

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, August 21, 1986 2:30 p.m.**

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

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

Bill 36
Local Authorities Election
Amendment Act, 1986

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Local Authorities Election Amendment Act, 1986.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill amends certain sections of the Local Authorities Election Act that, although minor in detail, are necessary for the fall elections of this year.

[Leave granted; Bill 36 read a first time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 36 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I would like to file with the Legislative Assembly today two important reports which will add to the information base of all members. The first is entitled Field Investigation of Waste Disposal Sites written by Associated Engineering. The second is a document entitled the Results of Investigations at Priority 1 Landfill Sites in Alberta written by Alberta Environment.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the annual report of the Alberta Electric Energy Marketing Agency for the period 1985-1986.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the annual report of the University of Lethbridge for the year '84-85.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to be able to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, two students from the Malmo School Day Care. During a recent visit to the Provincial Museum by the class, these two students found a \$50 bill. They were honest enough to immediately give that \$50 to officials at the museum. Their honesty is a tribute to their parents and their day care leaders, and as well they themselves have provided us with a good example for the whole province.

I'd ask that Alfie Bounacorso and his mother, Eliana, and Rafael Joussef and his mother, Ana Rita, along with Connie Jorgenson of the day care school, rise from the members' gallery and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly and our thanks.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to add to the remarks and introductions of my colleague the Minister of Culture by introducing the children and staff from the Malmo School Day Care centre. The staff members along today with the children are the assistant director, Peggy Coulter, and members of the staff: Joan Stebbings, Joyce Kueber, and Carl Alexandruk. I would ask those staff members and the members of the class please to stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Federal/provincial Relations

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Premier. The last time a Premier of this province used the prospect of western separatism to try to influence Ottawa, there were actually large separatist meetings occurring around the province and, of course, a separatist was here in the Legislature. Today in 1986, does the Premier have any objective evidence that he can table or refer to that shows that separatism is on the rise, or have those little birds been bothering the Premier again?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I think it might be helpful for the hon. member if I provided him with the notes from which I made an address to the Canadian Bar Association yesterday. He will notice that the way in which it was raised was in a manner more to show the potential that frustration may well lead to, I think, upon seeing the notes, he will feel that there was no particular need to try and provide additional support for that kind of movement.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not suggesting that the Premier is trying to advocate it, but bringing it up brings it back into the public domain. Surely the Premier is aware of that.

A supplementary question. Given that the Premier hasn't even gotten it together to give the Prime Minister a simple phone call to talk about our energy problems, why has he now stooped — I say stooped — to talking about separatism to try to get the attention of the Tories in Ottawa?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the address I made yesterday was on a national basis about a Canadian problem and has none of the implications suggested by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Maybe the Premier doesn't think it does, but many people in the province have been calling today. Surely he's aware that you can't just go out and utter speeches and then say, "I was misquoted."

A supplementary question to the Premier. Reports indicate that many Alberta MPs, MPs from the same party as the hon. Premier, support Mr. Masse's unreasonable views about our energy problems. Is it not the case then that the Premier is resurrecting the bogeyman of western separatism because he can't even convince his own Alberta Tory MPs about the merits of his government's position?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker, and I suggest the hon. member should not try and give reports to this Legislature about people's positions when he doesn't know them. If he can't substantiate that that's their position, he shouldn't try and present them.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, seeing the Premier talking about it on television, I guess he was misquoted or they put on a different guy to talk about it on television.

My question then to the Premier: in view of the problems that we're having with the federal government, before we start talking about separatism, would the Premier be prepared to endorse, for the sake of Alberta, an opposition candidate in the Pembina by-election to bring the message home to the federal government rather than talking about separatism?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition started the question on a foolish note and ended it on one.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Could he tell us how many ex-separatists or card-carrying separatists ran for the Conservative nomination in the last provincial election?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, relative to the support from Alberta Members of Parliament, I understand that two out of 18 have made public statements in support of Alberta's position. Could the Premier indicate whether a meeting is planned with the chairman of the Alberta MP caucus, is that soon, and are there more MPs that possibly support our position here in Alberta?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I don't think any member should take a short report in a newspaper as something that represents positions of 18 MPs at all. I caution you that that's not wise. I know they don't do it intentionally, but it's surprising how often material in the media is incorrect.

MR. MARTIN: Just about as often as the Premier seems to get misquoted.

Coal Marketing

MR. MARTIN: My question is to the Minister of Energy. It has to do with the report tabled yesterday, I think jointly by the minister, on the federal/provincial task force on western low-sulphur coal. I would say it's great that they now support what the Alberta New Democrats and United Mine Workers have been advocating since 1983. The report did highlight transportation cost difficulties, which our federal leader brought to the attention of the House of Commons in 1983. My question is: has the Minister of Energy or the minister of economic development scheduled a series of meetings flowing from this report with the railways and the federal government to explore ways to lower freight rates for our coal? If not, when will they get around to doing that?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition would go back further in time, I think he would find recommendations in this House which precluded the support of the groups that he referred to. However, there has been a great deal of work done in the last few years with respect to trying to develop coal markets and trying to resolve the problems of getting Alberta coal into the

Ontario market. I would think that it would be more appropriate for the minister of economic development to respond to some of the question as it relates to transportation. There is considerable work being done in our department as well as by the Alberta coal research centre in Devon. Most of the work is related, as I understand it, to upgrading the quality of coal and trying to reduce the cost at this end so that we can become more competitive in that market in central Canada.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, a follow-up supplementary to the Minister of Energy. It seems we may be running out of time. Today Ontario Hydro has announced it's going ahead with the completion of the very expensive Darlington nuclear power plant. I would hope that's not cutting into our markets. Given the sorry state of our oil and gas industry today, has the minister made any effort to draw to the attention of the federal government that assistance with the transport costs of our coal would create thousands of jobs in this province and, indeed, in western Canada?

DR. WEBBER: First of all, Mr. Speaker, Alberta's proportion of the Ontario market is actually increasing in terms of coal coming from western Canada. However, the overall demand, as the hon. member indicated, has been dropping. That doesn't mean the potential is not there for the future. I think there is a great deal of potential for increasing our markets in that area.

I'd also point out to the House, Mr. Speaker, that since the appointment of the Alberta coal development adviser in December 1985, his top priority has been given to trying to get Ontario officials together to discuss the greater use of Alberta coal in those markets. The reports I'm receiving from Mr. Page, the adviser, are that he is encountering very great co-operation in these activities with the Ontario officials, and I'm sure he has talked to other people across the country as well.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we always hear about great co-operation and how things are going along.

A supplementary question. With the announcement today by Ontario Hydro about the Darlington nuclear plant, what assessment has the minister made of this in terms of trying to sell our coal in the future that he talks about?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, as I already indicated, the coal adviser is doing a considerable amount of work in this area. The first stage of his work is to be completed by the end of the summer. I will be hearing from him by the end of the summer the progress he has made, and we can go on from there.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's great; we love these studies. The point I was trying to make is that they made this announcement about the nuclear plant today, the day after we came out with this report.

Let me try something else on federal/provincial co-operation with our MPs again. What has the minister done in terms of lobbying our Alberta MPs, specifically Mr. Mazankowski, who is now the Deputy Prime Minister, to try to bring this about with Ontario Hydro?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, the report came out yesterday. We have officials working in the department to address the market situation at the other end. We have a coal research centre looking into new technologies. A great deal of work

is being done. As a follow-up to this report we'll be taking every step we can to try to increase our markets there.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, a supplemental to the Premier. The report was yesterday, but the internal draft was out and you had a committee appointed just last December. Did you raise the issue in the recent Premiers' talks?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there was a great deal of discussion about resources. We didn't deal specifically with this report.

MR. BRADLEY: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Energy. Given the recommendations of the low-sulphur coal task force to pursue developing and demonstrating advanced coal quality enhancement technologies, will the minister request the office of coal research and technology to expedite the research in this area, particularly the development of a pilot plant coal upgrading facility, which has the potential of making Alberta coal more competitive in domestic and international markets?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the office of coal research and technology is doing considerable research in the coal combustion technology area and upgrading the coal through different research projects, also working with the Alberta Research Council. With respect to the specific proposal the hon. member mentioned, certainly I think it's something that this particular office should investigate further and pursue if it has potential.

Federal/provincial Relations (continued)

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, this is to the Premier. Yesterday the Premier of this province insulted every Albertan by suggesting that there is a swelling of support for western separatism within this province. Albertans are dedicated Canadians, and they resent the suggestion that Albertans might separate. Why has the Premier taken the irresponsible step of raising the spectre of Alberta separation from Canada at this time?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, the substance of the question was the first question that was raised by the Leader of the Official Opposition, and we can't have the same matter arising twice in the same day.

MR. TAYLOR: On a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: The point of order will have to come at the end of question period, hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: Do you mean to say that we can't bring it up for the rest of the year, the rest of the session?

MR. SPEAKER: No. Hon. member, as the Chair heard the question, it was basically the same question as raised in the first question by the Leader of the Opposition. If you have had a few moments to think of a new way to phrase this question, the Chair would listen to that, but it's with a great deal of difficulty.

The Chair made no comment about the issue not being raised again, but not twice in the same question period.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, would the Premier comment on his misquoted report on separatism yesterday?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I believe in and stand behind the address I made. The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon can have a copy of the notes for those remarks. I'd be pleased to have him read them and then decide whether he wants to pursue the matter. Further, the remarks I made I stand behind strongly. [some applause]

MR. TAYLOR: Some separatists slapping tables there.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. When is he going to accept the fact that the breakdown in relations between Ottawa and Alberta is as much a result of his government's incompetence as it is of the federal government's intransigence?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, obviously, I reject the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon's position completely. I think the government of Alberta has established, not just recently but over the years, a remarkable record of dealing with federal/provincial relations, and we'll continue to do that in the future.

MR. TAYLOR: "Remarkable" is hardly the word I'd think of.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier again. When is he going to change to a more productive approach for dealing with the federal government? Albertans want results, not mere words.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are getting results.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. I have a suggestion for starters. For example, when is the Premier going to get rid of his Minister of Energy and put someone in there that's competent to do the negotiating?

Liquor Control Board Strike

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Solicitor General. Could the minister indicate what the current status is in terms of the Alberta Liquor Control Board negotiations at this point?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I am not personally involved in negotiations as this is a Crown corporation that has its own management structure and mandate. However, I am advised that the issue is down to salary and job security and that the next few days, hopefully, will bring results and settlement of the strike.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to either the Minister of Labour or the Solicitor General. At present some 600 employees of the board have ignored their union leaders and gone back to work, and the Alberta union of public employees is threatening fines and removal of union membership for these people. My question is: is the maintenance of union status necessary for these workers to retain their jobs?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is asking a question that has to do with the content of the labour Act. Where a union is certified as representing the employees and unless an individual has some religious scruples, they should join the union. Even if they have those scruples, which are recognized on occasion, they still have to pay the union dues, as they derive the benefits of the activities of the union in negotiating with management.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Could the minister indicate whether any of the liquor board employees have made representation to the department with regard to their desire to terminate their association with AUPE?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, not that I am aware of, I have received no such representations nor, to my knowledge, has the department.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary to the minister. In the review of the provincial government's labour laws, will the minister or the government be receptive to legislation guaranteeing Albertans the right to freely seek employment without union membership being a barrier?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, in view of the broad-ranging inquiry that the committee is going to hold, I am anticipating that all kinds of proposals will be put to that committee and it will be up to the committee to consider them. What the results of those considerations may be, of course, is not up to me at this time to anticipate.

