

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Wednesday, November 23, 1983 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous leave of the House to announce the passing of a former member of the Legislature.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Alex Gordey of Vegreville, who represented the Vegreville constituency in the Legislature from 1959 to '71, has passed away at the age of 72. Not only was Mr. Gordey an MLA and a professional educator, but he participated, belonged to, and took an active part in a number of organizations. He also served for four years on the advisory board of the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, which is government owned. Mr. Gordey will be buried this afternoon in Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Edmonton. I am sure he will be missed by many.

Thank you.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, on the privilege that has been given the hon. Member for Vegreville, I would also like to make comments with regard to Mr. Alex Gordey, in terms of Mr. Gordey being a former colleague of mine and of Dr. Buck in this Legislature. I think we can recall many, many times when Mr. Gordey became a very responsible and principled representative of the people in his constituency. I can say that in incident after incident, Mr. Gordey always put his constituents first. Their needs were number one. His concern and compassion for others was certainly ultimate as a guideline in his actions as a member of this Legislature. I am sure his family and friends will certainly miss him, and I would like to add my concern at this time in my remarks to this Legislature.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 115

**Natural Gas Pricing Agreement
Amendment Act, 1983**

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Natural Gas Pricing Agreement Amendment Act, 1983.

The purpose of the Bill is to establish a formal mechanism by which the Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission could administer an incentive natural gas marketing program in Canada, such as the incentive interruptible industrial natural gas marketing plan presently being considered by Alberta to enhance natural gas sales in Canada.

[Leave granted; Bill 115 read a first time]

Bill 247

**An Act to Amend the
Hazardous Chemicals Act**

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill No. 247, An Act to Amend the Hazardous Chemicals Act.

The Act would compel the Minister of the Environment to establish a schedule of hazardous chemicals. It would compel those who possess them to inform the minister, within 90 days, of what they have. It is an attempt to have an inventory of hazardous products in the province.

[Leave granted; Bill 247 read a first time]

Bill 250

An Act to Amend the Cemeteries Act

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill No. 250, An Act to Amend the Cemeteries Act.

This Bill would allow for the interment of members of the Canadian merchant navy within fields of honor in our provincial cemeteries.

[Leave granted; Bill 250 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, as required by section 83 of the Surveys Act, I wish to table copies of three orders in council passed under the authority of this Act.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the most recent fiscal reports of the two provincial hospitals, Ponoka and Oliver.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table five copies of a report entitled The Development of New Agricultural Land in Northwestern Alberta, which has been prepared by the Northern Alberta Development Council.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. ALEXANDER: Mr. Speaker, today I request leave to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, 32 grade 6 students from the Richard Secord school in the constituency of Edmonton Whitemud. These students are accompanied by their teachers Miss Ursula Buffi and Mrs. Pauline Sosnowski and by parents Mrs. Dale Jehn, Mrs. Ada Moyles, Mrs. Lou Stata, and Mrs. Laura Twardy. They are seated in the members gallery, and I would ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the House.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, a group of 23 grade 6 students from the Ardmore school, located in the hamlet of Ardmore in the Bonnyville constituency. They are accompanied by their principal, Mr. Richard Jalbert; their teacher, Mr. Remi Gagnon; and parents Mrs. Rita Dorwart, Mrs. Joyce Bokota, Mrs. Bernice Romanowicz, and Mrs. Twilla Misiwich. They are seated in the members gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional welcome of the House.

MR. McPHERSON: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure and pride to introduce to you, and through you to

members of the Legislature, Miss Iris Naumenko, who is Miss Red Deer and the first runner-up in the Miss Canada Pageant. Miss Naumenko is accompanied today by her father, Mr. Walter Naumenko, and by her sister, Miss Nancy Naumenko, who is a special assistant to the Minister of Economic Development. I would ask that our very fine ambassador from Red Deer, and her family, please rise in the members gallery and receive the warm accord of the House.

MR. CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 72 grade 6 students from Dunluce community school in the constituency of Edmonton Calder. They are accompanied by their teachers Jan Bauerfind, Ernie Silverton, and Ram Nand; by their librarian, Linda Corrigal; and by parents Linda Hagley, Diane Sinclair, and Ed Romijn. They are seated in the public gallery. I would like them to stand and receive the usual warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly members of the Committee of the Unemployed from various parts of Alberta. I am not sure how many are here. They are in the members gallery, and I would like them to stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Prescription Drug Costs

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Has the minister had the opportunity to review the report on the Saskatchewan prescription drug plan, prepared by Associated Health Planners of Winnipeg, and has she been able to determine from the report why prescription drugs are higher in Alberta than in any other province in Canada?

MRS. OSTERMAN: No, Mr. Speaker, I haven't had an opportunity to review that report. But I understand it has been reviewed, or is in the process of being reviewed, by one of my colleagues. I think the Minister of Social Services and Community Health may have some information on it.

MR. MARTIN: I guess not. My supplementary question, then, to either minister who wants to answer it: has the minister estimated how much money the government and the people of Alberta would save if pharmacists were paid for the actual acquisition cost of their inventories instead of the current schedule, which I understand pays them up to 25 per cent of the wholesale price listed, plus a dispensing fee?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, if I had any responsibility in that area, I'd be happy to respond. But since I don't, I don't have anything to say.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, in terms of an analysis of the information or the question the hon. member asked, that isn't something my department would do.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, if I could track down the departments here, maybe. But I'll go on to the next question.

Will the minister undertake an effort to determine how much of a hidden profit is concealed by the difference between what pharmacists actually pay for their inventories and what the

wholesale list prices indicate, given that pharmacists may haggle and negotiate prices below the list prices?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I really hesitate to acknowledge, almost, the information the hon. member is putting forward in the House today, and I can only say that I'll take his question under advisement.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'll go on to a different report, dealing with a similar matter. I'm sure the minister will have time to look at the report, and we'll ask it again.

Has the minister contacted her federal counterpart to object to proposed changes to federal legislation, which currently permits Canadian pharmaceutical manufacturers to produce name-brand drugs as generic drugs? In the past this has saved Canadian consumers millions of dollars.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Let's just stay with the question.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have had no discussions with the federal minister about a federal Bill or federal policy in that regard.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it's been in the making for over a year. I suggest the minister take a look at it.

My question to the minister is: will she then commission a study to discover ways and means of lowering drug prices in Alberta, much of which is paid for from government coffers?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm having some difficulty with the hon. member's question, because it isn't a matter that in terms of costs of any particular item in this province, other than whether those costs somehow are inappropriate and would be recognized as inappropriate by a statute that my department would administer — it is not something that we would be speaking to.

MR. PLANCHE: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could supplement my colleague's response. The fact of the matter is that because of the Patent Act regulations in Canada now, there is no room, in the worldwide sense, for any R and D in pharmaceuticals or any activity in the technology of pharmaceuticals in Canada. There is a cost/benefit to be determined as to whether or not that activity could be put in place with a change in the Patent Act as it presently stands, and there is at this time no reasonable substantiation of the comment that the prices of pharmaceuticals here are out of line with the rest of the world, where R and D is permitted. So we will be looking with some interest at the way the Patent Act changes develop and, wherever possible, will be encouraging the presence of a pharmaceutical activity in Alberta.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Social Services and Community Health, Mr. Speaker. My question is: will the minister also undertake to study the implications of the report — and I gather there has been some consultation — to determine how his department might save money in its payments for prescriptions on behalf of social allowance recipients?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, in terms of payments to social allowance recipients, there is an annual agreement reached between the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association and the department as to what the costs would be. I would be happy to follow up, in reviewing *Hansard* to try to determine what the hon. member is asking, and look into it.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I was trying to bring in reports that have been in the news and everywhere else. I would think the ministers would know about it.

Wildlife Park — Orphaned Bears

MR. MARTIN: I'll direct my second set of questions to the Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife. Could the minister describe the policy established by his department to deal with wildlife in captivity, specifically the policy dealing with orphaned bear cubs?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I think this has been aired several times through the press over the last few weeks.

DR. BUCK: This is the Legislature, Don.

MR. SPARROW: The incident we're referring to was an unfortunate one. Captive wildlife is normally disposed of with the approval of the department, and the removal of wildlife from a zoo or park is handled by our department, usually with the authorization of our department.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, then. Because there seem to be some problems, will the minister establish a policy on what is to be done with orphaned bear cubs, before his department renews any agreement with the Alberta Wildlife Park?

MR. SPARROW: Yes, we're in the process of reviewing our contract with the Wildlife Park. One year ago, the contract was initiated for the first time in Alberta. Previous to that contract, wildlife and orphaned cubs were disposed of in the field by wildlife officers if they could not immediately find a home or a zoo that wanted them. Under this contract, they were brought to and kept at the Wildlife Park and, along with Wildlife Park officials, our wildlife department tried to find homes for them. As you know, all of a sudden 27 of these animals turned out to be collected from spring till fall, and there was very little success in trying to find other homes for them. They had to be disposed of in some manner, and the rest of the story was in the paper.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary. . . Sorry; we're on the second question. Right.

MR. MARTIN: Can the minister advise the Assembly what is being done to prevent the slaughter of the six bear cubs remaining at the Alberta Wildlife Park?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, if the policies are being established by our staff, if we cannot locate homes for them in other zoos, they will be disposed of. If they are old enough and can be put back into the wild in proper locations, they will be. But other than that, they will be disposed of by humane methods.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. Can the minister advise when the operations and assets of the Alberta Wildlife Park will be handed over to the Alberta Wildlife Park Foundation?

MR. SPARROW: There are discussions going on at the present time. As to the exact date of the transfer, I have not been

notified. They're in negotiations with the society to do that, but they have not notified me of the specific dates.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister table in the Legislature the results of the investigation his department is carrying on into the November 7 killings of the 17 bears at the Alberta Wildlife Park?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I will give that question some consideration. A lot of the information in the file was given to us in confidence, and I would have to look at the total file before I could say I could give that information to the Legislature.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise this Assembly why a private country road which runs past the Alberta Wildlife Park was paved by the Transportation Department?

