserve; God knows that. But what they do in this House is the affair of the people of Alberta. I would challenge some of these people to stand up, if they support this Bill, and tell us why we had to make the change. The only way in which they've said it is the catcalls in the back or in private conversations. None of them has stood in their place so their constituents can say: oh, yes, this is where the Member for Edmonton Belmont sits; that's his position; he has an interesting sense of fairness.

DR. BUCK: He just steals nominations.

MR. NOTLEY: It seems that he's sinking in his seat at the moment, but that's interesting.

Where do these people stand? Mr. Speaker, what we have is just an unacceptable change without a single plausible reason being presented to this House as to why we should change from parity — parity which wasn't even acceptable to the Tories in '69 — to a position where it is three to one in favor of the government. I don't know how members of this caucus are going to be able to justify this kind of Bill.

I want to add just two or three other points. In Canada today, and throughout the western world, there is a dangerous amount of cynicism — and I'll set aside the rhetoric for a moment — about the functioning of democratic government. Mr. Speaker, all of us, regardless of the political differences — whether we are left, right, centre, or wherever the case may be — are custodians of a much more precious heritage than our particular ideology. And that precious heritage is the democratic system of government. There are certain fundamental assumptions on which the democratic system of government is based, and anytime you try to change those assumptions, you are seriously eroding the basis of public support for democratic government.

Today, Mr. Speaker, when I listened to the reports of various delegates to our parliamentary association meeting, it was interesting that the issue of the role of politicians arose. When one sees public opinion polls taken, it's rather frightening that the only people who are probably less respected than politicians are lawyers. I can certainly understand that. But apart from our low esteem, there are dangers inherent in that. If people are

cynical about political leadership, if they're cynical about the process of politics, if they're cynical about the operation of democracy, then they become easy victims for those who come along, particularly in difficult times, and say: I've got the answer; forget about all the fooferaw in the Legislature — first, second, and third readings; committee stage; Speaker's rulings; opposition challenges; what have you — let's just sweep it all aside and have a government that will make the trains run on time. We've seen that sort of practice, that sort of ideology, cause democratic governments to be supplanted in many parts of the world in the last 30 years.

So when we talk about democracy, it is not a vague abstraction. It is something that each of us as individuals has an obligation to defend. Mr. Speaker, let me bring that right back to this Bill. If we're talking about the assumptions on which people respect the democratic system, one of the assumptions is that there will be fairness in the way in which we draw up the boundaries. That's basic, because you can't have representative government unless you have fairness in the method by which we draw the boundaries. That's not a new revelation. My heavens; that is a position that has developed and is fundamental to the system of democratic government. That's why we remember — not with pride — Boss Tweed in the United States, the Governor Gerrys, or why even Conservatives look back on the shenanigans of Sir John A. Macdonald, or the black days of Maurice Duplessis. Regardless of where we stand politically, we say: we don't want that kind of practice to happen again. Because if we're going defend democracy, we must also make it clear that the method by which we set the rules of the game is fair and equitable, honest and straightforward.

Mr. Speaker, what we have in this legislation tonight is not an equitable, straightforward approach. We have a government that's stacking the deck, without even showing the courtesy to the people of Alberta, through their elected members, of telling us why they're doing it, or without those elected members standing in their places and defending it so that their constituents can make a judgment about the sense of fairness their elected members bring to this Chamber. Before we go any further down the path to regimentation — not big government so much as secretive government controlled by a tiny little group of people who meet in government caucus with the major decisions not even made by them — before we assign to a tiny minority the ability to make decisions that affect us all, before we throw away so many progressive developments that have taken place right across this country and step back 50 years, let us consider why.

I would challenge members of the government caucus: we will have time tonight, with this amendment specifically being a reasoned amendment, to hear from the government members as to what input they had and why they have to make this change. Mr. Speaker, I say to the government members in particular that unless they can demonstrate with more convincing arguments than have been advanced to date, they may win the battle in this House 74 to four, but in terms of the minds of Albertans, they will lose an important war. They will be seen as being unfair. They will be seen as being so concerned about monopolizing their own power that they even have to rig the rules of redistribution in order to achieve that goal. Mr. Speaker, I say to you and to members of House: before we go down that road, let the government think about what it's doing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

AN HON. MEMBER: The gutless wonders, where are they?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think we've got to look at what we're doing. That was the remark of one of the early founders of the Conservative Party. All the members on that side of the House wouldn't recall that. But I recall that back in 1969 when the man that became Deputy Premier of this province sat on this side of the Legislature and rose in his chair with that roaring introduction: well, . . . And he did that time after time in this Legislature. He rose in that manner because he was often concerned about things. We look back to 1969 with regard to this specific topic of discussion. Dr. Horner addressed that topic of discussion, along with his colleagues that sat over here with the names Lougheed, Russell, Hyndman, Getty, Werry. What did they do when they looked at the presentation of the Social Credit government at that time? What did they do? Did they look at some formula that was unfair? Did they come up with an adjustment of the committee recommendation?

DR. BUCK: Just amend the Bill, Neil, and we can go home. Be fair.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Did they look at any adjustments? They made no suggestions, not one suggestion at all, with regard to the recommendation of the Social Credit government at that time.

The record shows, Mr. Speaker, that the Conservative opposition — the government of the day — approved the Bill in principle at that time by a voice vote, approved a committee that had two from the opposition and two from government. There wasn't any standing vote because there wasn't a controversy with regard to that matter. There wasn't any intensive discussion with regard to the composition of the committee. They knew that it was fair and just, and was accepted by Albertans. That's the historic record, the precedent that was established at that time: a committee structured as such that has gone through the elections of 1971, 1975, 1979, 1982 and, as I said yesterday, set up boundaries in this province that were accepted by the people and set up a mechanism that worked. A voice vote, Mr. Speaker — because the Conservative founding fathers knew that it was an accepted organizational mechanism to do the job. But here we have the up and comers, this new breed, the new opportunists in the Conservative Party, coming into this Legislature, trying to enhance their position of power — not enhancing democracy; not putting forward legislation that's fair for all sides of the Legislature, fair for the people of Alberta — worrying about their position of power, about their own personal self-indulgence over the needs of others, over the needs of democracy in this province.

As I said in my remarks yesterday — and I do not withdraw any of those remarks — the mover and presenter of this Bill has the total maximum responsibility resting in his court. It rests there because that person is the sponsor, the mover, the backer of a principle which is unfair, inequitable, and unacceptable as far as I'm concerned. On that basis, I certainly accept the amendment put forward by the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood that we should decline the second reading of Bill 81 because, in principle, the Bill is inconsistent with the previously accepted democratic norms established by this Assembly; established, as I've said, by the founding fathers of the Conservative Party in Alberta, who brought it from a party that was out in the wilderness — that really didn't exist in Alberta — to a party that has some 75 out of 79 seats in this Legislature. The founding fathers wanted to have some equity, some fairness.