MR. CHUMIR: To the hon. Solicitor General. I was wondering why the minister does not move to require agencies and Crown corporations to set up joint management/labour committees in order to work out these difficult job security problems in order to set a precedent of co-operation for labour relations in this province.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the labour relations between the ALCB and AUPE have generally been very convivial. It's six years ago, if my memory serves me right, that there was some sort of labour differential. In view of that, I have not personally seen any reason for implementation of such a committee or panel as the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo has mentioned. I am more than willing to take that matter into consideration and see if it is worth while. But I would like to advise the Assembly that I am quite happy with the relationship that ALCB and AUPE have at present. I am sure that within the next few days settlement of this rather minor dispute will be overcome.

MR. STRONG: A supplementary to the Solicitor General, Mr. Speaker. Could the Solicitor General indicate to this Assembly whether the ALCB is going to supply health and pension coverage to its casual employees?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I have no idea on that. As I mentioned, I am not an integral part of the management of ALCB, and I believe that's probably a matter that is being presently discussed between the union and the board.

Temporary Employment Programs

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of Manpower. Yesterday in the Assembly the minister stated that he had no information that provincial government departments are eliminating jobs and replacing them with PEP and STEP positions at lower wage rates. I'd like to table a letter I have, indicating that in the fall of 1985, 30 temporary staff earning \$9 an hour were laid off at the Tyrrell museum in Drumheller and within weeks were replaced by 30 people hired under PEP for \$5.50 per hour. My question to the minister; does this constitute an abuse of PEP?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the Department of Manpower does not place PEP or STEP students, nor does it proactively place any people under its programs. As I indicated yesterday, we are not in the business of making jobs in the Department of Manpower. We're an extension of economic policy, and we work closely with the private sector and with the various departments. Various departments, as the private sector, approach the department and make requests for students under our programs. We review the applications, making no judgment on the applicability of those jobs. I think that may clarify the confusion the Member for Calgary Mountain View has been labouring under.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. I'm just referring to those STEP and PEP programs under the provincial government departments administered through his department. Does he have in place any safeguards to prevent provincial government departments from simply using these programs to get public service employees at cheap wage rates?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I just said about 15 seconds ago that our department does not pass judgment on the purpose for which the jobs that are placed under and PEP and STEP make. It's our decision, our role, to make available wage incentives, wage subsidies, under the various programs, and we'll continue to do that. Certainly I would say that that may be an interesting item for debate, Mr. Speaker, and I'd be willing to participate in that debate.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, I don't think anyone will argue with the importance of job creation or job-training programs provided they're used for that purpose.

A supplementary to the minister. When a provincial government department continues to hire and rehire repeatedly for the same positions under STEP and PEP, is there any monitoring or follow-up done to ensure that that department is not abusing or misusing the original intention of these programs?

MR. ORMAN: For the third and final time, Mr. Speaker, we do not make decisions about the applicability of applications to the Department of Manpower. I would suggest to the hon. member if he has specific concerns about the placement or the use of PEP and STEP students within the government department element or in the private sector, I would be pleased to review it with my colleagues. Our department has assisted in one way or another 460,000 people over the last year, Mr. Speaker, and we're very pleased about that record. That's the role of the Manpower department. That's the role and the intention of the PEP and STEP programs and the wage subsidies, and I can assure you that as long as I'm minister, that will continue to be the case.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, does the minister have any concerns that these programs may in fact be abused or misused by other provincial government departments? Does he have any concern that that might in fact be taking place?

MR. ORMAN: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier or the minister then tell us who in the government would be responsible to see that this does not happen within government programs?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, obviously, ministers responsible for departments.

Child Welfare

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of Social Services. In Calgary last week a judge said that he was puzzled why Alberta Social Services hadn't stepped in long ago to remove two eight- and 11-year-old native girls from the custody of their abusive uncle. The pastor of the Church of God stated that he wrote to the then social services minister last November but received no reply. On August 8 he wrote directly to the current minister. Has the minister conducted an investigation into this case in order to determine why Social Services did not act on complaints going back some two years?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, as always when one is discussing cases with respect to possible abuse of children, they're very sensitive and highly confidential. On a regular basis information that deals with just such cases comes not only to staff but to the minister's attention. We are not privy, if the hon. member understands the Child Welfare Act, to discuss those cases in public with either the people who have registered the complaint about possible abuse or others. I can only say to the hon. member that, obviously, when any cases are brought to our attention, they are thoroughly investigated.

MR. CHUMIR: Is the minister aware of complaints from schools and other institutions that Social Services is often slow to respond to the needs of neglected and abused children?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, there again, partially because of the fact that indeed we're dealing with highly confidential information relating to the children, the people who raise the concerns, quite appropriately so, are not told of the investigation that is going on. I imagine that in some cases, because they are unaware of an investigation, they may not realize that in fact something is happening.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Are any changes planned to legislation or Social Services department procedures in order to restore a balance to the process?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to receive the hon. member's representations with respect to the Child Welfare Act. We believe it's an excellent piece of legislation; however, that doesn't mean that it can't be improved. I do receive a lot of correspondence in this very vein from people who have raised concerns and are not aware of their outcome. Again, as the hon. member mentioned, we are talking about a balance. If the member has some representations, I'd certainly be pleased to receive them.

MR. CHUMIR: Is the minister saying that they are not planning any current changes to legislation or Social Services department procedures in that respect?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, as a result of the Child Welfare Act, the procedures are very carefully mandated for us in terms of investigation and, in fact, in terms of reporting that must be done by people outside the department. At this point in time we believe appropriate procedures are

in place and that matters are handled expeditiously. I certainly have reviewed all cases that are brought to our attention.

With respect to the specific case that has been mentioned, I think the hon. member, if he also reads the complete press reports, will be aware that, in fact, the judicial system was a party to placing the children in the first instance; that was a procedure prior to the case that came forward.

MS LAING: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Social Services. Would she comment on her policy of least intervention in families as possibly hindering and hampering both the investigation and intervention by social workers in these kinds of cases?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the kind of intervention I believe all of us would abhor is the kind that immediately separates children from families. The type of intervention that is absolutely necessary is to provide the resources after an investigation to the family so that the most appropriate steps can be taken to secure the children and secure the family unit.

Correspondence School

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Education. More than 25,000 students, particularly in rural Alberta, depend on the Alberta Correspondence School for courses. Normally catalogues for courses for the coming year would be distributed by midsummer so registration can be completed and materials received early in the fall. Could the Minister of Education confirm that the catalogue this year will not be available for another two weeks?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take that question on notice and report back to the House.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, people calling the correspondence branch have been told that there may be a two-week delay and that there will be fee increases in the coming year. Could the minister confirm this if this is the case and, if so, indicate what the increases will be?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, I will report back to the House.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Has she consulted with her bureaucrats in regard to fee increases?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: I will report back to the House, Mr. Speaker.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, will the minister also consult with school personnel and municipalities to see what, in fact, would be the impact of correspondence branch course increases?

Red Meat Stabilization Program

MR. PIQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, to the Associate Minister of Agriculture. On Monday the only reason the Minister of Agriculture would give for the low participation of cow/calf producers in the red meat stabilization plan was the current high calf price, but producers were not signing up prior to the June 30 deadline either, even though prices were not rising then. In fact, there were no calves on the market until very recent days. Could the minister confirm

the real reason producers are not signing up? Is it because they do not think the program is fair to them?

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I certainly cannot confirm that. In my discussions with producers when they understand the program, they do believe it's fair.

If you take a look at the cow/calf portion of the program, which is based on a 10-year average, you'll find that the first couple of years in the average are the lowest. I believe this year's average price would be between 85 and 86 cents, base across Canada, and in the next few years that average would rise because the low averages of 1976-77, when they started to go up, would drop out of the average. So the price is going to increase.

This last week calves sold — I suppose this is only the odd circumstances — in the Edmonton Public Stockyards for as high as \$1.34 a pound. Certainly producers expected that rise, and my information is that the reason the majority of them didn't sign up was that they expected good prices this fall. Even at that I believe it would be a good investment to carry assurance.

MR. PIQUETTE: On Monday the minister talked vaguely about a 35 to 45 percent sign-up in the cow/calf program. Could she be more accurate and indicate if the figures represent the percentage of producers or the percentage of animals enrolled in the program?

MRS. CRIPPS: No, Mr. Speaker, I can't.

MR. PIQUETTE: The producers are saying that the program, like the farm stability program, is not as rosy as the minister indicates it is. What is the minister being told, as both of them talk directly with organizations representing cow/calf producers, about the reason they see for the low participation, besides the high prices? Have there been other presentations about changing the plan?

MRS. CRIPPS: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, there's always representation to make a government program a little richer, and we've had representation from some producer organizations that say the plan is an excellent program and that it will meet the needs of the cow/calf producer. We've had other producers who have said that it isn't sufficient and that they would like a much richer program. On the other hand, they recognize that if the program is too rich, you have to have production controls or marketing boards, and from my discussions with both those groups and the producers, nobody wants that.

MR. PIQUETTE: One of the things that farmers bring up is the fact that it's not based on a cost of production type of program. What analysis has the minister done regarding the fact that the cow/calf program bears little resemblance to a cost of production program like the pork stabilization program, which is very welcome by the hog producers in Alberta?

MRS. CRIPPS: If the member means on a personal basis, we've raised cattle for 28 years. But if he's talking about the departmental point of view, yes, analyses have been done on whether it's feasible to do it on cost of production. The problem is on whose cost of production. Is it on my cost of production or your cost of production or the member from Brooks' cost of production? There's a whole variation.

In hogs it's much simpler. You know how many bushels of grain a hog eats to reach market weight, and it's a lot simpler to come up with a cost of production. But in Alberta in the cattle-producing areas the variations are so widespread, and the farming practices of the individual farmers and their costs are very, very different. It's an almost impossible level to reach without making it so terribly rich for one farmer that he can put the poor one out of business.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the associate minister. In her concern for oversupply, would she not admit that the government is shaving the cost of raising beef down too far and just helping the big producers and squeezing out the small ones?