MR. SPEAKER: Gosh, I have a little difficulty with this line of questioning anyway, having regard to the criterion of urgency in regard to questions that are being asked. Now that we're getting off on a side road, I think perhaps that should be dealt with in a different way, either the Order Paper or direct communication with the minister. The question seems to lack that high drama which is characteristic of the question period.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the question being asked deserves an answer, because the hon. member may have been suggesting there was something wrong with the government having taken that approach. That fact of the matter are that this government believes that people in the private sector who do such things as establishing the Alberta game farm ought to be assisted in every way possible. We did, without any hesitation, assist them with regard to the access to that property, and we're pleased that we were able to do so.

MR. MARTIN: Nice. One final supplementary. Can the minister tell this Assembly the approximate cost of this nice project?

MR. SPEAKER: Really, let's go to the Order Paper. A supplementary by the hon. Member for Clover Bar.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife is for a point of clarification; I might have missed something. Can the minister indicate what the government policy is for its wildlife officers, as it applies to the field. Did the minister say that when officers in the field find abandoned cubs, all of these animals are brought into the Wildlife Park?

MR. SPARROW: No, Mr. Speaker, not all of them. The ones that are turned in or are injured are taken to the park, but not all of them.

Timber Harvesting — Oldman River Basin

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources is with regard to the logging road in the upper Oldman River area. I would like to ask the minister why the decision with regard to this road was made prior to the road itself, and the land that would be affected, being discussed and interpreted by the integrated land management committee that is available?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated on another occasion in the Assembly, this logging operation flows from a licence issued some 18 or 19 years ago; back in 1966, to be precise.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, as I think the hon. member would be aware, the Eastern Slopes policy does specifically permit a logging operation like this to proceed, even while the integrated management plan is being developed, where there is a multiple use area, a zone five rating, which is the specific rating of this area. It is zone five, multiple use, and it is consistent with the Eastern Slopes policy.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the effect on the area, an area that is protected and certainly could be maintained as a natural area, has the minister reviewed that matter, and is he convinced that there will not be any adverse effect with regard to such an area in southern Alberta?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have done so. Again, as I mentioned on another occasion, we're talking here about some 6 per cent of the entire watershed area. We're going to ensure that the cutting is done in such a way that is as aesthetically pleasing as possible and takes into account the multiple use aspects of that area.

I should also advise the Assembly that it is located immediately adjacent to the Beehive area of the upper Oldman River watershed, which is being assessed as a major ecological reserve, so we're making determined efforts to ensure that the recreational use of that general part of Alberta will be maintained.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. The road is being initiated at the present time. At an earlier date, the minister indicated that it would start in 1984. Can the minister indicate why the different start-up date?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: In fact, Mr. Speaker, that's not the case. There may have been some ambiguity in a letter of mine, responding to a written query from the Alberta Wilderness Association. The reference to 1984 was to the actual logging taking place. Upon noting the possible ambiguity, I followed it up with an immediate letter to the Alberta Wilderness Association, clearing up any possible ambiguity. The plan all along has been for the road to be constructed in late 1983, the reason for that being that the road must be constructed and have an opportunity to settle so that logging can occur in the summer of 1984. If that logging opportunity isn't available, it could well result in the shutdown of the sawmill for one year, with many Albertans being put out of work. I know the hon. member wouldn't want to see that occur.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. I hope I'm not being repetitive, but I would like to clarify one point. Could the minister please advise the Assembly in regard to what the monitoring process will be, to make sure the standards used in forest management will be up to 1983 standards and not standards back in the 1950s.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: An excellent question, Mr. Speaker. To begin with, we've gone ahead and had the proposal for the logging plans, the cut plans, — assessed by a third party, a landscape architect who has already taken a look at the proposed cut plans, has offered some comments on them, and has generally assessed them as being very much state-of-the-art cut plans. As well, when the actual cutting takes place, we're going to have a representative of the timber management branch mon-

itoring the ongoing cutting and, as I said, it will be done in a way that is aesthetically appropriate for that area of the province.

MRS. EMBURY: One more supplementary question, please, Mr. Speaker. I believe the minister just said that there would be a possibility that the sawmill would be shut down for a year if this project didn't proceed. I understood there would be some possibility that the sawmill would be shutting down regardless if this proceeds or not in the near future. So you are saying that if this project possibly doesn't go ahead, the sawmill would only be shutting down for one year?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Mr. Speaker, we certainly have no information that would suggest that the sawmill would not be operational. If the cutting does occur, the cutting will occur for the express purpose of enabling the sawmill operations to continue. This is part of the 20-year allocation of lumber to the Revelstoke operations and, in fact, the Revelstoke company has quite naturally requested that they be permitted to proceed with the operations in the normal course. It would be our expectation that the sawmill will continue in operation.

Rental Deposits

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question to the hon. Minister for Consumer and Corporate Affairs deals with damage deposits for rental accommodations. With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I just want to explain what happened. The gentleman who brought this to my attention lost two damage deposits, because the rental accommodation he was in went bankrupt. I'd like to know what consideration the minister is giving to introducing some type of legislation to protect these people who lose their deposits.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I seem to recall a case with one particular tenancy situation in Calgary where there was a problem. With some negotiations, my department staff succeeded in securing the damage deposits. I am not aware of the situation you are describing now, and I had not considered bringing any legislation in.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate what consultation she has had with equivalent ministers in other provinces, to see if they are having the same problem and what they are doing to solve their problem?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, there was a meeting of consumer and corporate affairs ministers in Whitehorse in September. Matters of urgency were placed on the agenda, and no minister raised that subject.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in discussion with her provincial counterparts, is the minister in a position to indicate if Alberta is the only province that does not have protection for its renters, or are there other provinces?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of the answer to that question, but I will certainly undertake to get the information.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate if the department has given any consideration to having these deposits placed in trust, the same as real estate agents and other people who are taking people's money as deposits, and guaranteeing

that those funds will be there when the people move out? Has the minister given consideration to putting these funds in trust?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, that topic was raised when there was a discussion with respect to the interest rates presently being paid on damage deposits. There was a clear indication, in terms of the public's communication with my office, that that would create more problems than it would solve.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that there are substantial sums involved in large rental projects, can the minister indicate if the study as to these large funds could be divorced from where there are smaller apartments, or is the minister looking at one type of protection for all types of rental accommodation?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, whether the rental units are large or small, we're still dealing with individual deposits with respect to individual accommodations. I think it's very difficult to separate those situations where we may be talking about a very large unit with many, many suites in it, so I don't think it's probably a practical suggestion.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in studying this situation and problem, can the minister indicate to the Assembly what the difference is between these funds being kept in trust and the funds that are kept in trust when a person makes a deposit on a house? That can be a large amount in some instances, or it can be a small amount. Can the minister indicate the difference between the two situations?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, insofar as I recall the discussions that took place at the time, there was some concern about — obviously the hon. member realizes that when somebody gives notice to vacate the premises, that deposit has to be available for return.

DR. BUCK: They were broke.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Well, one of the unfortunate problems is that when you're dealing with large numbers of deposits, whether it's a large number of single deposits, there is a lot more administration. That certainly was one of the factors taken into account.

DR. BUCK: A supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER: Might this be the final supplementary.

DR. BUCK: Yes. So at this point in time, the person has unfortunately lost the two deposits and has no recourse to recover them?

MR. SPEAKER: That's a legal question, of course. The minister isn't required to give that kind of advice, even if she's an honorary member of the Law Society.

Drilling Operations on Irrigation Land

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources is a question that came up during the hearings Alberta Environment had on land use. Is the Energy Resources Conservation Board still taking a look at the impact that gas and oil exploration has on irrigated land?

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is a matter that, to my knowledge, has been considered by the Energy Resources

Conservation Board. I believe that a couple of measures have been considered, and implemented in some instances, in respect of irrigation lands, the first being that the normal target for the well location has been changed from the centre of the quarter section to the northeast corner of the quarter section. As well, I understand that in some instances, there has been a practice and a requirement for the lowering of wellheads in these situations.

MR. MUSGROVE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is any consideration being given to multiple drillings from one surface lease; in other words, directional drillings to target areas, other places under the quarter section, from one given surface lease.

MR. ZAOZIRNY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the notion of a requirement of directional drilling has been given some consideration. In that regard, one has to bear in mind, of course, that directional drilling is a very expensive technique to employ and, in some instances, would render marginal fields uneconomic. As well, one has to bear in mind that the size of irrigation land is often such that directional drilling alone could not be employed from one pad; there would have to be several pads engaged. But finally, I would simply say that each situation has its own circumstances and, in our judgment and to our knowledge, the ERCB would make that assessment on an individual, case-by-case analysis.

Metrication

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Transportation. Since the acquittal of a dealer selling gasoline by the imperial measure, could the minister advise whether it is his intention to follow the footsteps of Nova Scotia Premier Buchanan, to revert to road signs with imperial distance measures?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure of the relationship between gallons of gas and kilometres or miles. But my understanding of what occurred in Nova Scotia is that the government there has decided to erect some signs in both kilometres and miles along common border points between their province and the United States, so visiting tourists to that province from the United States might become more easily acquainted with our system of measuring distances on highways. At the present time, we have no intention of doing that in Alberta. Our border points are less significant, in terms of the province as a whole, than they might be in Nova Scotia. But I suppose it is something that we would need to consider if it were determined there were some significant advantage, to the tourist industry in particular, in providing that kind of information, so visitors to our province from south of the border would more gradually become used to our system.

MR. BATIUK: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister advise whether he has had communication or representation from people requesting this change?

MR. M. MOORE: There are continual representations being made with respect to the kilometre measurement in rural Alberta. They particularly have to do with distances in rural areas where, as the hon. member knows, our system of land measurement has resulted in road allowances being laid out two miles apart in one direction and one mile in another direction. The situation is that because of the system that exists, kilometre measurements are frequently in decimals. So while

one might suggest that it's 110 kilometres from here to Vegreville, when you get to Vegreville, it's always nine miles north and three miles west of where John Batiuk lives. I don't see that changing.

Incidentally, we got into this before this government was in office, but that's neither here nor there. It was about 1970 that the provinces and Canada, as I understand it, agreed in principle to converting to metric, and I don't think there was much discussion about it at that time. The problem has been, though — and this relates to the soft conversion that's going on in the U.S., as opposed to the method we're undertaking — that the federal Liberal government in this case . . . The old saying is: you give them a millimetre, and they've taken a kilometre.