I really regret that the hon. Dr. Horner is not present in this Legislature this evening. This kind of nonsense would not be

allowed. It would not even have passed the caucus. When Dr. Horner became a cabinet minister and Deputy Premier, he took that "well" out of his remarks. He became the diplomat, the leader; he was a man with a lot of dignity who showed a lot of responsibility. I was proud of that change. It was like a transformation occurred on this side of the House. I raised it with him one day, and said: Doc, that's great stuff; you played that role of opposition, moved to the government's side, now you're playing the role of a minister. And he did a great job. I'll tell you that if someone writes the history of that particular member of this Legislature — he made more things move, made more decisions happen in this Legislature, in this province, than anybody else because he wasn't afraid. He knew what was fair and just, and he also knew what was wanted by the people of Alberta in many cases. He boldly strode ahead.

Now there were some ministers who picked up the pieces after Dr. Horner and were concerned about the fact that there were maybe some dollars wasted here, some programs shouldn't have been implemented. We got embarrassed here because we lost some \$40 million in terms of cattle programs. But the fact of the matter was, on net balance, there was a leader that was able to do something, that could stand up for some very basic principles. And one of those was fairness.

I know that if he were in the caucus at the present time, there would be no question about this Bill; we wouldn't even be debating it. The Bill wouldn't have passed this Legislature without even discussion, because it wouldn't have come to this neurotic position; a government, a group of backbenchers that are afraid they're going to lose because they need the jobs. That's why lots of them are here, because they need the jobs — with the exclusion of the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud. I appreciate that he can stand in a very independent position within this Assembly room.

It's unfortunate that we have such a situation where a Bill has been presented that has principles of unfairness, that's inequitable in its application, but the government seems to think it's great. I only want to add this: whether they're sitting in the front bench, the back bench, or whether they're the Minister of Recreation and Parks, the government members have not stood in their places to defend this principle. I don't because I don't think there is an argument. I challenge the Minister of Recreation and Parks to stand up and say, there's a principle here that I can support. He hasn't done it.

MR. TRYNCHY: Watch me vote.

MR. R. SPEAKER: The only way that he can really say that he supports it is by a voice vote. We're going to call for a standing vote, so the member will at least have to stand up. Even with a standing vote, he can stand up in the herd, and when the herd endorses a principle that's not fair . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

DR. BUCK: It's a herd.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. It is not proper to refer to any group of members as a herd. I'm sure I'm not telling anybody any news. That ought to be known. I respectfully remind the hon. leader of the Independents to talk about the Bill, not about the characteristics of the members. There isn't any motion before the House dealing with the characteristics of any members. Reference to the members' dispositions, natures, whatever, at the very least is out of order; it's irrelevant and worse than that, at times it's unparliamentary.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I humbly submit that the hon. member is using a point, saying that we have not heard one backbencher stand in his or her place in this Assembly defending the Bill. So what the hon. member is saying is that they are just playing follow the leader. Surely people who have been elected to this Assembly — either they don't have an opinion or they haven't got the guts to stand in this Assembly and express an opinion.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I respectfully ask the hon. member to reconsider what he has just said. He is not entitled to accuse any member of the House of not having any guts. That may be his opinion. As I said before, it is totally irrelevant as far as the debate is concerned. I see nothing objectionable about asking members whether or not they're going to get into the debate, or noting that they aren't. But to say that they are a "herd" is totally unacceptable, and to say that they have no guts is worse.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I am asking the hon. Member for Clover Bar to reconsider what he has just said.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I will not reconsider. The hon. members of this Assembly have been sent to this Legislature to do the public's business. We have beseeched them, we have asked them to stand in their places and tell us why they will not tell us why they are supporting this Bill. If that is not showing a lack of guts, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what is. I have had a gut full of the inactivity of this government.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

DR. BUCK: They have been sent here, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

DR. BUCK: . . . to represent the people . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Would the hon. member . . .

DR. BUCK: . . . and they haven't got the guts to do it!

MR. SPEAKER: Would the hon. member resume his seat.

DR. BUCK: I will not. I want to hear from those backbenchers, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Would the hon. member kindly resume his seat.

DR. BUCK: Gutless wonders.

MR. SPEAKER: I am asking the hon. member not to make worse his situation but to calmly reconsider what he has said. I would not wish to hear other hon. members say that about the hon. Member for Clover Bar . . .

DR. BUCK: Because I stand in my place, and I speak.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I have the floor. The hon. member will kindly retain his seat while the Speaker is standing. That's a very well-known rule of every respectable and self-respecting parliament.

The hon. member is simply not allowed to refer to other hon. members in the way that he has, and he knows that. I realize that he's a bit excited at the moment.

DR. BUCK: I'm disgusted.

MR. SPEAKER: Well whatever is the cause of the emotion — perhaps I shouldn't analyse — it seems to be there. The hon. member, I must say with great respect, is ordinarily very reasonable and courteous in the House, but I really can't allow this particular use of language to go by. I say with no resentment at all and, as a matter of fact, by way of a plea to the hon. member for his co-operation — and I say that very respectfully — that I would be very grateful if he would reconsider the words that he has just used.

I have no objection at all to the most vehement language with regard to the principle of the Bill, which is what's under discussion here now, by way of amendment I suppose. But as I have said so often — and it really doesn't seem to need repetition — we don't personally attack other members, either outside the House or in. One day the hon. member made that clear himself, and I thought he spoke very well on that occasion. He said that outside the House, members are good friends, and they respect each other. They may not be the chummiest people, but they do respect each other, and they are friendly outside the House; whereas inside the House — and that's what a parliament is for — they may contend vigorously for or against whatever principle or motion is before the House.

I say again to the hon. member that I would very respectfully, and with the utmost kindness, courtesy, and respect for him as well as his constituents, ask him if he wouldn't just reflect for a moment and give some further attention to the remarks which he made a moment ago.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I have reflected for two seconds, and I will make a deal with you. I'll make a deal with you, and I'll make a deal with the people of this province: if we have at least four government backbenchers stand in their place, get into the debate, and tell us why they defend the Bill, I will withdraw. Otherwise I will not withdraw the statement; the statement will stand. There is an old Latin expression, *res ipsa loquitur*, the fact speaks for itself. Either the hon. government backbenchers don't have an expression of opinion, or they won't tell it.

So, Mr. Speaker, my offer to you, very plainly, is this. If we have at least four government backbenchers stand in their place and tell us why they're defending the Bill, I will be glad to withdraw the statement that they don't have any guts.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member reminds me about a debate which went on about Sodom and Gomorrah. In that case, I think they started with 50 and, after a while, they got down to 10. Eventually the deal fell through, apparently. I don't know what there is magically about the number four. Besides that, I'm in no position to put myself forth as bargaining agent for the government members of the Assembly.