MRS. CRIPPS: No, sir. Mr. Speaker, if farmers had gotten 86 cents across the board last year, they would have been fairly well satisfied. When this year's price is worked into the figure, the support price will increase. If you can guarantee 86 cents for this year on 100 cows for a \$700 investment, it's a pretty good investment. Fortunately, this year you won't have to use it, and members must realize that the 86 cents is market neutral, so it isn't quite as rosy as it appears on first blush.

Ethnocultural Concerns

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address my question to the Minister of Culture. It's my understanding that the cabinet committee on cultural heritage, which includes ministries of a number of departments, is now getting close to two years old. I wonder if the minister can report on what new programs or policies have come from that committee?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, the cabinet committee on cultural heritage is in existence and has met. The committee has been looking at a number of suggestions which are there for the long term. The results of those deliberations will eventually be in this House, and we'll have an opportunity to debate and discuss them at that time.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask if the minister plans to have any discussions, possibly with the Minister of Recreation and Parks but specifically with the organizing committee for the Calgary Olympics, to ensure that there's adequate representation of Alberta's ethnic population in the Olympic ceremonies and other events for 1988.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, that's a good question. We have in fact discussed that possibility. I do sit on the cabinet committee on the Olympics precisely to ensure that the cultural component, including the multicultural aspect and others, is represented. We have been considering possibilities for that event in the city of Calgary and will continue to discuss those both in the committee on the Olympics as well as between ministers and among the department staff responsible in that particular area.

MS BARRETT: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. There's another concern within ethnocultural communities in Alberta with respect to racial intolerance. I wonder if the Minister of Education would announce if she's planning to table a government response to the Ghitter report on tolerance and understanding?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, that's a very important question, and I think it is to the credit of this government

and this province that we moved on the establishment of the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding. It was a very difficult exercise, I would say, but made some very, very important recommendations. One of those recommendations, which I am taking a careful look at, is the question of monitoring the curriculum within the private school system in this province. That monitoring is going on, as I've indicated on several occasions in this House. There were some recommendations in the Ghitter report which are part of my overall view, and in fact my response to the Ghitter report will be part of the new School Act, which I hope to bring forth next spring, 1987.

While I'm on my feet, I would like to also point out that the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding gave a strong endorsement for public support of private schools in this province. I don't quite understand the position taken by the parties opposite that there be no public support for private education. We have a very important system in this province, one that supports the option by parents, and we also have a very strong focus on the 97 percent of students who are in the public system.

MS BARRETT: A supplementary question to the minister. Will the minister please table a formal response on behalf of the government with respect to its policy for private schools and the public funding thereof in the context of the Ghitter report?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, our support for private schools in this province is very clearly documented, not only in informational material to the public but also in regulations governing those private schools.

With respect to a final response on the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, because already some of the recommendations in that report have been acted on, we're working with both the Alberta School Trustees' Association and the Alberta Teachers' Association with respect to some other recommendations, but I would say that a final government policy statement would have to await the introduction of a new School Act in the future.

MR. CHUMIR: To the hon. Minister of Education. Is there any possibility that the government might consider enacting a requirement that there be compulsory education on tolerance and understanding for each child in this province in all schools rather than leaving it to the discretion of individual schools as at the present time?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: I'm very pleased to hear the endorsement by the Member for Calgary Buffalo for the new secondary school curriculum, because in fact within that curriculum is a very important portion on health and life management skills, which will have a very important focus on the importance of the individual and will in fact recognize this government's strong endorsement of racial tolerance in our province.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: Might the Assembly agree to reverting to Presenting Petitions? Those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

head: PRESENTING PETITIONS

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present the following petition that has been received for a private Bill: the petition of the board of trustees of the Canadian Native Friendship Centre building for the Board of Trustees of the Edmonton Canadian Native Friendship Centre Building Amendment Act, 1986.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Drumheller, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, if any, please say no. The motion is carried.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would move that Question 169 and motions for returns 158, 163, and 165 stand.

[Motion carried]

head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

166. Ms Mjolsness asked the government the following question: With regard to the job-finding centres program operated under the Department of Social Services, as at August 15, 1986: how many individuals had entered the program,
- (2) how many individuals had completed the program,
 - (3) how many individuals were still enrolled in the program,
 - (4) how many of those individuals who had completed the program had found placements,
 - (5) how many of those placements found by individuals who had completed the program were placements for which the wage or salary paid the individual was subsidized to some degree by a job-creation program administered either by the government of Alberta or the government of Canada, and
 - (6) of the individuals who had completed the program and found placements, how many were being paid
 - (a) less than \$3.80 per hour,
 - (b) \$3.80 per hour,
 - (c) \$3.81 to \$4.25 per hour,
 - (d) \$4.26 to \$5 per hour,
 - (e) \$5.01 to \$7 per hour,
 - (f) \$7.01 to \$9 per hour,
 - (g) \$9.01 or more per hour?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, an evaluation of the program that's referred to in Question 166 is indeed appropriate, but I would say at this point in time that I have made a commitment in the House to provide a report on the evaluation of this 18-month pilot project and would again refer to my answer in question period when I said this information would be available early in 1987. Therefore, it is premature to address this question at this time.

167. Mr. Wright asked the government the following question: Does the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care provide the services necessary to encourage the self-administration of intravenous antibiotics in the homes of persons requiring

such antibiotics and, if not, what considerations militate against taking advantage of the economics inherent in the provision of such services?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, we're prepared to accept the question. I'd just like to provide the answer very briefly because it is brief. The answer, in fact, is that the responsibility for such self-administration of intravenous antibiotics rests with the hospitals. We indeed have had submissions from at least one hospital to provide some funding and are presently reviewing that. There is certainly no reason why a hospital couldn't provide that on a trial basis from their own resources. I thank the hon. member for having written me separately on it, and we will be following it up.

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

168. Ms Mjolsness moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of the studies and/or reports, preliminary and/or final, on the basis of which the hon. Minister of Social Services stated on Wednesday, July 16 — *Hansard*, page 582 — that, with regard to the effectiveness of the job-finding centres program, "We have information here which says that 50 to 70 percent of the individuals completing the program with these job-finding centres have found placements."

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, déjà vu. For the hon. member, my same response applies as for the question we just spoke to, and I'll be pleased to discuss the evaluation when it's available.

[Motion lost]

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

218. Moved by Ms Barrett:
Be it resolved that in the opinion of the Legislative Assembly, the following actions are urgently needed to defend the physical and mental health of peoples affected by the Chernobyl tragedy:
- (1) that the United Nations form an international investigative committee of scientists and medical experts and that this committee be granted entrance to Ukraine to assess the extent of the danger immediately upon its constitution;
 - (2) that Canada declare its preparedness to contribute emergency aid in the form of medicine, food, and technical personnel as needed;
 - (3) that Canada announce a policy of greatly enhanced immigration to encourage family reunification and sponsorship of immigrants wishing to enter Canada from Ukraine;
 - (4) that the U.S.S.R. permit free and full communication between Canadians and their relatives in Ukraine; and
- be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly request the government of Alberta to communicate this resolution to the government of Canada.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out some of the reasons I am sponsoring this motion. I realize that the event that took place near Kiev on April 26 is now a little distant from the minds of many Albertans. There was,

of course, a disaster — a catastrophe, might I say — in one of the nuclear reactors at Chernobyl in Ukraine. Its explosion caused the death of several people instantly and more people over a period of days. It caused radiation ...

MR. SPEAKER: Members of the Assembly, perhaps the noise level could decrease so that other members of the Assembly could hear the representation by the Member for Edmonton Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It caused radiation to flow over a very wide area in eastern Europe, throughout the Soviet Union, and ultimately to most places around the world. It wasn't just a sad fact that hurt a few people in a country far away from us.

At the time, Mr. Speaker, there were some Canadian students in Kiev who very clearly wanted to leave the area as soon as possible. That process was delayed somewhat by virtue of the fact that Canada does not have a consulate in Ukraine. The students in question had to go through a fair amount of red tape through Moscow itself in order to get clearance to leave the country to ensure their own safety. That is not to mitigate the danger to safety in which all people in the immediate area and in the distant area around Chernobyl found themselves as a result of this tragic accident.

I'd like to point out that one of the reasons I believe this accident occurred is that the technology that exists in the Soviet Union, particularly with respect to nuclear reactors, is not as sophisticated as that with which we have become familiar in the western industrialized countries. It's an unfortunate fact that most of the nuclear reactors in the Soviet Union or in eastern Europe, in fact, are copies of prototypes which were developed in the United States many decades ago. Those particular reactors are no longer used in North America for some pretty good reasons, primarily because they don't have sufficient automatic safety devices built in to ensure the long-term safety of the public. Mr. Speaker, it's common knowledge that in Alberta particularly we have a great representation of people with ethnocultural ties to Ukraine. The last Canadian census indicates about 137,000 residents of Alberta of Ukrainian descent. It's very possible that that number will increase with the census that was just taken this summer.

Albertans and Canadians of Ukrainian descent lament the fact that they are not able to communicate openly and freely with their relations in Ukraine. This was particularly profound in the days following the Chernobyl accident. People couldn't get through formal channels, partly because of the red tape that deals through Moscow precisely and partly because we as a country and, I suppose, a nation of peoples have not made a way clear for that to happen by means of something like a consulate.

Part of my motion talks about an international investigative committee of scientists and medical experts being "granted entrance to Ukraine to assess the extent of the danger immediately upon its constitution." It may seem that that's a kind of long time ago. But we know, for example, that three weeks after the initial explosion at Chernobyl a fire broke out. We don't know the extent of control over those series of reactors.

It's our understanding now in the west that it is intended that at least two of the reactors be started up again in October of 1986. It could well be that the scientific and medical expertise and technology contained in this country which we have access to could be of great benefit in

assisting that plan or even in helping the authorities decide whether or not it would be viable to reopen those two reactors in question. The question of asking for an investigative committee to go to Ukraine is actually not something that is past and over with. It's something that could still be of use, Mr. Speaker.

If we as Albertans and Alberta legislators requested this of the federal government, I believe they would recognize the validity of our request on behalf of our constituents and ask the authorities in Moscow if that were possible. I have no reason to believe, at this point in any event, that the authorities dealing directly with Chernobyl, who have now recognized the importance of this catastrophe, would themselves not welcome such an opportunity. They may not themselves go out of their way to ask for help from the west, but if we were to offer it, I think it would be considered in the light and the spirit in which it was offered.

AN HON. MEMBER: It has been offered.

MS BARRETT: It has been offered. Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Mr. Speaker, I would like to explore some information that has just come from the floor after today's adjournment.

I would also like to point out that the third part of my motion talks about something that is not specifically within our jurisdiction; that is, immigration. We do, however, have the ability as legislators, as people who speak for the people who reside in Alberta, to talk to our federal counterparts about enhancing immigration policies to promote reunification of families who have been split by a series of wars, cold wars, and a number of other instances, people who would like to be reunified particularly in light of the tragedy at Chernobyl, people who would like to be in communication with each other but for the fact that Moscow does not deem it appropriate that free communication exist between the countries of eastern Europe and any other country with which they would like to correspond or deal directly on matters of immigration and communication. That, of course, is the fourth part of the motion as well.