MR. BATIUK: Mr. Speaker, I must say I'm glad the minister has made the uniform speed limit for day and night, because with those previous signs, many used to travel at night because they [not recorded] closer at night than in daytime.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member forgot to add a question mark to the end of that.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister would reconsider his first answer and post signs at Coutts, because Coutts, Alberta, in my hon. colleague's constituency, is one of the largest border crossings servicing people in Canada.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, if there are indications that there are some significant disadvantages to not providing mileage information in addition to kilometres at border points, we would be pleased to consider that. I hasten to add, however, that it's certainly not our intention to try to turn back the clock in Alberta. I believe it would be appropriate to be in step with other provinces in Canada.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Vegreville asked some questions awhile ago about signage and a related point. It had to do with the matter of a sign saying "fine for parking". I asked my staff in the department if they would consider the validity of drawing a red circle around that particular sign and putting a line through it and seeing if that would work.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway, and then the hon. Minister of the Environment would like to supplement some information previously given.

War Emergency Preparedness

MR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister responsible for Disaster Services. As a result of recent public concerns stemming from the television film *The Day After*, a film depicting the tragedy of nuclear war, has the government reviewed its preparedness for possible nuclear war?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the situation is that the government of Alberta, through Alberta Disaster Services and through our municipalities, does have a fairly comprehensive plan with respect to a possible war emergency. Those plans are updated annually, and we try to keep them in step with whatever conditions may exist. They involve fairly elaborate plans with respect to the continuation of government operations. They involve the provision of essential services, such as medical and health services, fire and police services, food supplies, and a communication plan, as well as advice to our citizens with respect to the manner in which they might take shelter from nuclear fall-out.

On reviewing those plans, Mr. Speaker, I believe they are as good as, if not better than, any that exist in Canada. I would add as well that they are developed under some national direction, so as to be consistent with the plans of the government of Canada and other provinces.

MR. PAPROSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. It has been suggested that Alberta is not a prime target. Does the government have any evidence to suggest that this capital city is indeed not a prime target?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, we do not make that decision or make those judgments. The government of Canada, National Defence, provides us with advice with respect to the likelihood of something occurring or not. Their advice is that from a North American point of view, there are a number of other centres which would more likely be prime targets than would any centre in the province of Alberta. I should add that that doesn't minimize our concern. I do believe it's necessary for our citizens to spend perhaps more of their efforts on the efforts being made by our federal government and by our allies in the United States and elsewhere to prevent such an occurrence, rather than spending an undue amount of time with respect to the preparation that might go on.

MR. SZWENDER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate if the government of Alberta has constructed or is planning to construct any special nuclear shelters in this province?

DR. BUCK: There's one under the Legislature here, Walter.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the situation is that there are some provisions that have already been made with respect to deployment to specially constructed shelters throughout the province of persons who would be involved in the administration of federal, provincial, and municipal governments.

Perhaps more important than that is that there are any number of existing buildings within every area of the province that would provide some protection in the event of nuclear war and the fall-out that might occur. From time to time we update a listing of those buildings. In fact, during this current year, in conjunction with Emergency Planning Canada and several municipalities, we have undertaken to update the buildings that might offer the most shelter from nuclear fall-out in the event of such a problem. Because of the unlikelihood of these events occurring and because of the probability of limited protection being afforded in buildings that already exist, we do not advocate that our citizens go out and build fall-out shelters. Indeed, we think there are other more meaningful efforts that could be made to ensure that such a disaster does not occur or that, in the event that it does, there is reasonable protection.

MR. SZWENDER: A supplementary to the Minister of Education. Considering the warnings issued to viewers, prior to the showing of *The Day After*, about the undesirability of children watching the program, could the minister indicate if any change is being considered in the department's policy on teaching about nuclear war below the grade 12 level?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe it is necessary for that issue to be considered as a matter of policy either by the government or by the Department of Education. On a matter such as that, I would place my confidence in the professional teachers who are in the classroom, given the fact that they understand the views and conditions of the community.

MR. KOWALSKI: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister responsible for Alberta Disaster Services. Can the minister advise if Alberta Disaster Services continues to have in place a program that subsidizes and allows municipal officials from Alberta to attend a course sponsored by the Canadian National Defence people, in Arnprior, Ontario, dealing with this whole question of nuclear devastation?

MR. M. MOORE: As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, we do assist municipal officials in travelling to a national program. In addition to that, we assist municipalities in sending representatives to courses, mainly in Edmonton, with respect to that and other peacetime emergency measures. I should add that the municipal plans which have been developed throughout the province for peacetime emergencies in many ways can be activated in the case of a possible wartime emergency, which would be very helpful as well.

Sewage Disposal — Lac Ste. Anne

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to supplement a question I was asked yesterday with regard to alleged raw sewage discharge into Lac Ste. Anne.

The summer village of West Cove is located on the southwest side of Lac Ste. Anne. It has a permanent population of about 49 people and a considerably larger number of summer residences. The summer village's sewer system consists of pump-out tanks, which each cottage owner hauls to a lagoon located southeast of the village. Approximately 60 cottages or residences use this system. The lagoon was not designed to be drained and does not meet departmental standards.

In 1981 the village was instructed to upgrade their facilities. They hired an engineering consulting firm to prepare a design report and purchase land for a new facility. To date they have been unsuccessful in obtaining land. The recent challenge to municipal election has compounded their problems with regard to proceeding with this matter in the near term, and the council will be dealing with it once the court challenge to the election has been proceeded with.

With regard to the particular incident this fall, when the lagoon was full this fall, the department instructed the village to haul the sewage to a suitable disposal site. The village could not obtain access to suitable facilities within a reasonable distance and requested permission to pump the effluent onto an adjacent hayfield. They had the permission of the owner of the hayfield. This process proceeded in a satisfactory manner and was inspected twice by the department. Almost all of the effluent soaked into the ground, with the exception of three small puddles. During spring run-off, the larger puddle will flow into an adjacent bog. If there is sufficient run-off, the effluent contained in the small puddle could reach the lake by a roadside ditch; however, it is a very small quantity, and if there are any bacteria or viruses pathogenic to human health, they will not survive the winter. The land used was private property, and therefore it was not necessary to be posted.

Mr. Speaker, I might conclude by saying that the sewage disposal facilities at West Cove need upgrading, and the community is attempting to do so. I might also advise that the village has disposed of their effluent in a satisfactory manner, and it poses no threat to the lake or to bathers using the lake. I may also conclude by saying that no raw sewage entered the lake.

MR. PURDY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Can the minister confirm that in actual fact, the effluent that was

pumped was actually pumped in a southwesterly direction and not in a northerly direction toward the lake?

MR. BRADLEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I believe the effluent was pumped out in a northwesterly direction.

MR. PURDY: A southwesterly direction.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to read this map I have, trying to determine which way is north on this map. After further review, it appears that it is southeast.

MR. PURDY: Thank you. Can the minister confirm that when the actual sewage was being pumped into this particular hayfield southeast of the lake, officials from the Department of the Environment were on hand to witness the operation?

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, when the particular drainage of the lagoon was taking place — I believe the date was November 9 — there were officials from the department monitoring the drainage.

Alternative Schools

MR. LEE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, concerning withdrawal of funding for the Logos Education Society by the Calgary Board of Education. Is the minister in receipt of an appeal from the Logos Education Society, alleging discrimination against families on a religious basis, in view of the province's policy of funding other alternative programs such as bilingual schools and schools for the gifted?

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, representatives of the Logos Education Society contacted my office some time ago and asked if they could meet with me. I agreed to that immediately and arranged that such a meeting would be held early next week in Calgary. As a result of that, I have received a letter from the Logos Education Society. I don't consider it to be an appeal. I consider that the appeal had been made to me earlier. The letter contains information which I had asked to receive from them. But I have received such a letter. It had been my intention, prior to the receipt of the letter, to meet with them. Clearly this is an issue of concern in Calgary, and the hon. member's question reflects a similar concern that had been expressed by many of his colleagues in this Assembly.

MR. LEE: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the urgency of this decision-making process, could the minister indicate how he delineates between funding for, say, the Logos Education Society school, of which we have one school located in Calgary Buffalo, and the separate school system?

MR. KING: I couldn't do that in the question period, Mr. Speaker. It is a very complex matter that relates not only to current practice in the community but to constitutional law. Very briefly, I can say that the position of separate schools is established in the Alberta Act of 1905, which I might note is not provincial legislation and therefore not subject to the possibility of amendment by the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Other schools are not similarly enshrined in the constitution.

DR. CARTER: A supplemental, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: We've come to the end of the allotted time. Perhaps we could come back to this topic tomorrow. But I did

recognize the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood. If the Assembly agrees, perhaps we could have a brief question and a brief answer.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. MARTIN: Maybe I'll save it.

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

Bill 111
Dental Profession Act

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that Bill No. 111, the Dental Profession Act, be read a second time.

Hon. members will recall that this is the fourth piece of professional legislation that has been introduced by the government this year. As well, six groups have been designated under the provisions of the Health Occupations Act this year. I say this because I think that both facts demonstrate the government's commitment to the smooth and comprehensive implementation of our policy on professions and occupations. At the same time, we recognize the aspirations of many other professional and occupational groups who are impatient to benefit from the application of the policy.

Our legislative program this year reflects the very effective groundwork that was laid by my predecessors and demonstrates the government's commitment to continued progress in this area. I've wanted to take the opportunity provided by second reading of Bill No. 111 to put those comments on the record, because I do know that many other professional and occupational groups have an interest in the implementation of the policy and will want that reassurance that I can give very sincerely on behalf of the government.

Speaking directly to the dentistry profession, though, it is worth noting that legislation in this province has recognized the practice of the dentistry profession in Alberta since days prior to our existence as a province; that is, since the days of our being a part of the Northwest Territories. Today approximately 1,000 dentists practise their profession in the province. The legislation before us today will provide these 1,000 men and women with a legislative framework that I believe will be recognized throughout Canada, and possibly across North America, as a model to be copied by others.

Much of the credit for what I believe is a very good piece of legislation must go to the Alberta Dental Association. I have enjoyed my working relationship with them very, very much. The participation by representatives of the ADA has been extensive, informed, and constructive. Among many, I would particularly like to recognize the president, Dr. Foster; the chairman of the legislation committee, Dr. Jack Snedden; and the executive director, Dr. Bruno Martinello, who, if my glasses are still good, I recognize seated in the members gallery. I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome him to the Assembly this afternoon. I would like to express the hope that he will find the debate in the Assembly very supportive of the Alberta Dental Association and of all practitioners.