I respectfully suggest that the hon. member consider his position a little further and see if perhaps he may not be able to propose some more readily acceptable bargain which I could accept without having to call the government members into Room 312 and see whether they would agree with such a proposition.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, at this time I will withdraw the words I used: that they have no guts. If that is your wish, I will do it. But I will have the opportunity to speak later in the

debate, and before I get up to speak I will be waiting to find out if they do have any intestinal fortitude to get into this debate.

MR. SPEAKER: May I say very, very candidly and very, very sincerely that I am very grateful to the hon. Member for Clover Bar. If I may be permitted — and I don't know if I should be — a personal reference, may I say that he has just gone up even higher in the respect which I hold for him.

Let's continue with the debate.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, coming from the farm, if you've ever had to deal with cattle and all of a sudden one cow decides to run in a certain direction, with the tail up in the air, heading across the field towards the water hole — they all move at the same time, and they don't know why they're going there — then you can understand why I called them a herd of cattle.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. That also was not acceptable. I really did not expect that the hon. Member for Little Bow would come back to that expression. I realized it wasn't parliamentary. I didn't intervene; I didn't want to intervene. But now that he has aggravated the situation, may I respectfully refer him also to a reconsideration of what he has said.

There is no call for referring to any members of the House as a herd or cattle of either sex. I really would respectfully urge the hon. member, whose experience in this House is much more extensive than mine — and I'm sure he is able to recall what the House was like beyond the days of the inauguration of *Hansard*. I would ask him if he would kindly direct his attention to those remarks and put them out of the way so we needn't be concerned about them any more and may get on with the debate on the amendment.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, on the point that is raised with regard to the word "herd", I recall the word "lemmings" being used in this Legislature at one time, to indicate that the Socred government — and it came from this side of the Legislature — were all going to vote together. I think it passed the House at that time. It was descriptive of the massive Social Credit vote, all in one rubber stamp. That was the hon. Provincial Treasurer who used to stand on this side and do the very same thing. So there is some precedent historically.

But I'll back off that comment and continue with the debate with regard to the amendment that is before us.

MR. SPEAKER: Then I'll just briefly express my thanks and my respect to the hon. member.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, the amendment that is here is a way that we on the opposition side can indicate to government and the people of Alberta that we're not satisfied with the presentation of the minister, as well the Conservative Party, in this Legislature. Because it's unacceptable in principle and inconsistent with a long-held principle, we feel that we should defeat second reading. That would be the purpose of our debate.

I think we have dealt very extensively with the principle of three government members and one from the opposition, and how unfair that is. We haven't really dealt with the other part of that Bill, which I guess in a sense is acceptable to us on this side of the House, in terms of the number of seats there are going to be, the distribution between urban and rural seats. In the debate of 1969, the distribution between the urban and rural areas of the province was the concern of the Conservative members on this side of the House — the concern at that time

about gerrymandering. The spokesman was Dr. Horner, from the Barrhead constituency. I'm surprised the hon. Member for Barrhead hasn't stood up and said: I know the former Member for Barrhead stood on principle and believed in fairness, and would make a presentation in this Legislature; and I'm going to do it too; I'm going to stand up in opposition to what government is doing. But that doesn't really happen, Mr. Speaker.

The concern was the gerrymandering of seats. At that time Dr. Horner said that the rural areas supported the Socred government, the urban areas would support a Conservative Party, and the Socred government was placing the balance in terms of rural seats. Well, he might have had a case. It didn't really follow that that was true. We all know what the results of the 1971 election were. But that's where the focus of concern was: with regard to gerrymandering in that manner — no question in terms of the committee being a vehicle of gerrymandering; no question at all.

I think that speaks well for what was proposed at that time. As I've said two or three times: that has stood the test of time; it should stay that way. How can we change at this point in time when something has worked so well? I just can't understand that. I can't understand why the government can't make some conclusive arguments, why backbenchers aren't standing up and placing a position before us. They're not, Mr. Speaker. They're sitting quietly. I think of the MLA for Cypress, who represents the constituency of the former premier of this province, the premier who endorsed the principle of the composition of that redistribution committee. Earlier in the evening, the hon. Member for Cypress had some catcalls and a few comments, but he isn't even here for the debate and isn't showing concern with regard to the historic fairness that came from the constituency of Cypress.

I think of this amendment and the reason we want to turn down second reading, in terms of the information that is going out to the public of Alberta. At the present time, the public of Alberta is not aware of what is really happening. The press of this province has not done its job on this government. If this same situation were happening in the province of British Columbia, I think the press would be ripping the government apart, putting headlines across this province about unfairness and lack of thought by the government. But what did we see in the *Edmonton Journal* with regard to this Bill: a little article you could hardly read . . .

MR. NOTLEY: Page 98.

MR. R. SPEAKER: . . . way back in the back pages — that concerned about it.

What concerns me about that, Mr. Speaker — and another reason we should decline this — is why that happens; why this government, through the Premier, phones the papers every once in while when they start criticizing the government. The papers are so gun shy, so afraid the Premier is going to send a phone call. They are as bad as the backbenchers of this government.

MR. NOTLEY: Southam must have an AOC loan.

MR. R. SPEAKER: But that is another part of the whole circumstance. You wonder why we stand up as four members in this House and speak on the principle and repeat the argument against this kind of inequity and unfairness. It's because it's the only way we'll ever get the message across to the public of Alberta. We're going to go out to our private meetings and through our own means distribute this kind of material to the people of Alberta and tell them how unfair this government is.

As we do it, one at a time, this one and another one, it will take its toll with this government, and the government will have to live with the political consequences. I hope that doesn't take too long. I'm not sure how many years I want to stay in this Legislature. But that toll will happen because unfairness — power-hungry people — will be dealt with by the democratic process. I have faith in that. Somewhere, in some way, the attitude of self-indulgence — power-hungry attitudes — will penetrate the voting patterns of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly whole-heartedly support this amendment. I think it's the only reasonable thing to do at this time. If we can defeat the Bill in second reading, then even in this session the government has time to reconsider what they're doing in the back rooms of caucus and bring something back to this Legislature that has some logic and principles, and ideas that have been tested and well proven by time.

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh, shame.

MR. McPHERSON: Mr. Speaker, we have been invited to speak to the amendment. While our members in the opposition have been exhorting us to do so, it doesn't seem that we've had much of an opportunity. There has been an awfully lot of speaking going on. I would like to raise a couple of points with respect to the amendment.

In the amendment, we refer to democratic norms. It seems to me that in a democratic process we have to rely strictly on the superiority of the voter to determine who will represent us in our parliament. After all, it is the voter who will determine who will be their representative in any legislature.

It was interesting for me to note last evening that one of the members presented an amendment that suggested we should refer this Bill to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing. I find it rather interesting to consider that in this Legislature the members of the opposition hold 5.06 per cent of the representation in terms of seats in this province. Interestingly enough, three members of the opposition sit on the Standing Committee of Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing — three members out of a total of 26 — which represents 11.53 per cent.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I have some difficulty with the hon. member's remarks. It seems to me that we disposed of that amendment. If it is relevant for the hon. member to reargue the amendment, then the same latitude will have to be extended to every other member in the House. Instead of debating the amendment made today, we are going to be debating the one we voted on yesterday.