A number of people over the years have managed to find their way out of eastern Europe, having recognized that the lack of democracy in the Soviet Union, which by virtue of the authorities' determination in one city in Russia has extended to many locations in eastern Europe — they've left there and they've built, along with people from around the world, an incredible place called Canada. It's one that we're lucky to know, and it's because of people like this that we have a country like this. I think we all recognize the contribution that people from around the world have made to our country and our province.

Similarly, though, in recognizing the value of that contribution, I think it's certainly within our jurisdiction to request of our federal counterparts opportunities for these people to communicate with and reunify with their families, who are in situations they prefer, in many instances, not to be in in eastern Europe. There are political implications; there's no doubt about that, Mr. Speaker. I think the political implications would become very profound if we had something like a consulate in Kiev or in any other major city in eastern Europe.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

I don't want to stray from the intent of my motion, Mr. Speaker. The reason I'm bringing up these facts is to point out that along with the political difficulties between

east and west, millions of people have been caught in a situation they do not perceive to be in their best interests. I'm inclined to agree with those people. I'm inclined to agree on the political level, but I'm also inclined to agree on the health and safety level. We have operating in the Soviet Union in many instances dangerously old technology. We have in the Soviet Union, because of this and leading up to it, a lack of communication between scientific communities around the world. People can make all kinds of academic arguments about what importance a scientific community means, but I think that Chernobyl itself tells us what it means. It tells us that when we close the borders to information, when we — or they, whoever they might be — decide that it's okay, that it's safe to do that, we put many people in peril of their very own lives.

It takes some political courage to ask our federal counterparts to observe the contents of this motion, but I say this, Mr. Speaker. We trade with the Soviet Union. We don't necessarily like their system. I think most people in this country object particularly to the absence of democracy and meaningful political dialogue, particularly given that that extends to countries outside its own direct sphere, and I mean countries in eastern Europe. However, we are able to communicate with the Soviet Union and eastern Europe to the tune of billions of dollars a year in trade. We know that the bulk of the trade that goes on between Canada and the Soviet Union relates to grain exports, half of which come from Alberta, it is my understanding. The imports from the Soviet Union are relatively small, but I'm sure the Soviets would like to see them increase. If we can do that, then surely we can have the political conviction to make offers of more and more open communication and talk honestly about the need for relaxed rules pertaining to emigration from eastern Europe and also talk about the importance of immigration to Canada.

This motion, Mr. Speaker, asks that the government of Alberta communicate the full set of resolutions contained in the motion to the government of Canada. On behalf of the people who make their homes in Canada and in Alberta who are from a lineage related to east European countries, who know first and secondhand what it is like to live in those countries, and who know profoundly by virtue of their relatives having been affected by the tragedy at Chernobyl, I urge every member in this Assembly to have the political conviction and courage to support this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PENGELLY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to take part in the debate on Motion 218 sponsored by the Member for Edmonton Highlands. I commend her for her compassionate gesture to the people of the Soviet Union who were affected by this tragic Chernobyl nuclear disaster. However, most aspects of Motion 218 have been undertaken by the government of Canada. If the hon. member had researched the matter in a more than cursory manner, it would have been discovered that the International Atomic Energy Agency is already looking into the disaster with the co-operation of the Soviet Union. It would have been discovered that Canada has already offered assistance in the form of technical assistance, food, and medical supplies and that Canada already has a policy for family reunification and has asked the Soviet Union to facilitate greater communication. The Soviet Union has refused all offers of Canadian assistance.

It should also be noted, Mr. Speaker, that Alberta as a province has no jurisdiction over those matters occurring in the international sphere. The federal government has the

sole responsibility for these matters. In fact, the Hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona in his speech on capital punishment on July 15, 1986, stated:

Why members of this Assembly should be required to debate a motion such as this, over which we have no jurisdiction at all, substantively, when there are so many other things in this province that deserve debate at this time, is beyond my comprehension.

Mr. Speaker, the motion is redundant. All four points raised in Motion 218 have been undertaken by a caring and responsible Canadian government. Unfortunately, to date the Soviet Union has refused all offers of Canadian assistance.

Thank you very much.

MR. ZARUSKY: Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to Motion 218, it's been suggested to me that I speak to it in Ukrainian. Probably the only one that would understand me would be the hon. Member for Vegreville, so I'll talk about it to him later. Anyway, I'll speak to it in English, if everybody can understand me that way.

It's a sad day in the world when an accident of this magnitude occurs because it endangers the lives of mankind throughout the world. Something like this could have destroyed the whole world, but fortunately it was controlled.

Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this motion further, it is an international and national matter, and our governments have tried to give assistance as much as possible. Numerous groups and individuals have made calls for an international investigation of the Chernobyl nuclear accident. To date the Soviet Union has refused all such requests. An international agency already exists, the International Atomic Energy Agency, which has the expertise to undertake such an investigation. Without Soviet co-operation, however, this international agency is limited to what it can do from the sidelines. The IAEA is a United Nations organization with an international membership of countries, including Canada, which are involved in the nuclear power industry. Canada strongly supports the commission, which has already conducted a series of meetings. The agency is currently attempting to develop a postaccident nuclear safety program in case of a future nuclear accident such as Chernobyl. Recently, a Soviet foreign ministry official stated that after the U.S.S.R. has completed its own study of the events leading up to the reactor fire, it will report its findings to the IAEA, likely sometime in September.

On point 2, emergency aid, almost immediately after the incident Canada offered emergency aid to the Soviet Union in the form of technical assistance, food, and medical supplies. This offer was turned down, and to date the U.S.S.R. has not taken up the offer, though Canada has not withdrawn it. In mid-May external affairs minister Joe Clark sent a diplomatic note to the U.S.S.R. which asked that the Soviet Union facilitate to the maximum extent possible communications between Canada and the U.S.S.R. for those Canadians who have relatives in Ukraine and arrange for ensuring the smooth and rapid delivery of parcels containing food and medical supplies from Canadians to their relatives in Ukraine and to other Soviets who have been affected, especially children. The Soviets did not respond specifically to the first point, but to the second they replied that competent Soviet health authorities were already providing all necessary assistance and medical supplies. In addition, the diplomatic note drew to the attention of the Soviet government the private offer, made by concerned citizens, of medical treatment in Canada for those

affected, including children. Finally, it requested increased information on the long-term public health and environmental consequences of the Chernobyl accident.

Mr. Speaker, going into immigration and communication further, the Soviet record of immigration and family reunification with Canada is a poor one despite the fact that both countries were signatories to the 1975 Helsinki Accord. The agreements under the accord were seen as guaranteeing the reunification of families and promoting immigration between countries. In some instances people applying for emigration from the U.S.S.R. to Canada have waited 10 to 15 years without any resolution of their applications. The figures for Russian émigrés to Canada and cases of family reunification are not very good. Officials in External Affairs stated that they would like to see more family reunification and Russian émigrés, and their current policy allows for that. However, in the final light it is the Soviet Union who decides who emigrates and how many emigrate.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of full and free communication, again the Soviet Union has the final say in this matter. In its diplomatic note shortly after the Chernobyl incident, the Canadian government requested that the Soviet Union facilitate to the maximum extent possible communications between Canada and the U.S.S.R. For those Canadians who have relatives in Ukraine, the Canadian government is looking at provisions to try to get them reunited in any way possible.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, this is an international/national matter. Our provincial government can suggest to them what can be done, but it's still up to the Russian government to take our advice. Hopefully, they would agree with us.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, we in Alberta are fortunate that we have the oil and gas industry for energy and do not have to depend on nuclear energy. Hopefully, we won't have to for many years.

Also, I'm glad to see that the Member for Edmonton Highlands is moving on to bigger and better things. If she were in international affairs, it might give us a chance to govern this House more rapidly.

Thank you.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, this is a motion which understandably touches the heart of everybody, not just in Canada but internationally, I would hope. I think there are some things we need to understand for us to comprehend the difficulties of the motion and not be seen as wanting to actually oppose what I believe is the heart intent of this motion. I want to congratulate the member opposite in bringing the motion forward. I will confess I actually anticipated a discussion against the virtues of nuclear power as a source of energy. Instead, we had some good comments suggesting that possibly the things we have learned on this side of the iron curtain might be of some assistance on the other side.

The accident in question is a very interesting one and involved an experiment — the latest reports have just come out in the last couple of days — on the part of the people working in the Chernobyl plant. The experiment was to determine just how much power could be maintained from the plant as they gradually shut down its various functions — a highly dangerous experiment, as we have unfortunately discovered. It went so far as to include the shutting down of emergency servicing in and to the plant, thereby resulting in the subsequent meltdown.

To appreciate the difficulties in this motion, I believe we have to come to an assumption of the mind-set of the Soviet politburo and the Soviet way of thinking. I do say

"assumption," not "presumption." This isn't something we just presume out of rhetoric on a capitalist versus communist system. We assume something about somebody or about a country based on what we view as their past and present performance. We can come to some fairly safe assumptions about the Soviet Union based on their past performances and definitely on the performance that we saw involved in this particular accident.

The accident actually happened April 26. As we look at the motion, I want you to understand where I'm coming from on this in talking about the accident. When we're trying to decide whether we should support this motion, we've got to look at how the Soviet Union responded to the accident. We know that it happened on April 26. There was no report forthcoming from the Soviet Union of what has turned out to be the most severe and disastrous nuclear accident this world has ever known. Its magnitude was known to the Soviets at the time it happened. But it was two days later, on April 28, that Swedish authorities at the Forsmark nuclear power plant in their own country began picking up some high levels of radiation in and around their power plant. They thought, "Maybe this is a radioactive leak of our own. We'd better check it out." They began to search for its source and couldn't find it. Then in Norway and Denmark similar reports of high levels of radiation were reported. It took some time, but they were able to confirm that the source of the radiation indeed was not within their own borders. It was then that Scandinavian officials pressed the Soviet Union for six hours before the Soviet Union even mentioned the fact that an accident had indeed taken place. This is the type of mind-set we have to realize we're up against when we are discussing a motion such as this. This is just one of the things we have to be aware of.

I don't know that the member opposite fully comprehends that mind-set. A couple of her remarks, which I believe were made with good intentions, may suggest a lack of understanding of what we're up against when we're dealing with a motion like this in terms of presenting it through whatever channels to the Soviet Union. In her very insightful remarks about our own nuclear abilities, she said, "Maybe they won't ask for it, but maybe if we offered it to them, they would accept it." I suggest that reflects a degree of naivety in terms of the Soviet Union and how they have responded in the past to such overtures and indeed how they have already responded to overtures directly connected with the Chernobyl incident.