Mr. Speaker, briefly, the Bill provides a number of features that I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members. I should perhaps begin by making it very clear that in every substantial way, the Bill is consistent with the government's policy on professions and occupations. Particularly, it provides for an exclusive scope of practice and for mandatory registration. No one can practise dentistry in Alberta unless they are

subject to the professional control that is embodied in the Alberta Dental Association. What we mean by the practice of dentistry is defined in the legislation.

Secondly, the Bill provides for the continuation of very high educational standards, as were originally established by the Faculty of Dentistry at the University of Alberta and as will be maintained in future by the Universities Co-ordinating Council. In this regard, I might put on record the fact that the Department of Advanced Education and I will review the structure, role, and processes of the Universities Co-ordinating Council as established in law; that is, as established in the Universities Act. Amendments, if necessary, will be presented to the Legislative Assembly in the spring of 1984. That is further to an undertaking that the hon. Minister of Advanced Education and I made to the Alberta Dental Association.

Third, the Bill provides that there will be a full, effective, and equitable discipline and competence process, in which members of the public will participate as a matter of right. Fourth, the Bill establishes a dental occupations council, which will be available to paraprofessionals and occupational groups, at their absolute discretion, as a means of providing appropriate governance to such paraprofessional or occupational groups. In this context, I would like to recognize as well the useful input that we received from the dental assistants, the dental hygienists, the dental technicians, and the dental mechanics, all of whom have an interest in the profession and in this aspect of public health practice in the province.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by saying that in my view, passage of this Act will provide patients and practitioners — and, I think I should add, the Alberta Dental Association — with protective, progressive, and professional legislation of which we can all be proud. Thank you.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to Bill 111, I would first of all like to congratulate the minister for bringing this Act forward at this time. It is very timely, and I think the process through which the minister has taken the Bill is to be recognized and congratulated as well. As I understand it, the dental profession itself was quite involved in the process and, in its present form, the Bill is acceptable to that profession. As a member of the Legislature, that means it is acceptable to me as well. I would certainly support it. If taken through the same route, other pieces of legislation that have come before this Assembly would create a lot more harmony rather than the adversary position we have with regard to other Bills, such as the Bill brought by the Minister of Labour and the taxation Bill. If I thought for a moment or two, I could list a number of others.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Education. I certainly support the Bill wholeheartedly and will assist it through the Assembly. I support the manner by which the minister has brought it into the House, in a form that has had good public and professional input and that meets with the approval of the respective people who will be guided by the Act.

I would also like to say that the recognition by the minister that the Act is consistent with the objectives of the committee on professions and occupations is important as well, because it is important that we have consistency between the various professional Acts in this province. If we have privileges for one group that are different from other groups, inconsistencies and conflict occur not only between the professions but in the mind of the general public. I certainly don't think that would be acceptable at all.

Mr. Speaker, I intend to support this Bill on second reading, and offer my congratulations to the minister.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, because I have some knowledge of the subject matter under review, and because members of the Assembly are in professions other than the profession we are discussing this afternoon and others are lay people, I would like to briefly bring to their attention some of the new sections of the Act, to help them understand. Some of the things were already being done but did not really have any legal status, when we are looking at things such as peer review committees, discipline committees, sections on advertising, and so on and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's very, very important that if professions have the privilege of being self-governing, they should also have the responsibility to make sure the people they serve, the general public of this province . . . You must always have lay people on these review committees, be they discipline committees — and this is of course a very good example that I can explain quite simply to members of the Assembly. In a committee such as this, if a professional is being disciplined, you can't have the coyote looking after the chicken house, to put it very simply. You have to have people outside the profession sitting on these review committees and discipline committees. That way the ordinary man on the street has representation on these types of committees.

The peer review committee is of course an attempt by the profession to make sure that high standards are maintained. It is fine to say that we have high standards at the university, but these standards must carry on into practice. Now that there will be legal status for the peer review committee, that can be done. As a self-governing profession, the profession can make sure that high standards are maintained. It has always been quite amazing to me that when people who develop problems in their personal lives that carry on into their professional lives when they are serving patients, have their licence suspended — you almost have to commit murder before a licence is suspended. Of course, the self-governing person who comes under this Act always has the opportunity to go to the courts if he feels he has not been treated fairly.

The profession must have sufficient teeth in it. Now it will have teeth — that's not meant to be a pun — and will have the mechanism in place so that a peer review committee can go into a practitioner's office and say to him: sir, or madam, we don't think you are practising the profession the way it is meant to be practised; you will have to go back and take short courses, and so on. This of course is covered in another part by the continuing education portion, where practitioners in medicine and dentistry must go back. I believe that in pharmacy, or three of the ones I'm familiar with, you must get a certain number of continuing education courses or your licence will be revoked or temporarily suspended.

As a practitioner of many years' standing, it's always quite interesting to me that until the continuing education section came in, we saw that the only way medical and dental practitioners upgraded their profession was when the dental supply person or the pharmaceutical representative came around and they found out what was new in the world. So because we have the continuing education portion, I want to assure members of the Assembly and the general public that practitioners of medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy in this province — the ones I'm familiar with — must keep up with what is the latest and greatest.

Of course I know that human beings, being human, sometimes when they go to these continuing education courses the social aspect is probably more fun than the learning process, but at least people must go to the courses. I'm sure that 99 per cent of the people, when they invest that kind of money and take time out of their office to go to the courses, certainly learn

something. So this is certainly a step the profession took on its own behalf to make sure its members stay up to date.

Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, the other area that should be indicated to the Assembly is the section that deals with advertising. Until there were one or two law cases, the profession really did not know what the guidelines were as to where they could look after and discipline their own members as far as advertising went. Now the guidelines are in place. Of course this took some time, because there were some cases before the courts in another discipline. I believe law was the one that a lot of other professions took their guidelines from. But now that is in place and the guidelines are firmly established. We know there will be challenges to those. We know there are people who always push to the outer limits to see how rigid the law is, and they try to bend the rules a little bit. But that's all part of human nature.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a comment or two on the role of the University of Alberta. I have the privilege of being over there for a few hours per week. It's not really a source of income; I guess it's a labor of love. I enjoy it very much, Mr. Speaker, and feel that by going that route possibly I help in some small manner with the new graduates, the people who are coming into the profession as registered, licensed dentists.

I would like to say to the Minister of Education, who is the pilot of the Bill — and the minister can pass this on to his colleague — that we must make sure there's sufficient funding in place. The University of Alberta, one of the oldest and best dental schools in the Dominion of Canada, must have sufficient funding so it can maintain that high standard of excellence. I say this knowing quite intimately the problems that all academics and schools have in budgeting in a time of restraint.

I want to assure the Minister of Education — and he can pass it on to his colleague — that I think the present dean and the administration of the school have done an excellent job in getting the best bang for the buck. The dean is a skilful administrator. He is also an excellent politician. He knows the politics of the university, the province, and the country, and that's the kind of man you have to have. You can't be just an academic. You have to be skilled in these other aspects when you're dealing with other faculties, government, staff, and students. The dean is doing an excellent job. I suppose the reason he's such a capable person is that he was under my tutelage when he was a student, way back when I still had hair. That's a long way back. I just want the minister to know and to indicate to his counterpart that the dean runs a tight ship over there, and is doing a good job.

At the same time that I say that, I want to bring to the attention of the Assembly and members of the government that all professional groups are going to have to review the supply-and-demand situation. From what I as a practitioner can see, and looking at the number of graduates we have from our schools, we are rapidly reaching the point where someday in the very near future someone is going to have to make a decision about how many people we should graduate in medicine, dentistry, and law, because they're expensive faculties. It is expensive to graduate members of these professions, so it would not seem reasonable to spend taxpayers' dollars if the need is not there any more. I know the universities in Canada are looking at this situation. The Canadian Dental Association is looking at the situation. How close are we to meeting the need with the supply of dental students and graduating dentists?

Mr. Speaker, with those few brief remarks, I would like to say that in talking with my professional colleagues, they are happy with the co-operation they have had with the Minister of Education. They are happy with his understanding of what

the Act was meant to do. With those few words, I would like to say that I will be pleased to support the Bill.

[Motion carried; Bill 111 read a second time]

Bill 98
Hospitals and Medical Care Statutes
Amendment Act, 1983

[Debate adjourned November 22: Mr. Notley speaking]

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, unless someone else wishes to rise — the hon. Member for Edmonton Whitemud? — I would like to speak to the subamendment before us at the present time with regard to public hearings on a statute we have before us, and the principles that are in Bill 98. We have just completed a Bill that I feel has gone through a process that has been examined carefully by a public group of professionals in this province and, following that discussion and type of public process, we produced in this Legislature an excellent piece of legislation, acceptable to all members of the Legislature and the professional group and, I'm sure, acceptable to the general public of Alberta. I would have to say that in terms of Bill 98 and the subamendment before us, the same type of process — that is, public hearings — would bring about the same type of legislation; legislation that may not require a lot of debate by the government backbenchers, members of the government, or members of the opposition, because the Bill would be washed through a process of public debate and public input so we would have the best possible legislation before us here at this time.

What happens, though, is that first of all we see the minister introducing the Bill, with very little discussion from other members of government, the primary discussion being carried on by members of the opposition. At the same time, we saw the Premier of this province go to the rural municipal convention last week and say to them very clearly that one of the prime causes of deficits in our provincial budget is hospital costs or health care costs. Again this week, on Monday or Tuesday I believe, the Premier said to the urban municipal association of this province that the major cause of deficits by the government of Alberta is hospital and health care costs. He went on to say that we must bring those costs into line; user fees are necessary.

That was a one-way conversation, and that's why I raise the matter. It was a one-way conversation, just like the conversation that's going on in this Legislature. Presentation of a Bill; the opposition attempts to have a certain amount of input, to reflect some public attitude into the Bill. The backbenchers and other ministers of government sit quietly and say: oh well, the minister has placed this missile before the Assembly; it's good enough for Albertans; the minister thinks it great; I think it's great; I don't want to think about it too much or tire my mind with this kind of information. So we just let it go. But it's one-way communication.