MR. McPHERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I abide by your ruling. I was just trying to make a comparison of some of the comments that were made.

If I may, I would just like to go on further and suggest that certainly in Bill 81, which is referred to in the amendment, the representation of the members of the opposition is 16 per cent.

While I would have preferred to have directed my comments toward Bill 81 itself, I did want to rise in my place and urge members to defeat this amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

DR. BUCK: Just go steal a nomination Szwender or Nelson; that's all you have to do.

Mr. Speaker, I rise with a great feeling of disappointment and great disillusionment with the Government House Leader, because I respect him as a man but I've lost all respect for him as Government House Leader. What we're talking about in this Assembly is an important principle. This government does not seem to understand that it's a principle. I think they have lost any political principles they ever had.

Mr. Speaker, we're talking about the preservation of democracy. We're talking about setting up a commission that will look at moving boundaries without any thought to partisanship. That's why the committee must be so structured. That's what the argument is all about. That's why I really am disappointed. If I were sitting on that side of the House, I would be very embarrassed for several reasons.

MR. CRAWFORD: You wouldn't be as embarrassed as we would be to have you here, Walter.

MR. MARTIN: Neil, you finally woke up.

DR. BUCK: I can tell my left-wing conservative friend that he never has to worry about that. The reason I would never be in that kind of caucus is because I have some guts.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh.

MR. MARTIN: He's speaking about himself.

DR. BUCK: I have some guts. I know how long I would last in that caucus — about five seconds, because nobody tells me what to do.

MR. MARTIN: Where's Tom Sindlinger?

DR. BUCK: Nobody tells me what to do. The people in my constituency are the only ones; that's why I am here. I am here to represent their views and to express the views of other Albertans.

When the minister who is proposing this Bill talks to his grandchildren, they will say: grandpa, what Bill did you bring to this Assembly?

MR. NOTLEY: I snuffed out democracy.

AN HON. MEMBER: We'll still be here, Walt.

DR. BUCK: And he will be able to stand in his place and say, I was the minister that brought in the Bill to set up the boundaries commission. They will say: was that the same one they had in '69 and eight years later; why did you change that fundamentally right Bill, grandpa? And do you know what he will say? [interjection] I will have to draw the conclusion that he said: because the caucus told me to. That is the only obvious conclusion you can come to.

Mr. Speaker, there is a cancer within this government party because they say: it doesn't matter what the people think; we've got 61 per cent of the vote — by default, I want to remind them. Stealing nominations is common practice in this party.

MRS. CRIPPS: At least we have nominations.

DR. BUCK: I'm not telling the Assembly anything it doesn't know. We had that happen to our good friend, the hon. reverend. He had his nomination stolen; the former Member for Edmonton Belmont, the former Member for Edmonton Norwood. Does this party not have any scruples?

Mr. Speaker, what we are saying is that this Bill is inconsistent with the principles that have been established in this Assembly in the setting up of an electoral boundaries commission. Where is the lap-dog press in this province? I say that as sincerely as I can, because this is an issue that is so important that the people in this province should be told about it. But there's that very subtle pressure by this government: if you don't toe the line, you don't get the business. That's pretty sad.

MR. PAYNE: Nonsense.

DR. BUCK: The minister of propaganda says nonsense. But I would like the hon. minister to look at the history of the establishment of that propaganda department.

AN HON. MEMBER: Gladly.

DR. BUCK: Gladly. First of all, we don't need it. The information that comes out of there is strictly nothing but propaganda and government gobbledegook.

MR. ANDERSON: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me that the member has now strayed significantly off topic; under any rule book he must be out of order.

MR. SPEAKER: I must confess that I was mystified as to how he would be able to connect the remarks just made with the topic under debate, but I wasn't totally despairing about that.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, we're talking about the principle of the Bill, and the principle is inconsistent with previous practice. The minister brought the Bill in. The minister has to be responsible for that Bill and has to justify to this Assembly why he is bringing the Bill in, in this form.

Mr. Speaker, we have a problem. The press is not doing its duty. It's not fulfilling its responsibility to the people of this province. Who are the political scientists? Who are the people at the university that talk about fairness and equity? Where are they? It is a sad day in the history of this Legislature, because I know that the members of the Assembly on the government side know that what they are doing is gravely wrong. And where are they? How can they in all conscience sit in their places, mute, muzzled, and gutless, Mr. Speaker?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. We're starting to analyse members of the Assembly even, it seems, anatomically. I thought we had just gotten away from that idea. As I mentioned to another member debating this matter — it was a previous amendment, and I think I mentioned it again on this amendment — we have to deal with the substance of the amendment, not the substance or the innards of the members. That's irrelevant, and I think it's easily recognized as unparliamentary to refer to other members in that way, regardless of whether or not they ever open their mouths.

The hon. member is fully entitled to refer, I think, to what he perceives to be a lack of argument from other sides of the House. We aren't through with the matter yet, of course, but the hon. member is certainly entitled to express that opinion, and I respect his right to do so. But I think it would be too bad if we negated the — I think — courage which the hon. member showed just a short while ago in regard to this expression, and I would respectfully ask him if he might deal with it again and

then perhaps continue or conclude the debate, whatever he decides to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm sorry, I can't call the question. We have an unresolved matter before the Assembly, and it's just not consistent. I know that it was a slip, as far as the hon. member is concerned, and I don't attach any great blame to him. But I know that he knows that I have certain obligations here, and I would very much appreciate if he might assist me in that regard and just deal further — again, it may just take a word or two — with that expression, and then let's get on with the business of the House.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, could I ask for your ruling pursuant to our standing rules. As I read *Beauchesne*, I think there is a distinction between "a Member" and "Members". It would be clearly unparliamentary to call an individual member gutless. As a matter of fact, that is one of the things that is specifically outlined in *Beauchesne* on page 107. But Citation 320 says: "It has been ruled unparliamentary to refer to a Member as ..."

Mr. Speaker, as I read Citation 319, I think any statement that casts a reflection upon the House as a whole would be unparliamentary. However, terms which reflect on certain unorganized members — we all know that they're organized, but in terms of the parliamentary system here they are a group of members. I'm not sure that the prescriptions as to what may or may not be said to individuals are as rigidly applicable to a group of members. I would ask you to review sections 319 and 320 of *Beauchesne*. Section 319 does refer to "Members" or "Member" with respect to "unworthy motives". That of course is not the burden of the presentation made by the hon. Member for Clover Bar. No one is saying that the government has unworthy motives — in so many words; we certainly would accuse them of muddled and befuddled thinking but not unworthy motives. But that is not what the hon. Member for Clover Bar has raised.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that it might be worth a judgment on your part. Pursuant to the standing rule, I would ask for your interpretation, to ascertain whether or not there is in fact a distinction between an individual member — no question of that at all. But it seems to me that a group of members as such — and whether or not there is some larger latitude — is a somewhat different situation. I raise that in dealing with the larger question of statements which have been made. On both sides of the House, we've had comments with respect to groups of members. We've had the hon. Premier, for example, refer to my party as the Toronto NDP and suggest that I'm slavishly following, which as far as I'm concerned is not something which upsets me a great deal. I've never stood on a point of order about it, because frankly I thought it was such a silly comment that it didn't need to be responded to. Nevertheless, we have had other comments. [interjections]

I think even the Attorney General knows that interjection is nonsense. If he had observed any of the proceedings of the recent federal NDP convention he would know that's nonsense. But in any event, we'll get into that debate at some other time.