Again, another remark stated, "Moscow does not deem it appropriate" and went on to talk about various emigration and diplomatic functions. I would like to suggest that Moscow severely works against policies of emigration. To say "does not deem it appropriate" is really a hapless euphemism that suggests a lack of understanding about the severity of Moscow's international and diplomatic policies.

The short- and long-term effects of the accident are still being assessed around the world. We know that. The immediate effect around the particular area, of course, has resulted in the area being contaminated for years. We have no idea even now of the degree and depth of that contamination. Up to 100,000 people who were living near Chernobyl are going to have to be monitored for cancer for the rest of their lives. Around the Soviet borders we see in Sweden that the radioactive element cesium 137 has been found in herds of reindeer. A five-year ban on the slaughter of reindeer for meat has been imposed. Thousands, actually tens of thousands, of these reindeer are going to have to

be killed. The livelihood of the Lapps who traditionally herd these animals has virtually been wiped out.

In spite of the international, global effects of the outpouring of this radiation, we already see the response to the types of initiatives the member is suggesting we undertake. I would like to suggest, as my hon. colleagues already have, that these initiatives have actually been in effect since the accident. I won't go into the details already well alluded to by my colleagues as far as the suggestion to set up the investigative committee, but mention has already been made of the International Atomic Energy Agency, of which Canada is a member. That agency specifically petitioned the Soviet Union. Its petitions were categorically refused. That is a tragic statement of the international mind-set of that country. Canada strongly supports this commission, has a membership on the commission, and has stood behind the initiatives by that particular agency.

As far as setting up an investigation as the motion suggests, that has already been done by Canada through its involvement in this international agency and by the international agency's own petitions to the Soviet Union. I believe that to suggest that we support this first motion — of course we all support it. We all support the fact that there should be an investigation. But for us as an Assembly to officially take this route would possibly be saying that we don't recognize the work already done by the international atomic agency or by the United Nations and could maybe even seen by some in those agencies as an insult to them, suggesting that they had not already petitioned and are not continuing to vigorously petition the Soviet Union in this particular area.

As far as emergency aid, again I think all persons here could categorically declare themselves to be for emergency aid and to want to see it sent. I appreciate the member opposite suggesting that this would have political implications and difficulties. I don't think there's a person here who would be concerned with those political difficulties to the point that it would stop them from offering that aid. I was pleased to see that our own Premier, representing our government, specifically communicated his concern in that area to Mr. Vorotnikov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation and member of the Politburo, Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in a personal telegram, a copy of which I have here. I was glad to see not concern about the political difficulties but, immediately following the accident, direct communication and suggestion of concern, followed up by our own participation in the international involvement in these areas. Emergency aid, as our members have already suggested, has been offered and has been categorically denied and refused. Again, a tragedy, a human tragedy of our time, that the Soviet Union, so fearful of the political implications of an accident that really could happen to any country, would put the welfare of its people as secondary and its own international image as primary.

We have petitioned and we have offered, and I won't take the time that my two colleagues have taken to outline in detail what has been done with those offers of aid. So on the second point of that motion, the offer of emergency aid, I appreciate the thoughtfulness of the member opposite but am confident that our country and our province are actively involved in making that aid available. Here again, to formally suggest it again might suggest that we don't realize what our federal government is already doing and what our provincial government has offered.

On the third point of the motion, which has to do with immigration and communication, again my colleagues have

very effectively enunciated how we have already moved in these areas. I think it's interesting and instructive to note that in 1975 the Helsinki Accord was signed with the purpose of and hopefully guaranteeing reunification of families and promoting emigration. Yet since the Helsinki Accord, since the Final Act was signed, we have actually seen a drastic cut on the part of the Soviet Union in terms of emigration. That, again, is a tragic irony. That the Soviet Union would actually sign that accord and then — to me, this is another shameful demonstration of their arrogant and prideful attitude. When we look at figures, in the year before the Helsinki Final Act was signed, for instance, over 600 persons came from the U.S.S.R. That's already a pitifully low number in light of the number of petitions that are made yearly, but in the year before the Helsinki Act was signed, 600 persons came to join their families permanently. In 1985 that figure was reduced to 26 — an outrageous demonstration of pride and arrogance, showing the rest of the world that even if they sign something, there's no way they are going to be bound to it. Again, that reflects on what I say are the difficulties of the motion in terms of its even being accepted on the other side of the iron curtain, as we have an understanding of their performance in these areas.

It is also instructive to note that it was actually on April 30 that Lester Bauer, Canada's ambassador to a conference in Switzerland on security and co-operation in Europe, expressed Canada's concern with the U.S.S.R.'s policy on reunification. That speech was made four days after the accident and was written, I am sure, well before the accident happened. It's interesting to note the timeliness of it. I have a copy of that speech here, if any of the members would be interested in looking at it. Our ambassador decried the sharp decline in terms of applications being permitted that we were seeing from the Soviet Union.

In 1985, after a meeting that took place in May between external affairs minister Joe Clark and the politburo member who actually received the telegram from the Premier, the Soviet Union did agree to a name-by-name examination of 27 Russian families who had applied to emigrate to Canada. But a year later the Soviets have not taken any action on that whatsoever. I'd like to suggest that our federal government and also this provincial government, through interprovincial affairs and working with the federal government, are actively, constantly, and vigorously pursuing the area of immigration, and we are getting nothing more than more of a closed-door policy from the Soviet Union. To suggest, as this motion does, that we enact some procedures to enhance emigration would possibly be construed as reflecting an attitude that nothing is being done and a lack of awareness of the large task that has been done in this particular area.

Alberta has the highest Ukrainian-Canadian population outside Ontario. In Edmonton alone we know there are over 60,000 people of Ukrainian descent. Given that the Chernobyl nuclear plant is located in Ukraine, many Albertans have relatives in the affected areas. Many petitions have gone forth. Again, as I support the principle of the motion, I would not want to suggest to these many relatives who are actively petitioning in an ongoing way on behalf of their relatives that nothing is being done by them, because much is being done.

We have to look at all the particular areas the motion is addressing. My colleagues and I have enunciated that we have done much in the area of investigation, which is the first part of the motion. As far as assistance, the second part of the motion, that's been ongoing. Family reunification

and emigration is ongoing in a vigorous notwithstanding somewhat discouraging way in terms of the Soviet reaction to us. I also recognize that when the member filed this particular motion, it was something that was more current. Not that the tragedy has left us, but it was more current and pressing at that time. For us to apply this type of motion now, so far dated from the actual time and in light of what's already being done so vigorously, may suggest our lack of understanding of just how much is being done in this particular area already.

In terms of some of the negative qualities of that particular political entity, the Soviet Union, the member opposite talked about the absence of democracy and meaningful dialogue, and certainly we agree that we decry that absence. I would like to add to that the economic bondage that the policies of that government have placed their people in. That totalitarian state has completely opposed state control of the methods and means of production and distribution, also known as socialism, and that has put those people in such severe economic bondage that they do not have the political clout to accomplish what they would like to. I would suggest that economic freedom and democratic capitalism also go a long way to enhance political ability and freedom.

In light of the questions and concerns addressed by this motion, I support the concerns. I also support the work that is ongoing in terms of our own country through our federal government, our provincial government, and our international involvement in these particular areas.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak in support of Motion 218, I'd just like to respond briefly to a couple of points mentioned by members opposite, most recently the Member for Red Deer North. I would say to him that if at first we don't succeed, try and try again. I think there is a very great need here to go the extra mile to extend our hand and offer help to the people on the other side of the world who have suffered in this tragedy and to keep trying. I think this is what the motion is talking about.

It was suggested by the members opposite that we have no business addressing this because most of the matters contained in the motion pertain to federal jurisdiction. I call their attention to the end of the motion:

Be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly request the Government of Alberta to communicate this resolution to the Government of Canada.

We're certainly not pretending that we can take action that would supersede federal jurisdiction, but I think we do have the ability here to speak our minds and communicate to the federal government the concerns of the people of the province of Alberta. We do have a ministry of federal and intergovernmental affairs which would facilitate that kind of flow. I might also point out that when the Premier suggested that this House might get into a debate on capital punishment, which is a matter of purely federal jurisdiction, the members began to salivate at the prospect. I think we should be consistent here.

There has also been some reference to the fact that there is no need for us to follow up on part 1 of this motion, that we urge the United Nations to

form an international investigative committee of scientists and medical experts and that this committee be granted entrance to Ukraine to assess the extent of the danger ...

They refer to the International Atomic Energy Agency. I should point out to you that that agency per se has no

power. They don't have the ability to go in there and make recommendations or do inspections and comment on what's there. But the Soviet Union — and this might be useful for the member's information — has asked the International Atomic Energy Agency if they will help them produce a safe reactor and has asked a separate UN agency for direct scientific help and, by doing that, admitted their own weakness in terms of this type of technology.

I don't think it's proper in the context of this debate to belabour the Soviet record of immigration, because we agree that it's very poor. That's why we're saying that we have to go that extra mile to try and encourage the federal government to make every representation possible to the Soviet Union to allow the reunification of families. It's especially of concern to people in Alberta because we do have such a large population of people with Ukrainian backgrounds and relatives in the Chernobyl area.

One of the things the government of Alberta could do is to push the federal government to establish a consulate in Kiev. That hasn't been done; there isn't a consulate there. I suggest that it would be useful for a number of reasons. Very obviously, in the context of this motion it would help facilitate the reunification of families and the flow of information and communication between Canada and the U.S.S.R. It would also help in terms of trading relations and setting up that kind of arrangement. Our government is very good at setting up trading agencies in different parts of the world. Why don't they work to establish a consulate in Kiev? If humanitarian reasons aren't enough to instigate that kind of effort, then maybe economic ones will mitigate.

I think we all recognize the extent of the tragedy in Chernobyl, but we have to recognize that it's not a uniquely Soviet problem — it could happen anywhere in the world — and that the effects of this kind of disaster are felt around the world, that radiation and fallout and that sort of thing know no boundaries. I think it certainly gave us all pause to think very seriously about not just the applications of nuclear technology for peaceful means like the production of power but the even more insidious implications of this technology when applied to aggressive pursuits like armaments.

I call the members' attention to the motion that passed here the other day regarding peace. I think we all want to work toward peace at the international level. We have to demonstrate some compassion, and I want to point out to the House that the Member for Edmonton Highlands who brings forth this resolution was not the first person in the House to refer to the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The hon. Member for Lacombe brought this forth in discussing a motion of mine to institute debt adjustment in the province of Alberta. He referred to the Soviets sharing radiation with the rest of the world and therefore we should vote against debt adjustment in Alberta. I'm sure he's had pause to think about the wisdom of those comments, because I think it's that callous kind of attitude toward a tragedy of this magnitude that inhibits communication between our countries.

I think the members opposite speak very well and demonstrate their compassion when they're reading from prepared texts on a matter like this, but when they're speaking off the cuff and from the heart, we hear remarks like the Premier's during the election campaign. I'm sure he's had pause to think about those remarks about how we might somehow . . .