What we need, Mr. Speaker, is public input. Certainly we as MLAs can travel across this province and hear that public input. But there is not a discussion where the public can come and stand in this Legislature, give one point of view, and cross-examine the attitudes of the members of the Legislature. At the same time, the minister or the backbenchers — the member from east of Edmonton, the hon. Member for Vermilion-Viking — could have input, could question the various public presentations that are made, make statements with regard to those presentations, and tell the other side of the story so the public can hear why we need user fees, why we wish to treat the

hospital boards in a certain way. We would have a full public discussion on a very major item.

The other type of thing that could happen in that discussion is that the government may see that the way they're funding hospitals, the way the revenue is being used by this government in terms of hospitals, and the way the revenue of this government is being used in terms of other kinds of expenditures — housing, parks, land, culture, and recreation — may not have the same priority. The government may get some information with regard to a change of priorities, how to get better value out of the dollar being spent, how to spend the dollar where the people want it spent. Who knows? Maybe the people of Alberta would like us to divert more money into the area of health care and hospitalization, and maybe less to education. Who knows? Do we know that in this Legislature? Public hearings would bring that forward to this Legislature in a very clear and deliberate way, Mr. Speaker.

The question of priorities, as I raise them, is one that has never been discussed on a back-and-forth basis between the government and even the opposition. The government backbenchers want to spend something on everything, and if they get something for their constituency, they get re-elected next time and they're satisfied.

We need more than that, Mr. Speaker, and the discussion that should be held with regard to this Bill and other matters can happen in public hearings. Public hearings on Bill 98 would not only focus on the narrow questions that are raised in the Bill but would reflect on a broad number of responsibilities of government in terms of priorities and expenditures, what is important and what's not important. If the government is going to cut back on employees and on programs, where should they be cut back? I think the Premier owes it to the people of Alberta to say: look, if we are going to continue to spend more and more on health care, where do we cut back? The government doesn't ask that question, because they usually have the answer before they ask it.

As we all know, the Provincial Treasurer issued an edict that at least 2 per cent of the government civil service is going to be cut back. He says: well, I haven't got any grounds for it. I observed from a television conversation that the Premier as well hasn't any grounds for it. He says: we say 2 per cent; we're not sure; we don't know whether we mean 10 per cent, 12 per cent or 2 per cent; we've got to play it by ear, and whatever works and seems to be politically acceptable is what we're going to do. Politically acceptable to whom? — the Conservative party that is the government of this province, not the general public. If we could bring the matter before this Legislature in public hearings, it would be decisions by the public rather than just a partisan point of view. I think that's important at this point in time.

We are in a difficult economic time. We are facing the need for different approaches to the administration of health care, the administration of hospitals, and most likely the administration of municipalities, the relationship between departments and regional offices, for example in social services and education. We've built up such a layer between this Legislature, the minister, and the regional offices that a problem or concern between the government and the regional office gets lost in the discussion and is changed, watered down, distorted. It's affecting the performance of this government, affecting the delivery of services at the regional level. Through public hearings, most likely that kind of process could be evaluated as well, and certainly would have a lot of benefit to Bill 98.

I want to say that I am in support of the concept of public hearings, Mr. Speaker. I think they would be of great benefit and certainly should be welcomed in this Legislature. The spe-

cific question that could be decided in public hearings on user fees: is it really a problem, or is it not? That seems to be one of the main principles in this Bill. That discussion could occur right here in the Legislature, Mr. Speaker. A number of us have had letters with regard to user fees. A number of us feel philosophical in a certain way with regard to user fees. I think that how user fees are going to affect the hospitals would certainly be worth while as a consideration before a public hearing.

I think the other question, on the other side, should certainly be discussed; that is, user fees in terms of doctors. When a person goes to a medical doctor, should there not be a user fee of some type? Would that user fee be better than a user fee in the hospital?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but perhaps we should remind ourselves what we're about at the moment. We have a Bill which is up for second reading, and we have a motion to refer the subject matter of the Bill to a committee. We have a subamendment to the effect that when the Bill is referred to the committee, there should be public hearings. Since the amendment already says the subject matter of the Bill is to be referred for public hearings, that already is included, and to go through the Bill and enumerate all the things in the Bill that might be the subject of the public hearings is totally superfluous and certainly not relevant. The subject matter is already referred to and dealt with in the amendment, consequently it should not be dealt with again in a subamendment, as was very correctly pointed out yesterday by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. The effect of an amendment is to narrow the scope of debate, and the effect of a subamendment is to narrow it still further. What we have here is a magnifying process rather than a narrowing process. So I'd respectfully ask the hon. member to get back to this question of whether or not there should be public hearings.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I certainly accept your ruling. In my own assessment I recognized that in the last two or three minutes I was bringing the matter of the content of the Bill into the discussion of the pros and cons of public hearings. Up to that point, I attempted in every way to maintain the reasons for public hearings, the merits of public hearings, and why they would be a benefit to us in this Legislature at this time. That was the focus of my debate. In the last few moments, I certainly did recall your ruling of yesterday. However, sometimes a person nudges the rules a little in his debate.

Mr. Speaker, the public hearings we are asking for in this subamendment would bring Albertans from all walks of life. In Alberta at present, we have a large number of people who are unemployed and finding times very difficult and who, I'm sure, would have a presentation in terms of the content of this Bill. We have the medical profession at the other end of this case, who could appear before this Legislature and tell how the contents of this Bill would affect their actions and their work within the various medical centres and hospitals across this province.

We could have representation and input from the general businessman, the farmer, the ordinary citizen of this province. The content of this Bill, as it is now placed before us in this Legislature, is not a very technical set of ground rules. It is a set of ground rules that will affect every individual in Alberta. It is a situation with which they will be confronted. Because of that situation, each and every Albertan will have a personal point of view.

Certainly there must be restrictions placed upon those public hearings, but the restrictions will have to be as broad as pos-

sible. We may have to spend a longer period of time on the public hearings so we do get the voice of a cross section of Albertans. That will certainly need to be a criterion of the public hearings.

As well, I think the process in the public hearings must be comfortable, must be available to Albertans so when they arrive here they are able to ask members of the Legislature certain questions and, in turn, members of the Legislature can ask them questions, so there is a free flow of information between the members that represent the people in Alberta and the general public that will be making the presentations. That certainly would be a necessary criterion in these public hearings.

As a third criterion, a position paper or explanatory paper, designed and accepted by this Legislature, could be sent to various individuals who wish to make presentations, so each and every presenter, as they could be called, would not necessarily need to hire somebody or spend hours and hours in terms of research. The contents of the Bill would be enumerated in that paper, presentable and readable in very ordinary language rather than complicated language. I'm sure if that were done, it would enhance the process of presentation back to us in the Legislature. With those three terms of reference, I think the public hearing could be successful.

A fourth criterion I would add is openness, and an atmosphere of listening by the Legislature would certainly be necessary. I think it could work, Mr. Speaker, and we could have a changed Bill, an improved Bill and, I'm sure, a better Bill than we have before us. On those grounds, I'm sure even we in the opposition would consider our consent to Bill 98.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite has been going on at some length about having public meetings and public debate on the question of funding for hospitals and how we should do it, and having people in to air their views, apparently in the Legislature. I'd like to suggest that we're here, and debating is what the Legislature's all about.

In my case, we have three spanking brand-new hospitals, and they're beautiful.

MR. KOWALSKI: I would like to get one.

MR. LYSONS: The hon. member next to me says he would like to have one. But I don't think any of our three hospitals is contemplating user fees. As a matter of fact, on Sunday an administrator of one of these hospitals asked me how we were going to handle the surplus. Yesterday I talked to another administrator who was wondering how we were going to handle the surplus, whether they had to refund it or whether they could keep some.

As far as the hospitals and the people in my area are concerned, sure we've had a sudden knee-jerk reaction as to whether or not we should have user fees. But when they are not being implemented, there is no argument. It's just like whenever there's a five point tax increase, there's a knee-jerk reaction. But when people see new hospitals and all the other new services we have, they know they've got to be paid for. As long as we were motoring along and picking up all the bills from all the hospitals, there was no limit. We have to recognize that there is a limit to everything, except maybe outer space or the imagination of some of the members' opposite.

MR. SPEAKER: I wonder if the hon. member could assist the Chair in connecting the reaction he's referring to in his constituency with the need or lack of need of public hearings.

MR. LYSONS: Mr. Speaker, I will endeavor to do that. As I was mentioning, in my constituency we had the knee-jerk reac-

tion at the costs. We've had that debate in the constituency, as the hon. members opposite would have, and we've had people asking and explaining what they think of user fees. So I think that having a debate with people other than in the House has been going on all summer, as the minister announced this would be permissible in the budget in the spring. So the debate has been going on.

I would also like to point out where I think the minister has done a good job of presenting his case and suggesting that we should have this as a permissible thing. Mr. Speaker, the hospitals were asking for the right to charge so they could do some of the things they wanted to do. When we hear comments such as this being a rich country, and we're \$120 billion in debt federally, I think the minister was correct in having this announcement in the spring, the debate that went on in the constituency, and the debate not being necessary any more. We want to have a government that not only looks sound but is sound and reasonable. We have confidence in our judgment that we are doing the right thing in this Bill.

Thank you.

MR. SZWENDER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rise and add a few comments to the subamendment. I've been listening to the members opposite telling us why we should have hearings on Bill 98, and personally I cannot see any justification in the comments they have presented. As MLAs representing the total province, or even 75 government MLAs, we have had consistent and adequate feedback from our constituents telling us how they feel about the user-fee issue. We've all had plenty of opportunity to make those representations to the minister and to the government. By holding public hearings, all we're going to do is invite repetitious arguments from groups like the Friends of Medicare and the social injustice committee. We all know where they stand, and there's no point in listening to them *ad nauseam* again. The minister wants to act quickly. He's had plenty of time to receive the information, and by holding public hearings we're just going to delay what has to be handled in the near future. The time to act is now. We know how health care costs are running completely out of control. Public hearings would just forgo and delay what we as a government feel has to be done.

I'm pleased to see that the Member for Clover Bar has returned, because he made a couple of interesting comments on Monday evening in reference to the suggestion that public hearings be held on the Senate reform committee, and he adamantly opposed the formation of that committee. If I could just make quick reference to his statements of Monday night, he said:

There is nothing wrong with setting up the committee that we propose, except it is going to cost the taxpayer a whole bunch of money to really find out what we already know.