I think the point that I would like to leave with you, Mr. Speaker, is that in judging what is parliamentary and not parliamentary, if someone accuses an hon. member — and these proscriptions very clearly apply to an hon. member — I think as the chairman of this Chamber, you must apply the rules clearly. When you're talking about groups of people, groups of members, I suggest that the parliamentary tradition has been

somewhat more flexible and that it's a question of the determination of the Chair as to whether things such as "herd", "humpty-dumpty", or some of the things I can remember government members raising, would in fact fit.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might just reflect briefly on the point just now raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition in seeking your ruling in respect of the point that he has made about whether members may be singular or plural in the references made and whether that makes any difference. In the light of all that has been going on in the last few minutes, I think my first observation might be that given the probably unequalled powers to entertain that the hon. Member for Clover Bar enjoys in this Assembly, the mere question of whether or not he is entertaining is — and it may well be that the specific point just raised by the hon. leader is not directly on the point on which he's having difficulty responding to Your Honour at the moment and which we're all giving him a little more time to think through. But I thought I might address it in any event. I think Your Honour is saying that, when you made the observation originally, you were not worried about mere vulgar abuse. The issue is not whether the hon. Member for Clover Bar indulges in mere vulgar abuse but whether or not he's unparliamentary. It's on that point, as raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that I want to direct just these words.

In part of subsection (3), Citation 319 does indeed refer to "Members" rather than a "Member", when it says that

In the House of Commons a Member will not be permitted ... to impute to ... Members unworthy motives for their actions in a particular case ...

Given the long experience and the undoubted deep understanding of these matters that the hon. Member for Clover Bar has, I commend that to him in his reflections.

MR. SPEAKER: I thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the hon. Government House Leader for their intervention. I do respect the point raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. But the difficulty that poses is this: we're into a sort of numbers game. This means that you may use an insulting remark to, say, 20 members but not to one. Then the question arises: may you insult two? Where do you draw the line between singular and plural?

Whatever be the result of that discussion, the fact remains that it's irrelevant. In our *Standing Orders*, we have a rule against persisting in irrelevance. So it would seem to me that this type of reference is objectionable on two counts and shouldn't occur in the House and should be withdrawn. I would go so far as to say that there are some expressions which *Beauchesne* lists as being allowed which ought not to be allowed. Again, they are at the very least irrelevant, because they refer to members personally rather than to the matter under discussion.

This is supposed to be the highest court in the province. Can one imagine any of the lower courts in the province allowing the protagonists or antagonists in a court of law to digress from the matter under discussion or up for trial and simply attack each other personally? It would seem to me that it wouldn't make any difference whether one of the parties had one lawyer or a dozen. If that were done, I don't think it would be permitted, and neither should it be in this Assembly. So as I said, while I realize that there may be some distinction to be made there, I have difficulty with playing a numbers game in regard to unparliamentary and irrelevant language.

Therefore, I respectfully again refer to the hon. Member for Clover Bar, whom I respect not only personally but as a rep-

resentative of his constituency, which is why we're all here. I would be very grateful to him if he would deal with that. He contributed to a substantial extent in other ways his thoughts concerning the matter under debate, and nothing that he may do now with regard to dealing further with that remark will detract in any way from his contribution to the debate where he addressed the matter that was before the House. Again, I ask him — indeed I plead with him — most respectfully and urgently, would he just kindly briefly deal with the matter again.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in addressing your remarks to speaking on the highest court in this province, I would like to remind the hon. Speaker that parliament historically is always meant to be a debating place. I have asked, as impassionately as I can, this government and the members of this Assembly to stand in their places and tell us why they support the Bill. I have not tried to impugn any motives as to why they will not do their duty in this Assembly.

Because they are derelict in their responsibility to the people of this province, I have called them gutless for not standing in their place and expressing to the people of this province why they support or oppose this dastardly piece of legislation. Mr. Speaker, my statement stands, sir, because they are derelict in their responsibility to this Assembly, to this province, and to the people they represent. I have no choice but to stand in my place in this Assembly, before the people of this province, and say that the government members have not done their duty. Therefore, I can arrive at no other conclusion about their intestinal fortitude than the one I made, in a term which you may have considered unparliamentary, sir. But to me, anatomically, it describes very adequately what these members are guilty of by not doing their duty. I have no choice, and I will not withdraw.

MR. SPEAKER: May I respectfully suggest to the hon. member that he should not, if I may say so, box himself in, in that way, because whether or not he has a choice is in his own mind. I'm not aware that it's unparliamentary to suggest that an hon. member isn't doing his duty. I think it's going a little far; I don't think we're here to judge each other in that regard.

DR. BUCK: But we are here to do our duty.

MR. SPEAKER: That's true, but ...

DR. BUCK: And that's to stand in our place and speak.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

DR. BUCK: And they're not doing that.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I don't think there's any need for shouting at the Chair.

DR. BUCK: But we can debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Not at the moment. The hon. member really does have a choice, if I may say so with respect. He may want to draw certain conclusions from what he observes and, concerning that, I can have no objection, provided those conclusions do not insult other members. We are not elected to come here to judge other members or their motives. While the hon. member may not have expressly referred to motives, he certainly has referred to motivation or lack of it; I can't really see the distinction. May I say that I have the duty not only to respect the hon. members of the House — all of them — but

I also have the duty to respect the constituents who sent them here.

DR. BUCK: I will make my choice. I will worry about that.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The fact that the hon. member wants to worry about that is perfectly in order. That does not absolve me from being concerned about it as well. I respectfully am concerned about it. I would suggest to the hon. member in the most earnest way that I can command that he really should not lock himself into a position, or deem that he is locked into a position, in which he has no choice. Earlier in the evening — and I expressed my admiration for that, it was not an easy thing to do — he exercised a choice. That was most welcome to me, and I would really ask him to consider further and to exercise that choice again. I think it is as equally open to him now as it was at that time. Therefore, I respectfully and most earnestly call on the hon. member to deal just a little further with that last remark, so that we may get on with the business of the House.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of feeling that I say that this issue would never have come to the state we're at right now if the government had just withdrawn the legislation. Because it is that terrible, that unfair, that unreasonable to the people of this province, what choice do I have except to draw these conclusions about the performance of the government side of the House; I have great difficulty drawing any other conclusion. Either they do not have the capacity to think or they do not have the intestinal fortitude to stand in their place and do their duty.