MRS. CRIPPS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: He was misquoted.

MRS. CRIPPS: No, sir. That was taken out of context. The reply quoted in the paper was in response to about the fourth question. It was written in the paper as if it were the response to the initial question. They tied the first question and the fourth answer together, and that's totally unfair.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The hon. member who is making observations on the motives of members is entirely out of order in doing that, and I would request that he keep that in mind and cease and desist. That is contrary to the rules of the House. It's improper for any hon. member to discuss the motives of another hon. member.

MS BARRETT: I'd like to comment on the point of order, Mr. Speaker. In the first place, the Member for Vegreville did not even enunciate the quote that he may or may not have had in mind and which may or may not have been interpreted as being in his mind by members opposite. In the second place, even if he had, that does not attribute motives. Therefore, I think the point of order doesn't hold.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, just to clarify, since my point of order is completely misunderstood. The hon. Member for Vegreville was commenting upon many more than the Premier; in fact, I don't even recall his comments with respect to the Premier. It was with respect to the observations of other hon. members that I was rising.

MR. FOX: I accept those observations. I don't think they're legitimate points of order.

I didn't finish what I was saying. I was going on to say that I'm sure the Premier, even though he was pressured to make comment and may have done so in response to that pressure, has had a chance to reconsider the remarks, because I know that nobody in this Assembly or indeed in this province would like to see us profit in any way by the sad and unfortunate experiences of anybody else.

In terms of my referring to some previous remarks as being callous, I don't think that impugns motive; that's merely a description.

Mr. Speaker, I think we need to take a close look at this motion. I realize that the second part of the motion is in a sense a moot point, given the fact that almost three months have passed since this motion was put on the Order Paper. But I don't think that should stop us from demonstrating our desire to be giving and trying to help people who are in genuine need. I think the substance of the motion is, however, the third part:

that Canada announce [immediately] a policy of greatly enhanced immigration to encourage family reunification and sponsorship of immigrants wishing to enter Canada from Ukraine.

I think this is becoming even more important because especially in Alberta we've tried to develop in a stronger way our ethnocultural backgrounds and to encourage people to be proud of their history. That has fostered a strong urge to know more about our roots and for people to associate more closely with their ancestral homes. I think we can refer again to the sorry record of the Soviets in terms of allowing emigration, and I'm not going to dispute that. But I think there are cases of Ukrainian refugees waiting to come to Canada who have been detained for

long periods of time in Austria. I think there are things that we as a government can urge the federal government to do to help overcome these kinds of difficulties. I think we need to recognize, Mr. Speaker, that in spite of political differences, in spite of geographic boundaries, people are people, and to the extent that any of us in the human family suffer, we all pay for it. I'm urging members opposite to put those differences aside and support this motion.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise and make a few comments on the motion before us today. First of all, before I start I would like to set the record straight with regard to the Chernobyl incident as far as the Premier is concerned. I know the Premier is certainly quite able to defend himself, probably more handily than most in this Assembly and especially those opposite. But to clear up the record, it should be noted that in dealing with this particular item of Chernobyl, the Premier first of all indicated — I guess the matter that is really in question here is a story in the *Journal* in which he stated that the original story in the *Journal* was a complete distortion of his remarks regarding the Chernobyl disaster. Knowing the Premier and the reporting of the *Journal*, I'm sure that was probably the case.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, on May 1 the Premier sent a telegram to Mr. Vorotnikov, who is a member of the politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and it stated:

I was saddened to hear of the accident that recently occurred in Chernobyl with consequent injury and loss of life. On behalf of the people and Government of Alberta please accept our sincere condolences on this unfortunate incident.

Sincerely,

Donald R. Getty,

Premier of the Province of Alberta, Canada

Mr. Speaker, taking some potshots at the Premier is fair game in the arena that we stand in. However, let's make sure the record is clear and shows that the Premier actually stands in support of those unfortunate people who were disastrously ...

MR. TAYLOR: On a point of order. Talking about keeping the record clear, would he point out the fact that this letter or wire was sent between 24 and 36 hours after he made the statement, not at the time.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue. I think the record should and does show that the Premier of the province of Alberta does have empathy and did in fact address that in a proper and appropriate fashion to the people of Chernobyl in Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of comments made, and although I don't want to deal with other people's comments totally, with regard to the ability of the federal government to deal with this issue, we all know the government of Russia, the U.S.S.R., is not overly amenable to inviting people or some of their services into their country for whatever reason, security or otherwise. As we know, the government of that state is one that does not have a tremendous amount of sympathy for the peoples of the world, including their own citizens. I believe the intent of the motion is good in nature, and I don't believe that there's any malice intended by any member of this Legislature in discussing the motion.

It is a tragedy to see people living through and being injured by incidents of this nature, especially when they can't be stopped. Canada is one of those countries that has a reasonably friendly relationship with the Soviet republic. Even though that relationship holds us in good stead, with all the efforts of the federal legislators, even they have found difficulty in having people attend to the concerns in the republic of Russia that have been so eloquently addressed here today. Of course, there are concerns that have been addressed outside the boundaries of Russia, especially by those people that live in the Scandinavian countries and other European nations that border Russia. I haven't heard the government of Russia offering any assistance to those lands that have been damaged through an accident within the boundaries of that very large Communist block country.

I guess it's very easy to discuss the disaster and the disastrous effect that the Chernobyl incident has had in and around Kiev and to the people that live in and around that city, but we haven't heard a lot of discussion relevant to the issue of fallout from Chernobyl in other parts of the world such as the Scandinavian countries of Norway, Denmark, and so on, and Germany. Have we asked the Russians for compensation for the sterilization of lands, the foodstuffs and animals that have had to be destroyed, and the livelihoods that are being affected by this accident?

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I refer to it as an accident, because certainly nobody would wish to deliberately create a circumstance such as this incident in Chernobyl. There have been efforts to have people attend and assist medically through the international atomic energy organization, but like a lot of socialists or communists they want to block their borders and shut people out. We are fortunate in Canada that we are a great country developed by people of vision, energy, self-esteem, and initiative who travelled here from lands afar and brought with them a culture to give Canada a mosaic second to none in the world and, yes, a Ukrainian population of hardworking, sincere people recognizing the distaste of socialism and communism.

These are the people that are affected by this tragedy of Chernobyl, because many of those people still in Ukraine are friends and relatives of those people we are discussing here today relevant to the motion on the paper. What a tragedy to see people actually supporting the socialistic view that continues to be so damaging to many eastern block countries. I hope many in Canada and particularly Alberta will wake up before it's too late to have some of that socialism drawn upon us here.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to offer our people the incentives to rely less on the state and keep them proud in our community, which has the highest standard of living in the world. Through those standards we are able to ensure a Chernobyl ...

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. I hate to interrupt the hon. member, but the time for debate on this motion has expired.

PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (Second Reading)

Bill 204 Plain English Law Act

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill 204 is to put in place a review procedure designed to endeavour to ensure that provincial legislation is as understandable and direct as possible. This would be accomplished by referring

Bills which have passed second reading to a review committee established by the Legislative Assembly. The review committee would be comprised of members of the Assembly who could employ the services of members of the general public, English language experts, and experts in legal drafting. The committee would then examine the proposed piece of legislation and make recommendations with a view to simplifying the language where it is deemed appropriate.

I'd like to draw the attention of hon. members' to section 4 of Bill 204 which would also enable the Government House Leader to exempt a government Bill from being referred to the review committee. It is recognized, Mr. Speaker, that there are certain pieces of legislation which by their nature must be very technical, and there are situations when speedy passage is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to make our laws as clear and readable as possible for the general public. The credibility of legislation and its successful implementation depends upon this being the case. It is not the intention to detract from the capacity of a language to be used creatively, subtly, and to describe things beautifully or to express emotion. It is intended to provide simplicity and precision in the formation of laws, where this is extremely important.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, excessive use of complex words, long sentences, and the development of a language within a language to apply to a certain activity or profession may provide status, but it does not help communication. To some extent I feel the general public has come to think this is necessary, although they are at the same time frustrated by detail, contracts, professional jargon, and complicated legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to give some rather wide-ranging examples in support of the Bill, because I think we have to recognize the problem and the importance of at least making a start in the form of this Bill to simplify the language of legislation and to symbolize the importance of moving in a direction that will make communication more effective in terms of our laws.

In doing some research in preparation for this Bill, Mr. Speaker, I came across three or four examples of quotations and circumstances which I think support this particular Bill's direction. What is known as the plain language movement in the United States has gone on for some time, and there have been some notable accomplishments. One of the main promoters of this plain language movement is one Robert H. Mundheim, general counsel of the U.S. Treasury Department. This is a quotation from a memo he sent to his Treasury officials when this matter was coming up for some discussion in debate. He stated:

When an ordinary man wants to give an orange to another, he would merely say, "I give you this orange." But when a lawyer does it, he says it this way:

"Know all men by these presents that I hereby give, grant, bargain, sell, release, convey, transfer, and quitclaim all my right, title, interest, benefit, and use whatever in, of, and concerning this chattel, otherwise known as an orange, or citrus orantium, together with all the appurtenances thereto of skin, pulp, pip, rind, seeds, and juice, to have and to hold the said orange together with its skin, pulp, pip, rind, seeds, and juice for his own use and behoof, to himself and his heirs in fee simple forever, free from all liens, encumbrances, casements, limitations, restraints, or conditions what-

soever, any and all prior deeds, transfers or other documents whatsoever, now or anywhere made to the contrary notwithstanding, with full power to bite, cut, suck, or otherwise eat the said orange or to give away the same, with or without its skin, pulp, pip, rind, seeds, or juice."

Now the counsel of course was being extreme in his example. It did serve to illustrate a point. Rightly or wrongly, the legal profession is often associated with the drafting of legislation.

Another area of our way of life, Mr. Speaker, which also illustrates a problem on which there has to be some start concerns the wording of certain agreements. Like legislation, a legal agreement, let us say a lending agreement, is very much something that is important to the public. Just to illustrate that some progress can be made when this problem is really tackled, I'd like to quote from an example from Citicorp, a corporation in the United States. They set out to really simplify their lending agreements, and I'd just like to quote the original and the revised. This is from an actual document that was in use for a number of years, and the original read as follows:

In the event of default in the payment of this or any other Obligation or the performance or observance of any term or covenant contained herein or in any note or other contract or agreement evidencing or relating to any Obligation or any Collateral on the Borrower's part to be performed or observed; or the undersigned Borrower shall die; or any . . . benefit of creditors; or a petition shall be filed by or against any of the undersigned under any provision of the Bankruptcy Act; or any money, securities or property of the undersigned now or hereafter on deposit with or in the possession or under the control of the Bank shall be attached or become subject to distraint proceedings or any order or process of any court; or the Bank shall deem itself to be insecure, then in any such event, the Bank shall have the right (at its option), without demand or notice of any kind, to declare all or any part of the Obligations to be immediately due and payable, whereupon such Obligations shall become and be immediately due and payable, and the Bank shall have the right to exercise all the rights and remedies available to a secured party upon default under the Uniform Commercial Code (the "Code") in effect in New York at the time, and such other rights and remedies as may otherwise be provided by law.