It's clear that he has made a complete flip-flop from his position on Monday to his position today, which is supporting this amendment and now calling for public hearings. He goes on: "It's just about time that legislators and parliamentarians started showing some respect for the taxpayers' dollars." Mr. Speaker, I agree with him wholeheartedly, and I hope he will keep that position consistent and vote to defeat this subamendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Buck	Martin	Speaker, R..
------	--------	--------------

Against the motion:

Alexander	Hiebert	Purdy
Alger	Isley	Russell
Anderson	Jonson	Schmid
Appleby	Koper	Shaben
Batiuk	Kowalski	Shrake
Bogle	LeMessurier	Stiles
Bradley	Lysons	Stromberg
Campbell	McPherson	Szwender
Carter	Miller	Thompson
Cook	Moore, R.	Topolnisky
Cripps	Musgreave	Trynchy
Diachuk	Nelson	Weiss
Drobot	Oman	Woo
Embury	Paproski	Zip
Fischer	Planche	

Totals:	Ayes - 3	Noes - 44
---------	----------	-----------

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

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments this afternoon — approximately 29 and a half minutes — getting into the debate on the amendment. For the sake of the members who are staying, or for those who may be leaving, I just want to remind them what the amendment is.

MR. MARTIN: I don't think it's your speech, Walt.

DR. BUCK: It can't possibly be that they don't want to stay and listen to the speech. It must be that they have more important things to do. But I don't know how we could have anything more important than Bill 98 and its ramifications.

The amendment reads:

"the subject matter of Bill 98, Hospitals and Medical Care Statutes Amendment Act, 1983, be referred to the Standing Committee on Public Affairs."

Mr. Speaker, when we refer a Bill to the committee, it's a mechanism that has a long parliamentary tradition. When you really want to look at all aspects of a question — the question we have before us — then you refer it to a committee.

Of course we say we've already had a committee, the election of the fall of 1982. But there is a great, great difference between that forum and the forum we propose, the use of the committee. Because at the time we had the wide forum, as opposed to the narrow forum of the committee, the people of this province were not told that the government was going to take this direction. All the people of this province were told was how rosy everything was, how there were not going to be any taxes, how there were going to be all these great and wonderful economic upturns. That's all we were told at that time. So the people of the province wanted to believe that the government was telling them the truth, flocked in great numbers to that forum, as opposed to the forum on public affairs in this House, and voted Tory.

But we have done a 360 on the issue. We did not do what we promised the people in November of 1982. We have done a flip-flop.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. With great respect to the hon. member, the amendment deals with referring the subject matter of the Bill to a committee. It really has no bearing at all in any perceived or alleged inconsistency between what happened in an election and what has happened since. The question is not whether or not an election is a good vehicle to deal with an issue. We're not dealing with the advisability of that. We're dealing with the advisability of whether this should go to a committee. That means that we don't discuss all the alternatives that are no good. We discuss the ones we think are good in relation to this committee, if we think it's good.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not agree with the interpretation you're putting on it. I am comparing the two different forums. I'm talking about the large, large one, where this government promised one thing. That is a forum, and we had that mechanism. I'm wanting to narrow it and bring it to the Assembly now that we know the facts. You jumped the gun there a little bit, Mr. Speaker. I was just getting to trying to make that comparison.

MR. SPEAKER: I'd like to encourage the hon. member to narrow it.

DR. BUCK: That's why I had to have the freedom to rove a little bit: to show the public forum as opposed to bringing it into the Assembly and the committee. Until I told the members of the Assembly what that public forum was and how we relate it to the committee, they wouldn't know, and neither would you, Mr. Speaker. But now you know why I was talking about the forum of November 1982, and now the discussion we're having on Bill 98 and referring it to the committee. So there are those two vehicles. We have used the outside one, but have not told the people all the facts. So now the people will have the opportunity to come to the committee with the new information the government withheld in the fall of '82.

Mr. Speaker, if we were going to have the large forum again and use this as an issue, and if the people came to this committee — we set up the committees to hear those representations — then maybe the outcome of that forum of the fall of '82 could change very, very drastically. Mr. Speaker, that is why I was talking about what happened in the fall of '82. All the information was not available at that time, but now the information would be available for the committee. This committee should be struck, and the people of Alberta should be asked to come. The Committee on Public Affairs is a committee of the whole House. We might even have a few cabinet ministers, a few more members of Executive Council, if the public is invited to come. I know the way the system works: today it's your turn to stay in; tomorrow it's your turn to stay in.

MR. MARTIN: Pay attention, Ken.

DR. BUCK: Quite obviously, the half of the committee that is not here today would be here if the public was invited to come and make representations to the Committee on Public Affairs.

MR. MARTIN: Kowalski, pay attention.

DR. BUCK: Don't hassle the hon. Member for Barrhead. He's reading a little local news on what's going on back in the constituency. That's his responsibility, hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood. That's grass-roots politics; you have to do those things.

Mr. Speaker, it has become a tradition of our parliaments to make more and more use of the committee system. We have made an attempt in this Assembly to set up subcommittees to study the estimates. We have set up committees in the House of Commons to study many different items of public concern. So it is a system that has long proved to be effective, it is a system that has a very practical usage, and it is a system that works. I say to my hon. friend, the Member for Calgary . . . Nelson, what is your constituency?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: McCall.

DR. BUCK: The hon. Member for Calgary McCall. My apologies to the member, Mr. Speaker. I was trying to find it here. When your eyes get a little bad, it takes a bit longer.

MRS. CRIPPS: How are your teeth?

DR. BUCK: My teeth are fine.

I would like to say to the hon. Member for Calgary McCall that that committee system is a proven system when you genuinely want public input. I am sure that the hon. . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I think the hon. Member for Clover Bar is under some misconception. The question of public hearings has been decided and disposed of by the Assembly. I notice that he's referring to it repeatedly. The Assembly has decided that the committee will not hold public hearings, because that amendment has been rejected. So let's bring it back into the House. [interjections]

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, we are struggling — if they would just quit bothering me and let me make my speech. I am sure the members would like to extend that courtesy to me.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is really important that the hon. Member for Calgary McCall understand what a Standing Committee on Public Affairs is and what it does. It is my responsibility to indicate to the Member for Calgary McCall why the Legislature should refer this to the Standing Committee on Public Affairs. I am trying to explain to the hon. member how the Standing Committee on Public Affairs works and also how other committees in other jurisdictions work. If we are going to be referring Bill 98 to the Standing Committee on Public Affairs, all members of that committee should know how it works, because the government, in its wisdom, does not seem to make use of the Standing Committee on Public Affairs as often as it should. It is a forum where the ordinary citizen can come and speak to his M.L.A., to his cabinet ministers . . .

MR. R. SPEAKER: Call witnesses.

DR. BUCK: . . . and call witnesses. We can have people of expertise and members of the minister's department come to this committee and explain to us why they are going to use this system. The information I have is that they expect only 4 per cent of the funding will come from user fees.

MR. R. SPEAKER: What the municipal government should do too.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, have we heard from the municipalities in this province in the Committee on Public Affairs? Have they been given an opportunity to get involved in this decision-making process? The information that should be brought to the Standing Committee on Public Affairs . . . My colleague the hon. Member for Little Bow indicated that he was a bit dis-

tressed when the Premier told us outside the House why certain things have to happen as they relate to user fees, how medicare costs are running out of control. That information should be made available to the members of this committee. The Premier can then tell all of us and, through this Legislature, the people of Alberta what the problems are.

MR. R. SPEAKER: They don't want to tell us until the budget comes in next spring.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm not sure whether I'm hearing ventriloquism, or whether the hon. Member for Little Bow or the hon. Member for Clover Bar has the floor.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker . . . [interjections].

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I certainly was not trying to coach my hon. colleague in any direction. But during the moment that I mentioned what the Premier said in Red Deer with regard to the municipalities, that they as well must act in tandem with the provincial government to control medical and hospital costs — I just wanted to clarify that with my hon. colleague as he was speaking. Those were the comments, not in terms of directing his discussion, because he does that quite adequately himself.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I thought it was really the hon. Member for Edmonton Belmont who was muttering away. I don't know how I could possibly mix up the hon. Member for Little Bow with the hon. Member for Edmonton Belmont.

In referring the question to the Standing Committee on Public Affairs, we give these other bodies an opportunity to express their views. The longer the discussion takes place in this province and in this Assembly, and the longer we talk about the directions we're going to be taking — these are the kinds of things we want to hear from our people in this committee. This mechanism, the Standing Committee on Public Affairs, would also help the government with its budgeting process. Maybe we should subpoena the Deputy Provincial Treasurer when we strike this committee. Maybe the Deputy Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care can explain to us why they have taken this route. That's why the committee serves a more useful function than the formal debate we have in the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, of course I could indicate many, many instances, but that would be out of order. You know that I would never do anything that would cause you to doubt that I was straying outside the bounds of what we are debating this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, I would not want to cause you that mental anguish. [interjection]

By using the mechanism of the committee, all the pertinent information could be brought to this committee, and then the minister and the minister's support staff could go back and make a recommendation to this Assembly. There's absolutely nothing unreasonable about that approach. I am sure all government members would welcome that approach. It is a reasonable and practical approach to refer this to the committee. But most importantly, it is the use of the democratic process so that Albertans can come to this open Assembly. They cannot do it . . .

MR. SPEAKER: We're slipping into public hearings again. I have real doubt about the relevance of most of what's being said. The sole issue is public hearings on the subject matter of the Bill. The subject matter of the Bill is not an issue because that's what's to be referred to the committee, and if we're going to be consistent with the amendment, then we shouldn't be

dealing with it now. The committee would deal with it if the amendment were adopted.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I misunderstand your ruling. Are you saying that all I can speak about is "referring"?

MR. SPEAKER: Precisely.

DR. BUCK: Just the word. Okay, fine, as long as we all understand. [interjections] Mr. Speaker, I am sure other members are just waiting with bated breath to get into the debate about why it should be referred to the committee.

MR. NELSON: If you want us to do that, why don't you sit down?

DR. BUCK: I will take you up on that, hon. Member for Calgary McCall. I would be pleased to sit down on this subamendment if you were to speak for 15 minutes on why it should be referred to the committee.