AN HON. MEMBER: Sit down.

DR. BUCK: Will you stand in your place and say some . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. [interjection] Order please. There's no . . .

DR. BUCK: Well he doesn't have to [inaudible]. He can stand in his place, Mr. Speaker. Where are his guts? He can stand up and let us know.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Surely the hon. member is just compounding the situation. I respectfully acknowledge his right to draw whatever conclusions he wishes. Any member of the Assembly is entitled to draw a conclusion that another member is lying; that is open to any of us. But we're not permitted to say it, because we are not here to sit in judgment on one another as to our courage, our honesty, probity, or whatever other kind of quality there may be.

I would again ask the hon. member if he would give some further consideration to that remark. I realize it's difficult; I certainly don't like to be in a situation where I have to do that. I have every regard for the feelings of the hon. member; I don't quarrel with those in any way. I really would be grateful to him, as I said a moment ago, and I ask him most earnestly to consider and just briefly deal with those expressions. I realize that an hon. member was out of order when he interjected and asked the hon. Member for Clover Bar to take his seat, but I think he must recognize that when he used the expression again, he directed it to a single member. That is not a way in which I, or any other member of the House, am entitled to refer to another member, regardless of what another member does, it seems to me that there is sufficient flexibility — we're not locked into some kind of immobile paralysis — to deal with

the matter further, and I do ask the hon. member if he would kindly do so.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might make a few brief comments. I'm sure the hon. member made his comments in heat; I'm sure he must not have appreciated at the moment what he had done. I'm sure he . . . [interjection] I'd like to impute the very best motives possible for the hon. member, because I know him to be an honorable person, usually moderate and reasonable in his debate. Given his past actions in the House, those words are out of character, and I'm sure that he didn't mean them, Mr. Speaker.

What I think he is asking some hon. members to do is to participate in the debate. If that is his attempt, I think that hon. members on this side would be delighted to do that. I think we would be delighted, though, to have him withdraw his remarks so that we can on with the very serious business of debating this Bill. If he would yield to the House on this point, Mr. Speaker, it would be possible . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. It's not really a question at the moment of yielding to the House. I think the hon. member is entitled in temperate language — perhaps even very vigorous or dramatic language — to challenge members to get into the debate. I agree that he's within his rights to do that. He's not the only one who has done it in this debate. Nor would I object to it, and I didn't object to it. It's just the way in which it's done, that's all.

I'm not suggesting that the hon. Member for Clover Bar withdraw his challenge to other members of the House, whether it be for four, three, two, or 10, to get into the debate. I think he's totally within his rights in extending that challenge. As a matter of fact, he did it several times. It's just that we have this other problem with this expression which is totally out of keeping with the House, as it was when the hon. member was first elected. He also was here before I was, and while I don't know as much about what went on in the House in those days as I have learned about what's gone on in the House since, I've always had the impression that this House, throughout the period from, shall we say, 1935 until 1971, was a model to other Houses in the country. I know that my respected predecessors had the privilege of serving in a parliament which was regarded as businesslike and courteous, and I doubt whether there were very many occasions when a question even arose as to whether an expression was parliamentary or not.

All I'm asking the hon. member is to provide an opportunity that that high tradition, which goes back for such a long time, may be continued, because like himself, all of us I'm sure want to belong to a parliament that is respected for the way in which it conducts its business and the respectful way in which members may disagree with each other or agree with each other, as they see fit.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, my point is exactly your point, and it is simply that if the hon. member will withdraw the remarks you're asking him to withdraw, that would be desirable because it would show that he is being the good-natured and good-tempered individual that he always has been.

MR. SPEAKER: I respect the good intentions of the hon. Member for Edmonton Glengarry. But at the moment, if I might have the opportunity, I would prefer to recognize the hon. Member for Clover Bar.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, it is only because I believe in the principles of democracy, in its tenets, and in its decorum that

I would consider withdrawing the statement. But at the same time I am thinking about that, I think that we who are members of this Assembly, who are elected to serve in this Assembly, have to decide what is most important. Are we as elected people going to sit here in absolute silence? Are we going to do our jobs, our responsibility to our constituents and the people of this province, or are we just going to make a charade of this Assembly?

Seriously, it does hurt me to use the term that I have used, because I respect the members as individuals. As you have stated, Mr. Speaker, and as I have stated every four years to the rookies in this Assembly: my battle ends the minute the doors close. So because I respect parliament — and I hope I live long enough to see these people turfed out of here. I am being given one more chance to withdraw, but I also am giving the government backbenchers one more chance to participate in this debate. On those grounds, because I respect parliament and I respect most of the members of the government's side as individuals, and because I know the term "gutless" is unparliamentary and distasteful to all members, I will withdraw that statement, but I want to see some performance from that side of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: I think the hon. Member for Clover Bar has again done a very admirable thing. I would totally agree with his right to repeat the challenge he made previously, more or less throwing down the gauntlet to government members, asking them to participate in the debate. And now may we get on with the business of the Assembly.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker . . .

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker . . .

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I think I was recognized first. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate with respect to the amendment that's now before the Legislative Assembly. This matter of Bill 81, or whatever number it was going to be, was of some concern for me as the MLA for the constituency of Barrhead, and that concern has gone back a number of months. I have a very, very active constituency executive. In the early part of 1983, we met to discuss the reality of an electoral boundaries commission and the setting up of such a commission as the result of an Act that might be introduced in 1983 or 1984. I would like to share with the members of the House the views of the constituency executive of Barrhead.

When we were looking at the establishment of an electoral boundaries commission, we went through the current Act and looked at the representation that's set out for a commission. A number of my constituents who have long been involved in public life asked the question: in a Legislative Assembly that has a series of caucuses in it and a certain number of representatives in each of those caucuses, how is it that when it comes down to setting up an electoral commission, the largest party — in this case, the government party — would have the same type of representation that an opposition party might have? Frankly, I was left without an explanation. We had an additional discussion on it, and they basically concluded that, in fairness, perhaps the basic rule that's followed in the establishment of most committees in the House should be followed in setting up any electoral boundaries commission.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of all members of the House to three points of view which are being

represented by the Member for Barrhead. First of all, in the view of my constituents, they asked me how committees of the Legislative Assembly were struck. I said: well, basically there are a certain number of representatives from the various caucuses that are represented in the Legislative Assembly, and the numbers tend to vary: by tradition we have given an average amount of representation in most committees to caucuses other than our own. Okay, they said, and what do you have in the Legislative Assembly? I said there are 75 members that sit on the government side and four that sit on the opposition side. I think the Member for Red Deer has already talked about percentages of representation.