Mr. Speaker, after this was looked at in the light of plain language, the clause read as follows:

I'll be in default:

1. If I don't pay an installment on time; or
2. If any other creditor tries by legal process to take any money of mine in your possession.

That was it. So things can be shortened and simplified, Mr. Speaker.

A few seconds ago, Mr. Speaker, I put forward a quotation which perhaps puts some of the responsibility for what has occurred on lawyers. But lawyers of course went through the educational system. I'd like to give a couple of illustrations from the educational system, because I think it's sometimes as guilty as anybody of making language more complicated than necessary. I note that many of the curriculum guides . . .

MR. WRIGHT: A point of order. Mr. Speaker, I really do hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but we have

listened now to two examples which admittedly were very amusing and do illustrate how futile legal language is but have nothing whatever to do with the Bill, namely plain English in our legislation. If the hon. member will confine himself to illustrations that need correcting from our legislation, I'm sure that will send the business of the House quickly forward.

MR. NELSON: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The member doth have thin skin. I think the point of order is out of order. The member is just giving an illustration of how futile legal language may be.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey, please.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I do have some Bills I will refer to in a moment. I think it is important to recognize that we have to be aware that this can become a problem throughout our system. My examples related to the educational system can be gone through quite quickly. I feel that some of the curriculum guides we ask teachers and parents to read and discuss are more complex than necessary.

I note that there's been some controversy over a literacy test at the University of Alberta. I had the personal experience of two students at my school who had achieved over 90 percent on their English 30 examination and took this literacy test and failed it. This was a 90 percent plus on diploma examinations. Upon investigation — and it took quite a bit of digging to find what the reason or the problem was — the students had gone into the essay examination with the idea of impressing the professor or instructor by putting forth the most elaborate vocabulary and the most complex language they knew how to express, and they were good at it. It would have been nice if they had known this ahead of time, but they found that what was being looked for was very precise, very logical, very clear, and very simple language. That had been their main failing on the test.

The other illustration from the educational scene that I would like to mention is that not that long ago I sat in on a parent/teacher interview involving a young teacher, and the interview went something like this: "Mrs. Jones, your son is working up to his potential and shows considerable ability in those core subjects requiring cognitive understanding, but he does have real difficulty with this optional subject which requires psychomotor skills." The mother, obviously having had this kind of experience before, sat back and paused for a moment and then said, "Well, I know Fred's clumsy, but he really likes carpentry." She had figured out what was going on.

To get to some legislation, Mr. Speaker. I do not wish to be presumptuous, but perhaps just to illustrate my point, I took a couple of examples from the legislation which has been tabled this session, one from Bill 3 and the other from Bill 4. I'll try to be brief I'll just read through one of the examples and then just quote the other. Section 6 of Bill 3 reads as follows:

6(1) The Minister may establish any boards, committees or councils he considers necessary or desirable to act in an advisory or administrative capacity in connection with any of the policies, programs, services or other matters under his administration.

(2) The Minister may, with respect to any board, committee or council established by him under this section,

- (a) appoint or provide for the manner of the appointment of its members,
- (b) prescribe the term of office of any member,
- (c) designate a chairman, vice-chairman and secretary, and
- (d) authorize, fix and provide for the payment of remuneration and expenses to its members.

(3) A board, committee or council established pursuant to this section may make rules of procedure, subject to the approval thereof by the Minister, governing the calling of its meetings. [The procedures to be used at its meetings, the conduct of business at its meetings, reporting on any other matters as required.]

(4) A board, committee or council established pursuant to this section may exercise the powers and shall perform the duties and functions that the Minister approves or confers or imposes on it.

As I've said, I've not had any direct experience in drafting legislation but, with respect, I think it could be worded this way:

6. The Minister may appoint advisory or administrative bodies and determine membership, duties and terms of office.

That's all that's necessary.

I won't read through it, Mr. Speaker, but if hon. members would care to read the entire section 7 in Bill 4, for instance — I'll just give you my summary and you can see whether there is a point to it. I believe that section could be stated as follows:

The Minister may make grants if

- (a) authorized to do so by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and
- (b) there is authority available in a supply vote for the purpose for which the grant is to be made.

The concern, Mr. Speaker, over simplifying legislation is something that is verified and, as I said before, has been dealt with in the United States. The plain English movement in the United States officially started in March 1978, when President Carter signed executive order 12044. This required that all federal regulations be written in plain English, understandable to all who must comply with it. In June of that year New York State became the first state to pass a plain language law. To date 34 states have legislation requiring the use of plain English in one form or another. The idea has been picked up by private industry.

A couple of examples of the fact that there can be cost savings as well as improvements in clarity, Mr. Speaker: when the United States' Federal Communications Commission issued its regulations for citizens band radio that were written in legalese, the agency needed five full-time staff members to answer the public's questions. After the Federal Communications Commission rewrote the regulations in plain English, the questions stopped, and the five staff members were assigned to other areas. Citibank revised its forms so that both its staff and customers understand them. This reduced the time spent training staff by 50 percent and improved the accuracy of the information staff gave to customers.

There have been other countries that have made an effort in this area. Mr. Speaker, similar examples and explanations could be given on what has occurred, for instance, in Great Britain and Australia. But since there are other members wishing to get into the debate, I will move on to Canada and the conclusion. Within the nation of Canada there are no plain English laws at the provincial or federal level. However, there have been discussions on the topic. Right

here in this Legislature on March 23, 1976, a private members' motion sponsored by the Member for Medicine Hat was debated, and that motion was very much on the general topic that is being dealt with in this Bill. It read as follows:

Be it resolved that a select committee of the Assembly be established to recommend on:

- (1) The use of ordinary language in legislation and legal documents as opposed to formal legal language;
- (2) Whether the best balance between public understanding of the law and legal correctness is established by the current use of formal legal language;
- (3) Changes in specific methods of drafting;
- (4) The better use of introductory notes during the passage of bills through the Legislature;
- (5) How to increase public understanding of new laws by the use of White Papers or Draft Laws.

The province of Quebec has revised its tax forms in a new plain language format. The House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs has recommended that the Income Tax Act be redrafted and simplified, something we all look forward to. That is as recently as this year. I must note that since the time of that private members' motion I referred to, Alberta has introduced a style manual, which has no doubt improved the quality of our legislative drafting and leads to at least one writer assessing it as ranking among the best in Canada in this respect.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to sum up by saying — and I'd like to go back to the vast experience of the United States in this regard — that despite dire predictions to the contrary, an evaluation of the plain English movement in the United States would have the following conclusions. No large number of court cases came out of this simplification of legislation. There was no mass effort to amend the laws passed in this format. It led to having a great influence in similar things happening in government agencies and the private sector. I think probably most importantly, and the reason that earlier in my remarks I was somewhat general in what I said, the plain English laws have focussed attention on the need for reform in the way we approach legislation, legal contracts, and a number of other regulations and things that we do.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that plain language law or a measure that will accomplish the objective of greater simplicity and clarity in our legislation is overdue. It's necessary, and I would hope members of the Assembly would support this Bill.

Thank you.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some brief comments on Bill 204, the Plain English Law Act. One of the beauties of such a Bill is that it is a reminder to us to be very careful in our speech as well as in our writings. The reason is that we communicate with each other by words: the simpler and the more concise, the more likely we will take one idea from one mind and place it in that of another. In making my comments, I'd like to deal with plain English, firstly, from our own *Hansard* in this session; secondly, as seen by an American writer; and thirdly, by an English expert who is the author of *Plain Words*, Sir Ernest Gowers.

In reviewing *Hansard*, my goal was to see how members had used clichés instead of specific words or had used two or three words when one would do. I should mention in

passing that grammar was never one of my strengths, but I do count reading as one of life's blessings. So I do appreciate good reading and good speaking. To quote from *Hansard*, which will give members a quick review of some things said in the House, I began with the Speech from the Throne. Then I skimmed through the remarks of members and picked some examples of what I considered to be anything but plain English. One cliché in the Speech from the Throne mentioned "the greater global community." I wonder why we couldn't just say "the world." When speaking of tourism, a member mentioned in the establishment of the department "the need to enhance the skill and sophistication of all who work in the hospitality industry." The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines a "sophisticate" as one who is involved in sophistry, and it is "to deprive [a person] of natural simplicity, to make artificial by worldly experience." Now do we want deceivers or honest people in tourism?

Priority: "employment priorities are this government's priority." I would say that "priority" is a very popular word with every member of this Assembly and every party represented here. Another saying was "a total and absolute waste of time." Again, going back to *Oxford*, "total" is defined as "complete." "Absolute" is defined as "complete." I would suggest that "waste of time" would be good enough.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that most members have spoken very effectively. There were some clichés used which I feel could be replaced by words that are far more effective. For example, one member suggested that there were other members who were "frothing at the mouth." This usually describes dogs suffering from rabies. Another wanted to "pinpoint some questions." Why not just ask questions? Then there are a couple of tired old ones we've all heard, such as "thin-skinned" and "rose-coloured glasses." These are just a few, but to my surprise, the number used by most members was very low.

To go to the comments from the American who has written such books as *Strictly Speaking* and *A Civil Tongue*, let me quote Edwin Newman. His view of a civil language is one that is

not merely a stream of sound that disk jockeys produce, in which what is said does not matter so long as it is said without pause.

Civil language in his view is

direct, specific, concrete, vigorous, colorful, subtle, and imaginative when it should be, and as lucid and eloquent as we are able to make it. It is something to revel in and enjoy.

Speaking of America and those in public life, he goes on to say that the language they use

becomes more and more covered, obscure, turgid, ponderous, and overblown.

For example,

Nelson Rockefeller, when asked whether he would be nominated at the 1976 Republican convention, [said,] "I cannot conceive of any scenario in which that would eventuate" . . . Edmund Brown, Jr., asked whether his 1976 candidacy was really aimed at 1980, replied, "My equation is sufficiently complex to admit of various outcomes."

Or when asked to ride to a money-raising dinner in a Mercedes, he said,

"I cannot relate to that material possessory consciousness."

So he used an unwashed Ford. In 1974 the Secretary of Commerce said that

the rate of inflation in the second quarter of the year was 9.6 per cent, and this "validated the essentiality of President Ford's struggle to cut the inflation rate."

Using the word "justified" would have replaced three words and nine syllables.