MR. NOTLEY: Any words at all.

DR. BUCK: As a matter of fact, the hon. Member for Spirit River-Fairview says "any words at all", never mind 15 minutes.

If we want public input, this issue must be referred to the committee. Mr. Speaker, you have indicated that I cannot state why it should be referred to that committee.

MR. SPEAKER: Oh no.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, if . . .

MR. SPEAKER: We shouldn't be drifting back into holding public hearings. We're talking about hearing from the public in the committee.

DR. BUCK: So the reason we should refer it — how can we say why it should be referred without saying that it gives the public the opportunity to participate? Mr. Speaker, I . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I dealt specifically, as the hon. member knows . . . I don't wish to interrupt his speech unduly, and I believe it might have happened when he was outside the House, but we have decided in the Assembly, by a majority vote, that the matter will not be referred for public hearings. The only question left now is whether the subject matter of the Bill is going to be referred to the committee the hon. member has been referring to. That's all that's left.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, referring the Bill to the committee will give members the opportunity to participate. Those members will have the opportunity if we refer it. That's the mechanism we put into place. By referring it to the committee, the members of that committee can go home this weekend, find out the views of their constituents, and come back on Monday. The committee would still be sitting, because I'm sure members would have voluminous suggestions to make when this issue is referred to the committee.

So that's why I am asking that the Bill be referred to the committee, Mr. Speaker. It gives us that extra opportunity for the issue to be looked at more closely, and that's really what we're here for, to look at the issue from all aspects. That's what would happen, all members participating, if this were

reported to the Standing Committee on Public Affairs. I know this is a mechanism that members who are elected as legislators certainly would be willing to participate in. They are duty-bound to participate in it, and it would be in the best interests of Albertans.

With those few words . . . [interjections] Of course with all the interruptions I had from my colleagues in the Assembly, I would have been finished 10 minutes ago. But I would like to say that it's really a great opportunity for members of this Assembly to stand in their places after they have voted to refer this to the Standing Committee on Public Affairs. I thank you for your patience, Mr. Speaker. [interjection]

I have a few minutes left. Does anyone know how much time I have left?

AN HON. MEMBER: Four minutes.

DR. BUCK: Four minutes? I have to check my time very closely, because one time I had a little problem here. I got a little carried away, overenthusiastic, and waxing rather ineloquent, and — seven minutes, the hon. timekeeper says.

Mr. Speaker, I think it would not be fair to this Assembly and this committee if I did not move a subamendment, because I know how important the issue is. I know that when we are referring an issue to a committee, there must be a time line on it, otherwise the committee could sit indefinitely and in perpetuity. I would never think legislators would ever want to do that. So that that wouldn't happen, I would like to add the following subamendment:

. . . and that the Committee be instructed to report back to the Assembly no later than six months hence.

MR. SPEAKER: With regard to this subamendment, we have had one subamendment dealing with an instruction to the committee. There has been a very considerable amount of debate by a number of members in regard to delay. In other words, they are urging that there should be more time. That apparently has been argued by a number of members in favor of the amendment itself, and also it has been debated by some members in regard to the subamendment. Under the circumstances, it would seem to me that the debate on this particular subamendment should be strictly confined to the length of time which would apply to the committee, and within which the committee should report. That is the sole issue I see here in this subamendment: the length of time to which the committee is to be limited to report back to the Assembly.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Perhaps I might suggest to you, sir, that in addition to that — obviously the length of time is an aspect. But as I understand the amendment, it is that "the Committee be instructed to report back". That in itself is something different from what we have done before. We've held hearings, we have assigned the subject matter to the standing committee. But as I understand the hon. member's subamendment, he's now saying that there would be instructions to report back. So there would be two questions: whether or not there should be a report back — not whether it's wise to refer it, but whether there should be a report back — and then the time frame. Am I correct in my assessment?

MR. SPEAKER: I agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Those two ideas are germane to the subamendment. However, I should point out as well that although there has been considerable latitude, the amendment itself says that the subject matter of the Bill should be referred to the committee. I therefore suggest that the subject matter of the Bill is not a

pertinent subject in regard to the subamendment but must be dealt with only in the debate on the amendment.

MR. NOTLEY: Mr. Speaker, fair enough. I concur in the two areas of debate on this subamendment; that is, whether or not it is in the interests of the Assembly that we set out a clear obligation of the committee to report back, and then the question of the time frame.

In arguing that the Assembly should consider support for the subamendment proposed by the hon. Member for Clover Bar, I would argue as strongly as I can that there is no point in referring the subject matter to the Standing Committee on Public Affairs unless there is a clear provision for reporting back. Otherwise, what is the value of the study, the assessment, and the review by the Public Affairs Committee unless there is a report-back process, a mechanism in place? If there is any criticism that I would raise of past efforts, it is that in the mandate assigned by the Legislature, there has not been a clear responsibility to report back. That may create some difficulties for the person who is chairman of the Committee on Public Affairs. It may create some problems, I suppose, for support staff. But unless there is a process of reporting back, I don't think that the subject matter being referred to the Standing Committee on Public Affairs makes any sense at all. I do believe it makes sense; the reporting back is just part and parcel of it.

I am sorry, in a sense, that we even have to propose a subamendment of this nature, because it should be self-evident that there is a reporting-back mechanism. Unfortunately, as I have already indicated, the record of this government is not very good at all in this area. Therefore, we have to be clear that if we're going to consign the subject matter to the Standing Committee on Public Affairs, there has to be clear provision to report back to the Assembly.

The only area that I think I would ask the hon. member who has moved the subamendment to perhaps think about and reflect on, is whether the six-month period is reasonable. I would say to members of the House that six months may be longer than is necessary. I suppose that's the traditional hoist amendment, but I would argue that the matter being assigned to the Standing Committee on Public Affairs would allow that committee of the whole House to meet on the adjournment. We could adjourn the normal sessions of the Legislature, hold our sessions of the committee, and then report back somewhat earlier than six months. Even though I think this Bill is a bad Bill, I think the matter should be resolved a little sooner than six months.

So I'm not going to move a subamendment to the subamendment, but in expressing general support for the reporting back principle, I would just say that the six-month period is perhaps a little longer than necessary. From my own judgment, perhaps two or three months would have been well within the ability or capacity of this House.

I suppose that some members might argue that six months is a little more reasonable because members have been sitting during the fall session, and some people want to go back to their constituents. Of course, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the values of assessing this Bill by the standing committee and reporting back, and doing so within a given time frame. Our constituents are telling us clearly: don't go ahead with it; make changes. But I think that the problem of six months is that it does leave in limbo perhaps a little longer than necessary the issue of the reporting stage itself.

The only argument that I could see presented for six months is if there were some legislative item intervening that would make it impossible to report back sooner. I don't see that. I don't see any major conference of the Parliamentary Association. I don't see any compelling reason as to why we could

not have the report back at an earlier time. Nor, Mr. Speaker, do I think that it is at all untoward for the House to meet once the committee has completed its study. The idea of a session being held out of the ordinary times — we get so locked in to a session in the spring between late February or early March and whenever it adjourns in the spring, and then we have a fall session. The fact of the matter is that we are here to do the public business and, if the work of the committee is properly completed — I'm not suggesting that we meet in the Christmas holidays — I see no reason why the Legislature couldn't meet in January. It may interrupt some of the winter holiday plans of our Conservative friends, but the fact of the matter is that we're here to do the public business.

It's this government that brought in the proposal, and it seems to me that if we're going to study it properly, six months basically throws the thing into another session. I suppose there may be some argument for that, but I would assume there has to be at least some degree of urgency on the part of the government; otherwise, they wouldn't have introduced the legislation.

So rather than supporting the argument for six months, I would hope that one of the government backbenchers, who I know would want to support the principle of further in-depth study of the subject matter by the committee — and I can't imagine anyone would seriously oppose the principle of reporting back to the Assembly. I can't imagine anyone doing that, because that should be self-evident. The issue is then whether or not it could be done more quickly.

Anticipating, if I may, the arguments of some of my hon. friends here that this is just a delaying tactic, it needn't be a delaying tactic at all. We can have meetings of the standing committee that can go through all the subject matter in the Bill in a very detailed way, and prepare a report — no great problem. We've all been on legislative committees, and we know that reports can be compiled quickly. So the reporting-back mechanism is not a difficult one.

So rather than six months, it would be my submission that there would be no overwhelming obstacle at all to reporting back perhaps in early January. I would just say in a friendly way to the hon. Member for Clover Bar that it would allow the government to get on with the job of dealing with this issue but, at the same time, would permit the Legislature to have the kind of time to study the matter properly, so that we can reflect the views and the wishes of our constituents.

I am not standing in my place, Mr. Speaker, suggesting that the provincial minister should be totally unarmed in his shoot-out with Madame Begin. Of course, I think this Bill is going to go some distance to disarming him. But I think we can go through the process of the committee study, and do so at just a little faster speed, so that there is some clear commitment on the part of this Legislature that yes, we want to have the proper study of it, and yes, we're insisting upon our legislative rights, and yes, we're insisting on our constituents having an opportunity to have their views made known, but we're doing it within a somewhat clearer time frame than the conventional six-month hoist.

So I would generally support the amendment but ask the hon. member who's moved the subamendment to reflect on whether or not we might, perhaps in a friendly way, look at a friendly amendment to adjust this from six months to two months. I leave that to the hon. member who's moved the subamendment. I think the principle is sound, and I certainly would support it and trust that hon. members on the government benches will at some point during this process at last say something about this important Bill, at least about the process. The process is important if we're concerned about legislative

supremacy. Therefore I await with interest the active participation of the government backbenchers on this subamendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I want to support my colleague's subamendment, and I think the other members of the Legislature should be encouraged to do that as well. The subamendment is very clear. Our amendment to the motion asks for a study before the Public Affairs Committee of the Legislature. The subamendment says:

and that the Committee be instructed to report back to the Assembly no later than six months . . .

That's a very common sense kind of subamendment. I can only congratulate my colleague for introducing that. Not having that in the amendment would be an oversight. So I can see no grounds upon which the government could refuse that type of subamendment. In terms of harmony in this Legislature, I would think that this would be a place where a consent was given rather than a negative vote, and by a negative vote we have a standing vote. Certainly that creates a certain delay in the debate with regard to second reading of Bill 98.