One of the things that the hon. Member for Clover Bar said a little earlier was that really no thought should be given to partisanship with respect to the establishment of a commission such as this. I have great respect for all members of this Legislative Assembly. The proposed Bill 81 basically says that there should be one representative nominated by the Leader of the Opposition and three representatives nominated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. It's my great hope that in fact the highest level and highest degree of non-partisanship can be reached in dealing with appointments to this particular commission, because I think that is extremely important. But the principle of representation by caucus in a variety of committees must be maintained.

I have had series of notes given to me, Mr. Speaker, that there are really only 74 members in the government caucus, and that is absolutely correct.

The final point I want to make in terms of echoing the views of my constituents is really the basic principles they put forward to me. In their view, they were surprised that in fact caucuses other than the government caucuses would even be represented, because of the proportional representation in the House. So I am quite satisfied that they would be more than happy to know that their representative is quite prepared to accept a Bill that would basically see one person nominated by the Leader of the Opposition and three nominated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to alert all members of the Legislative Assembly that during second reading or committee stage of Bill 81, I intend to raise a number of points with respect to one clause — and I am going to use the phrase, "a totalitarian clause", aspect of a clause — listed in No. 3(b)(c) or, the inside, page 1, of Bill 81 currently before the House.

I will call on all members to support me in defeating the amendment currently before us.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I as well would like to address the amendment that is before the Assembly. It is some four and a half years since I joined this provincial parliament as a member, but before that I knew many previous members of this Assembly, belonging to all parties that have been represented in it since I came to Canada.

The whole argument of the opposition speakers on the motion and on the amendment has really been based on an alleged distrust of the motives of whoever the government members on the commission may be. I know of no member of this Assembly, past or present, who has not had the highest regard for our parliamentary democratic form of government. In their own way, they have all represented the best interests of all Albertans. It is on that basis, Mr. Speaker, that I am perfectly willing to trust the three government members, the same as the opposition member, whoever the four of them may be, to deal with complete equity and fairness with what has always been

a difficult problem in parliaments — that of changing constituency boundaries.

This particular commission is probably going to have greater difficulty than most commissions in other parliaments or indeed in this one, because since the last commission our province has changed radically. There is a much larger population than there used to be. There have also been tremendous changes in the distribution of that population. It is going to be a difficult problem for all members of the commission: members of this parliament, members of the public, and the judge who will head it.

The motion essentially says that this Bill is an attempt to subvert the whole basis of parliamentary democracy. For that reason, I would urge members to reject the amendment.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I've hesitated to rise because I didn't think it would do my shoes any favor to wade around in this stuff I've heard for the last four hours of debate on this Bill. I am really surprised that the members for Edmonton Norwood, Spirit River-Fairview, Little Bow, and Clover Bar have all made allegations that the members appointed to the committee are going to be unfair. I just simply don't buy that members are essentially unfair.

Obviously they can't attack the principle of the Bill, because the attack has been on the government members. In fact it has been a character assassination, if you want to know the truth.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. There really is no call for that kind of expression. The hon. member is entitled to deal with the merits of the debate on expressing opposing points of view, but there are certain ways of characterizing debate offered by other members which reflect on those members personally. I allowed the first sally to go by, with some reluctance, but I really don't think that should happen with the second one.

Would the hon. member please get to the subject of the amendment.

MRS. CRIPPS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will. If you want me to withdraw "character assassination", I will do that too. But I just can't stand here and hear the Member for Clover Bar have the audacity to accuse government members of being derelict in their duty, when last week he spent two and three quarter hours out of 11 hours on business in the House.

DR. BUCK: I'm competing with the Premier.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. NOTLEY: There's a rule of relevancy, isn't there?

MR. SPEAKER: There certainly is, and I really don't know what the activities, accomplishments, and enterprises of the hon. Member for Clover Bar have to do with the subject of this amendment. Let's get to the amendment. The hon. Member for Clover Bar challenged government members to debate the amendment; he didn't challenge them to debate what he might or might not be doing.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I agree that he challenged us to debate the Bill, but he did say we were derelict.

The Member for Spirit River-Fairview invited government members to criticize the former boundaries report, in saying that this one would be less fair. The southern boundary of my constituency is illogical. Quite frankly, it disfranchises the 50 voters on the northern periphery of the adjoining constituency.

That is a matter of record, which has been written in many letters to the Chief Electoral Officer as far back as 1976.

The Member for Little Bow said he has been on the commission twice, and he said that it has a proven track record. He said that this Bill changes principle. Mr. Speaker, I maintain that this Bill does not change the principle of the former boundaries commission. It is still chaired by a judge, there is still one person at large, and there are still four elected Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Chief Electoral Officer. The principle of the Bill has remained intact for the purposes of this commission.

I hope the Assembly will reject this amendment.

MR. COOK: Mr. Speaker, I as well would like to participate in the debate on the amendment and make a couple of quick observations. One is that the principle we're talking about in reducing the opposition representation on select committees has already been accepted in this Legislature by those same four members. If you think back to the make-up of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee, for example, opposition representation was reduced corresponding to the reduction of their membership in the opposition from the last Legislature. The same can be said of other committees that this Legislature has appointed, recognizing a reduction in their membership. They didn't squawk or fuss then; they accepted that principle that they are now challenging as being undemocratic. It seems to me to be logically inconsistent when this situation is somehow inherently undemocratic and the previous situations — in fact they had a member on the nominating committee that struck those committees — were acceptable. I don't understand their logic when they say this is undemocratic.

I scratched my head and thought, gee, the definition I was taught in my first year political science class was that democracy was the rule of the majority but with respect for the minority. Surely, one-quarter of the elected members on this committee are coming from the opposition, yet they represent about 5 per cent of the total membership of this House. They are being inordinately represented on the committee. So there can be no suggestion that this action is undemocratic. I think it would be undemocratic if the minority were to have equal say with the majority. Surely that's not democratic rule — rule of the majority with respect for the minority. Surely the majority in the House should have a majority of members of the Assembly on the committee.

Finally, if I could speak to the suggestion that the committee is somehow going to be unfair. I think we're going to have to await that decision when the electoral boundaries commission reports to the House. But I think there is some inherent political responsibility on both the government and opposition members of the committee to make sure that the process not only is fair but is seen to be fair. I think it's fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that we as a governing party would have very serious political problems if our actions were shown to be completely against the grain of representing the opposition fairly.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think the members of the opposition really have to await the report before they can fairly characterize it as being unfair. If they're getting five times the representation their numbers in the House warrant, certainly they're getting all the representation they're entitled to and more. This motion is neither undemocratic nor unfair. It doesn't meet either of those tests.

What we've had this evening is a lot of squawking and fussing when it's politically convenient to do so, but on earlier tests of the same type of example, striking committees, the opposition has been very willing to have its membership reduced, reflecting the reduction of its membership from the

last Legislature. They did that on the select committee on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund and others. For them now to be logically inconsistent with their previous position surely cannot be congruent with any principles they are trying to espouse at all.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of squawking tonight. It's been very enjoyable to watch the entertainment, but I think we should get on with the very serious business of the House. I urge other hon. members of this House not to accept the opposition amendment.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, my comments will be brief with respect to the motion. Before I make those particular comments, I would like to express my personal thanks through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Member for Clover Bar for the manner in which he has given second and third thoughts to some of the comments this evening.

DR. BUCK: Just one.

DR. CARTER: Well, it was one that was uttered more than once. I still want to express appreciation for the fact that the member has been in this Legislature for a considerable length of time. He has endured a number of difficult times, and whatever the reasons this evening, his comments obviously have caused various members of the government to rise and respond in various manners to the challenge he issued. So I think we would be less than magnanimous if we did not at least make note of the fact that he has shown the wisdom of second thought in a very difficult atmosphere in the House.

I must go on to a more light-hearted comment — the comment that was made with respect to the fullness of one's belly structure. I'm afraid it's quite evident that a number of us have all too much in that region because of what's happened to the fitting of our suits and belts. So in actual, precise terms his comments were not entirely accurate.

But to speak with respect to the motion, Mr. Speaker, it reads:

this Assembly declines to give a second reading to Bill 81. Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 1983, because the Bill is, in principle, inconsistent with the previously accepted democratic norms established by this Assembly for the purpose of reviewing electoral boundaries.

I purposely underline the phrase "in principle" because if you review the present sections of the Act which relate, what we're dealing with here is that the principle is intact. The principles are, namely, that there be neutral members. These are represented, as the Member for Drayton Valley so wisely pointed out, by neutral members from the bench, a member at large from the general public, and the Chief Electoral Officer, whom we as members of this Assembly and also the members of the Legislative Offices Committee have full confidence in with respect to his position and his understanding of his responsibilities as being fair-minded and a neutral party. So there we have three out of the seven who are in that neutral category, if you will.

In terms of the principle of the original Bill, we have neutral parties, representatives from the government, and representatives from the opposition. So the principles are intact; that has not been changed. What should have been dealt with in terms of the wording of this motion is that it really should have focused not on the principle but on the fact that it is inconsistent in numerical distribution with the present Act. That would have been a far better way, in my opinion, for framing that particular motion.

So, Mr. Speaker, because of the deficiency in exact wording, I too urge hon. members to defeat this motion.

MRS. FYFE: Mr. Speaker, I spoke on Bill 81 when it was in second reading, and I would now like to make a few comments related to the amendment before us this evening. One of the most difficult tasks of any legislative committee is that of the electoral boundaries commission. I do not want to be unduly critical of the previous commission, but in the constituency I represent there are boundaries that are illogical. One of the greatest factors in looking at the complexity of boundary changes or fairness is that it requires an enormous amount of time. Time is one of the factors the four members who would be appointed to this committee are going to be required to put in to look at the difficulties we have. It's not just looking at maps and drawing lines, as those who have served on it previously well know. The complexities have become greater. The population of our province has increased, and it's imperative that the commission project those population increases in the future, not just look at existing populations.

Elected people are put on this committee who have a different perspective than those that are appointed. Elected persons know what it is like to have to represent a small bit of another municipality in which there are no elected officials, for example. They know the complexities of constituencies that are diverse. They know the difficulties of representing urban constituencies in which there is no particular centre, no particular trading community, no one municipality or group of elected people to deal with.

It's a very detailed, very complex issue, which will require an enormous amount of time. It is my feeling that Bill 81 would require the time dedication of those four members in addition to the other appointed officials. It will require not only the time commitment but a fairness to represent the electors of the entire province. If in my mind I thought that any member of this Assembly would accept such a responsibility not looking at fairness and the complexities involved in boundary changes, then I would be the first to stand up and say so.

I hope this boundaries commission and the changes in this Bill will assist in rectifying the difficulties that exist in the electoral boundaries within the province of Alberta, and I recommend the defeat of the amendment.

[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:

Martin	Notley	Speaker. R.
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Against the motion:

Adair	Fyfe	Paproski
Alexander	Harle	Payne
Anderson	Hyland	Reid
Appleby	Jonson	Shaben
Bradley	Koper	Shrake
Carter	Kowalski	Sparrow
Cook	Koziak	Stevens
Crawford	Lee	Thompson
Cripps	McPherson	Trynchy
Drobot	Moore. R.	Woo
Elliott	Musgrove	Young
Embury	Nelson	Zip
Fischer	Oman	

Totals: Ayes – 3 Noes – 38

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I would like to know from someone the significance of the second bell ringing. I was halfway down the corridor. Why does the second bell ring if there is not an interval of at least two seconds to get into your place?

MR. SPEAKER: The House may wish to give some further consideration to this. We have not, as you know, had a practice here of keeping the bells ringing until the Whips report or anything like that. My understanding is that the timer we have here measures four minutes, and that's what we used, certainly going back to 1972. After certain members moved their offices into the former Agriculture Building, we felt that there was a need for an extension of time. Although the matter wasn't referred to the House or rules committee or anything like that, we doubled it by using the timer twice. So there's an interval of eight minutes, as I understand it, between the ringing of the division bells to start the running of the time and the conclusion of the time, after which, as I understand it, no member is permitted to enter the Assembly until after the vote. Of course, the hon. Member for Clover Bar knows that and respected it.

That's the situation. If it's not satisfactory to the House, may I respectfully suggest that someone in the House might wish to take some initiative in that regard.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, if I may raise the point again. For what it's worth, it is very difficult to hear the sand running in the sand dial from any place except three millimetres away. To the hon. Government House Leader: I don't know what changes would have to be made, but possibly the last 30 seconds or something. The hon. Member for Lethbridge West was at

the front door and I said, John, hustle up; we have to go and vote. I was outside the door at that time.

So to facilitate the members making sure they are in their place, possibly the bells should ring for the last 30 seconds or one minute.

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps hon. members would like to consider that suggestion. We could ring the concluding bell at eight minutes but ring a sort of warning bell perhaps one or two minutes before the final bell goes. I don't know if that requires a change in the rules. It isn't going to inconvenience anybody as far as I know, as long as it doesn't mislead anybody into thinking that the warning bell is the final bell. Some hon. members aren't here this evening. Perhaps I might be permitted, on an occasion when all of the members are here, to repeat that. We could try that — say, perhaps two minutes, because I think 30 seconds would allow covering only a very short distance. We'd have to use some other timing device because this one will only measure four minutes at a time, but I think we can manage that.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I've noted your suggestion that you may refer to the matter again when more members are present. That certainly seems to me to be a suitable suggestion that members may indeed agree to, that a warning bell sometime ahead could be given. If there is further difficulty, I would be quite happy to meet with the hon. Leader of the Opposition and you in respect of the same matter.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Assembly will deal with Bill 81, the one that was under consideration this evening, and if there's time, other Bills for second reading on the Order Paper.

[At 10:35 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]