So I would certainly urge the government members to support this amendment. It's positive. In principle it's right. Under conditions such as this and under conditions where the Public Affairs Committee is accepted by the Legislature, and hopefully it will be, then this subamendment is necessary to the amendment. So I think our discussion at this time should be: is it necessary if the amendment is passed? Yes it is. On that basis, I don't know why or how the government could ever refuse to go along with it.

If that is true, I'd certainly urge someone on the government's side of the House to stand in his place and make one or two comments as to why it is not in order, why we shouldn't report back as a committee, why six months is too long or too short and we should adjust that. If that's necessary, certainly a subamendment is in order at this point in time. So on that basis, I would look forward to the government's verbal response on this subamendment, to be recorded in *Hansard*.

I think the other important reason that the report-back no later than six months hence is necessary is because of some very important dates before us. On January 1, 1984, the user-fee policy goes into effect. Hospitals at that point in time can use that to secure additional revenue for their operations. The other very important bench mark is March 1984, at which time this Legislature approves the budget for the 1984-85 year.

If it is found in our research and in our investigation in the remaining part of 1983 — hopefully the committee would meet in December 1983, and we would review all of the relevant matters — that on January 1, or just prior to that point in time, if an adjustment to that user-fee policy is necessary, it can be made. If we wait longer and then try to back up or act retroactively after the money is spent, that would be a very difficult situation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important that the committee report back as quickly as possible. A year from now, it would be very obvious that any type of recommendations from the Public Affairs Committee would have no effect in terms of the implementation of this legislation, would have no effect on the budgeting of 1984, and would have no effect in terms of the priorities of this government. So haste is important, and certainly a termination period of time in the work of the committee is necessary as well.

I would urge that the government support this amendment. It's a guideline that's necessary for good actions on the com-

mittee, and certainly a responsible response from that committee at the proper time and place.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. JOHNSTON: Your turn, Ray.

MR. MARTIN: I appreciate the hon. minister giving me that opportunity. Mr. Speaker, I know that you wait with bated breath, because it was at 12:11 that you last heard from me in a speech. But I too would like to rise to support the sub-amendment.

When we go back, as I might say about my colleague, it probably didn't make much sense just to have it referred to a Committee on Public Affairs without it reporting back to the Legislative Assembly. I would have preferred the public being involved in public hearings, but one member — I have to even admit that the Member for Edmonton Belmont did talk about cost. I will accept that perhaps it is too expensive. But by referring it to the committee and having them report back to the Legislature, I would take it for granted that they would talk to the necessary people they would have to talk to. I'm talking specifically to the hospital boards and municipalities, because they're the other players in this. This committee could do this much quicker than the six months we were talking about. They could also do it much cheaper, and report back in two months, as has been suggested. I think that would be a reasonable time.

Mr. Speaker, the other reason we'd like at that point for this to go to the committee and to report back is that I understand that something very important will happen. They can check into the new health Act that by that time will have been tabled by the federal government, and see how this will affect our Bill. A new Bill could be brought in by the minister, even if they want to proceed along the same lines of user fees. We'd know exactly where we stood, which could save us a lot of money in the long run in terms of costs and legal fees.

It seems to me that the other very important reason that we do this, have this committee report back to the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, is that whether it's true or not, there is a perception that the Legislature here is just rubber-stamping things. I think this would be the Legislature at its absolute best. It would give the members time. If we're looking at a two-month period, and I'm not suggesting that that be the case — two months, three months; that would be up to the committee — it would give our members time to report back to the Legislature. A member said yesterday in debate that he hadn't heard from anybody on this issue. We have, so somewhere something's wrong. It would give us a little more time over the holidays and into January for our constituents to talk to hon. members. I'm sure the hon. members would have feed-in to this committee, Mr. Speaker. The committee would come back with a pretty good feeling, without the public hearings, about how Albertans felt about it, along with an idea of what the federal government is going to do, as I mentioned before.

Mr. Speaker, then we would come back to this Legislature, with this committee reporting back, and I think that would be the Legislature working at its very, very best. They would have a report that was new; they would have the feelings of Albertans from their constituents. The committee would have talked to the various people they need to talk to, to make this a proper Bill.

Obviously, I hope the user-fee part wouldn't be part of it. But even if it was at that point, I would suggest if we've gone this route with this particular Bill, then the minister would have a lot more cannon fodder. Even if I were to disagree with it in principle, if he's had this public feed-in, he would certainly

have the moral authority to bring this Bill in. At this point he does not have — at least the opposition doesn't feel that he does — the moral authority, because there was no debate, there were no public hearings about user fees, and even in the election it was not discussed. If the minister went this route and listened to the people, I can assure you I might oppose this on principle, but obviously we would not be going through the exercise that we are here now.

MR. JOHNSTON: This is a waste of time.

MR. MARTIN: No, this is a very important Bill. The hon. minister from Lethbridge knows that.

Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is that if the minister had gone through this procedure with the committee and talked to the various people, then had come back to the Legislature and had the moral authority of the people through this, we would not go through this procedure. I may disagree with the principle, but obviously the minister would have been listening to the people of Alberta. We would have to accept that, and the procedure of trying to put amendments to get the minister to listen would not be necessary at that point.

MR. JOHNSTON: I give you my assurance.

MR. MARTIN: I say to the hon. Member for Lethbridge East, it's good to hear from you again. It's always good to hear from the minister.

If the minister didn't like the six-month one, which obviously he and the government didn't — it was an overwhelming loss for us in the Legislature; we're getting used to it — if the time period was the thing that was bothering him, I say to the minister quite frankly that this procedure could be done in a month or two months. He could come back with this report. This committee could go to work right now — as I said, could go out and talk to the various constituents and come back.

If the minister does that and comes back with exactly the same Bill, I will make a guarantee to him: if he has really listened, we won't go through debating the Bill. I may make a speech, because I know the minister likes to hear my speeches on the Bill, but we will let it go through quickly at that point. I see nothing wrong — I don't think the whole world would fall apart at that particular time — if we did have a two-month delay on it. I believe if we did this, the minister would be given a great deal of political credit. Mr. Speaker, if he's prepared to do that, I will even praise the minister publicly. [interjections] If the government passes this amendment and the minister all of a sudden could lobby the people here, and he's prepared to do that, I will publicly say that I respect the minister for doing it. As I say, that would be a month or two.

I did not say I would be for user fees later on, but what I did say is that the process would be correct. If the minister, after going through this process, still felt as strongly as he does and felt that he had the moral authority of Albertans — because I believe this committee would do a good job of listening to people and talking to the groups, finding out what's happening in the health Act. If he came back with the same Act two months from now, I may make a short, 30-minute speech on user fees, but we would not go through this particular exercise again. I believe that he then would be speaking from strength.

Mr. Speaker, I also said that if he did this, even on the process — it's the process that's sometimes as important as the Bill. Even if he's prepared to do this on the process, follow this procedure — and it's not six months any longer; it can be almost what the minister wants when he deals with the committee — then I will say publicly that while I may not agree

with the end, I really appreciate and think that the means are worth while and that the government is now listening.

Mr. Speaker, when we attempt to go through this exercise — I know it may come as a shock to hon. members, but it's not just for the sheer fun of it. It is a Bill that all of us feel very strongly about. We've been getting a lot of calls from our constituents. I'm told by government members that they're getting none. So something's wrong. Why can't we take a month or two, Mr. Minister, and set this policy up? That's an ironclad commitment to the minister.

So I would like all hon. members — I won't wax eloquent much longer, because I know it's a little hard on the minister from Lethbridge's heart. He gets so excited when I speak. He just sits on the edge of his seat there. I wouldn't want him to have a heart attack, because Lethbridge is not the place to have a by-election.

MR. JOHNSTON: Not for you boys.

MR. MARTIN: That's right.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, being completely serious, as I always am, I say to the government: what is wrong with a two-month period to have this committee do this work? If they come back with the same Bill, then okay; perhaps we will not accept user fees, but we will go along with the government on the process. Just to reinforce one more time, I do not see how that could seriously affect what the government is doing. I think they would get some feed-in that would be very valuable to them, and some time to look at what the next move on the federal government is. They may want to change their Bill after they take a look at that.

With those few short, brief, scintillating, wonderful remarks, I will allow the government members to support us on this very important subamendment and bring it to an end. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

[Eight minutes elapsed]

MR. SPEAKER: As I mentioned to the House on a previous occasion of this kind, I don't think that I should take on myself the responsibility of stopping the clock. I'm doubtful that we can finish this recording of the names before half past five. The problem is that if we don't finish it, what do we do about the rule that no other members may enter the Assembly after the closing bell has gone? It would mean that we would have to meet again just as we are now, and I don't know of any procedure for that. But if the House doesn't find a way out, I'll find one.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move that we stop the clock.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: It is so ordered.

MR. APPLEBY: I'd like to move an amendment that the clock be considered stopped at 5:30.

MR. SPEAKER: With great respect to the hon. member, there could be some incidental business that we might have to do. There might be something else, like talking about the next day's business or something like that. I suggest that if we stop the clock now, we'll save that difficulty.

[The House divided]

For the motion:

Buck	Martin	Speaker, R.
------	--------	-------------

Against the motion:

Alger	Fyfe	Purdy
Anderson	Hiebert	Reid
Appleby	Johnston	Russell
Batiuk	Jonson	Schmid
Bogle	Koper	Shaben
Bradley	Kowalski	Shrake
Carter	LeMessurier	Stiles
Chambers	McPherson	Stromberg
Cook	Moore, R.	Szwender
Cripps	Musgreave	Thompson
Diachuk	Nelson	Trynchy
Drobot	Oman	Weiss
Embury	Paproski	Woo
Fischer	Planche	Zip
Fjordbotten		

Totals:	Ayes - 3	Noes - 43
---------	----------	-----------

MR. SPEAKER: I should apologize to my colleague the Deputy Speaker, because on sober second thought, it probably doesn't make any difference when we stop the clock, as long as it stops. It's going to take a motion to adjourn anyway, so it wouldn't have caused any difficulty.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of members, it is proposed that the House sit tomorrow night to continue discussion and debate of Bills on the Order Paper.

I move that the House do now adjourn until tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[At 5:31 p.m., the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]