To quote a few more examples from Newman, he points out that in American English, as he calls it,

enough is almost never enough. Is there a famine? No, there are famine conditions ... Does Jimmy Carter's pollster, Patrick Cadell, give his client, Saudi Arabia, information in confidence? He would rather speak of "the confidentiality of my client situation." Is there an urban crisis? No, said Morris Udall ... there is an urban crisis situation. Is Italy's economy deteriorating? No, said Edwin Newman of NBC news ... Italy is in an deteriorating economic situation.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to go back to Bill 204 and what I see is a weakness in the Bill. I have to disagree with the hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey. Reading through many of the Bills on our Order Paper, they were, in my opinion, very well written. They were very precise, and they were careful with their words both as to quantity and quality. But I would like to refer to *Plain Words* by Sir Ernest Cowers to outline why I think the intent of this Bill, while very important, should address the larger question of our letters to our constituents and letters of civil servants to the public when interpretation of various Acts should concern us if citizens are not to become frustrated and angry. I'd like to quote George Orwell in *Horizon*, written in April 1947. He said:

A scrupulous writer in every sentence that he writes will ask himself ... What am I trying to say? What words will express it? ... And he probably asks himself ... Could I put it more shortly? But you are not obliged to go to all this trouble. You can shirk it by simply throwing open your mind and letting the ready-made phrases come crowding in. They will construct your sentences for you — even think your thoughts for you to a certain extent — and at need they will perform the important service of partially concealing your meaning even from yourself

As Sir Gowers said, legal draftsmanship cannot be judged by the same standards as officials. To me this is something we should not miss when we're discussing Bill 204.

Gowers quotes from the *Spectator* of September 17, '43, regarding a regulation, which is a similar example given by the hon. member:

The control of tin cans kegs drums and packaging pails (No. 5) order, 1942(A), as varied by the control of tin cans kegs drums and packaging pails (No. 6) order, 1942(B), the control of tin cans kegs drums and packaging pails ...

And it goes on for another 15 lines. All it was saying was that tin plate could be used for tobacco and snuff tins other than cutter lid tobacco tins.

Gowers goes on to mention certain elementary rules: be short, be simple, be human. He mentions his advice was not novel, as similar precepts were laid down for the Egyptian civil service in the time of the pharaohs as follows:

Be courteous and tactful as well as honest and diligent. All your doings are publicly known, and must therefore be [free of] complaint or criticism. Be absolutely impartial. Always give a reason for refusing a plea; complainants like a kindly hearing even more than a

successful plea. Preserve dignity but avoid inspiring fear. Be an artist in words, that you may be strong, for the tongue is a sword.

Being plain in your language is not enough, as Bill 204 suggests. Words may be approved by the dictionary, the grammar correct, and the idiom above reproach, but what is written still fails to convey a ready and precise meaning. The reason is that too often officials tend to say it in as complicated a way as possible instead of being simple, terse, and direct. It is long-winded; it prefers an unusual word. Instead of the simple and plain, it uses clichés. Why is it that on writing, adults use this form which is called pudder in Lear's prayer to the gods? Children show no sign of this. For example, here is a short essay written by a 10-year-old on a bird and a beast:

The bird that I am going to write about is the Owl. The Owl cannot see at all by day and at night is as blind as a bat. I do not know much about the Owl, so I will go on to the beast which I am going to choose. It is the Cow. The Cow is a mammal. It has six sides — right, left, an upper and below. At the back it has a tail on which hangs a brush. With this it sends the flies away so that they do not fall into the milk. The head is for the purpose of growing horns and so that the mouth can be somewhere. The horns are to butt with, and the mouth is to moo with. Under the cow hangs the milk. It is arranged for milking. When people milk, the milk comes and there is never an end to the supply. How the cow does it I have not yet realised, but it makes more and more. The cow has a fine sense of smell; one can smell it far away. This is the reason for the fresh air in the country.

The man cow is called an ox. It is not a mammal. The cow does not eat much, but ... it eats twice, so that it gets enough. When it is hungry it moos, and when it says nothing it is because its inside is all full up with grass.

Gowers then goes on to ask why

when we are ten [we say] "so that the mouth has to be somewhere" [but] when we are thirty "in order to ensure that the mouth may be appropriately positioned [horizontally.]"? .

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to outline some of the difficulties of writing plain English, as Bill 204 suggests. I'd like to examine a specific case and see the results when we criticize officials because Acts of Parliament or the Legislature are not written in what we consider intelligible English. I would like to quote from the Shops (Sunday Trading Restriction) Act of the British Parliament of 1936:

... the following provisions of this Act shall extend only to shops, that is to say, those provisions of section six and section eight which relate to the approval by occupiers of shops of orders made under those sections, the provisions of paragraph (e) of subsection (1) of section seven and the provisions of paragraph (a) of section twelve.

With the Act before you it would become abundantly clear that certain provisions of the Act only apply to trading and shops and all the other provisions apply to not only trading and shops but also may apply to a place that is not a shop. The legal draftsman had

assumed that, when he had covered both sales in shops and sales in places that are not shops, he had left nothing outside. But he was wrong. He forgot the stop-me-and-buy-one man. The Court held that the ice-cream vendor's tricycle is neither a shop nor a place; and

the bit of ground on which it happens to be standing is not a place either.

His sales, therefore, escaped the meshes of the Sunday Trading Restriction Act.

So to quote Robert Louis Stevenson, Mr. Speaker:

The difficulty is not to write, but to write what you mean, not to affect your reader, but to affect him precisely as you wish.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, I don't disagree with anything the mover of this Bill, the hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey, has said by way of illustration and by way of exhortation of lawyers that use verbose language, never use one word where three will do, and whose job seems to be calculated to confuse the public. I have always been in favour of plain English in contract regulations and statutes, but the Bill under consideration deals only with statutes. In fact, you've only to look at almost any contract you get from the lawyer and compare it with practically any Bill and you'll see the difference. Our Acts in this province, and I think probably generally in Canada, are reasonably plainly written anyway and do not participate in the verbosity of the contracts and regulations and so on that the hon. members who have preceded me have adverted to. So we are really using rather a big hammer to crack a small nut.

If we are really serious about plain English law, then we must take in the rest of the law. There is the law we make up and then there is all the law that in effect is incorporated in mortgages, insurance contracts, bills of lading, conditional sale agreements, hire purchase agreements, all sorts of guarantees, and all those other contracts that you really don't have any say in the making of. You have a choice of signing them or not. Since you really can't fly from here to Vancouver on your own, you just have to sign them when you commit your luggage to the aircraft and that sort of thing.

It's those other ones that the plain English movement is really concerned with, Mr. Speaker, and the illustrations from the Member for Ponoka-Rimbey made that quite plain. I really doubt whether all the trouble of having this review committee and so on would be worth the effort.

An interesting illustration of what I'm talking about may be found in Bill 26 in this sitting, the International Commercial Arbitration Act. Its purpose is to bring into force for Alberta "the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards." This is an international convention. One must presume that this convention has been drawn up by those who are most skilled in the drafting of law and who have therefore trod the correct line between plainness and ease of understanding and the language which is necessary to state what needs to be stated, given the inherent difficulties of the subject matter. If you look at the sort of language which is in the schedules to that Bill, Mr. Speaker, and compare it with the language in the Bill itself which comes from our draftsmen in the Legislative office, you will see that it is really quite similar and does not have the verbosity and obscurity that is abhorrent in these matters.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I say that this Bill is so deficient in what it leaves out — although I suppose what it has in it is unobjectionable — that it's hardly worth the trouble. To be specific, it leaves out regulations. That's very important, because again and again now we have Acts in which the stuff of the matter is in the regulations and the rest of the Act is simply authorization to the minister to make regulations. It leaves out the rules and directives within the

departments, which I think are, without doubt, the worst of all in terms of vagueness and obscurity. Very importantly, it leaves out contracts, such as the ones I have mentioned like insurance contracts, both life and casualty.

We've all had the experience of wondering what the heck is in our insurance provision for the car but equally so for other casualty insurance and certainly life insurance, mortgages, bills of lading, and so on. That is really what the New York legislation and the Massachusetts legislation got at, and it's been an outstanding success there. I urge the hon. member to do a bit of homework. Get the rest of it along the lines of the New York legislation, for example, and we would certainly support it with enthusiasm.

One last point. The hon. member referred at length to a piece of legislation from our jurisdiction. He referred to Bill 3, in particular to paragraph 6 of that Bill. It is wordy, Mr. Speaker, but there is a reason. This gives an example of the things that one often doesn't think about unless one's had experience in the matter; namely, there is a rule of law that says that where legislation delegates a power, that power may not be further delegated unless there is legislation that says so. That is the reason for the surprising wordiness of section 6 of that Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the fact, and in terms of the debate, it would only be fair to recognize the Member for Calgary North Hill.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak against this Bill, I hasten to assure all members, and particularly the hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey, that I'm not doing so in defence of the vested interests of the profession of which I am a member. One might be surprised at that, particularly with the outlandish comments from the hon. member.

The provisions of this Bill may appear to be quite desirable to many of those people who look at lawyers as ones who charge by the word, who put in a whereas for \$50, a heretofore for \$60, and even oranges come for \$500 in the description. Therefore, one might expect a very immediate and definite protest from this particular corner. However, Mr. Speaker, priding ourselves in a collective sense as the perfectly reasonable man, I wish to take issue with this Bill for several other reasons.

Firstly, I think we must consider the Bill itself from the standpoint of the legislative process and what it would do to our procedures for passing legislation and what the logical consequences would be if we were to adopt the procedures outlined in this Bill. I don't think there's any doubt, Mr. Speaker, that we would pay the price in lengthy delays in the whole legislative process. Some people may consider that process at the present time to be inefficient and time-consuming and perhaps some other adjectives as well. While members may appreciate the three readings plus committee consideration together with Royal Assent as part and parcel of our democratic process with its checks and balances, I believe the man in the street does not have similar patience. To impose further steps in this overall process seems to me to be totally unacceptable to the very person to whom, we are trying to direct this Bill and for his benefit.

Drafting is a very time-consuming and exacting science. To communicate in a precise manner with a guarantee of full understanding, not only by the communicator but by the communicatee, is certainly a tough assignment. You

will recall the old parlour game where one person starts the message around the room speaking to the person next to him or her. By the time it goes around the room, to listen to how the ultimate message comes out certainly leaves no doubt as to some difficulties in communication. It shows us what can happen when the words are interpreted by different people in so many different ways. I would suggest that the moment we stray from tried and true words and phrases, we are certainly going to be in trouble.

The process, Mr. Speaker, that is suggested in this Bill also contemplates the use of so-called experts in plain English. I guess one would have to ask: who is this unique person? Where do we find him or her? And if we do find them, is there any other expert that would agree with the first or indeed a third that would agree with either of the first two? How much do these unique experts cost for their expertise? Perhaps they charge more than lawyers. Do they charge by the number of words they delete or simplify? Can we rely on these experts, or indeed the review committee itself that is proposed by this Bill, to carry out the intent and meaning of the legislation, or will it suffer in the translation? This Bill could result in a delegation of authority from the legislators to this committee and perhaps indeed from the committee to the experts. I would suggest that that is an abrogation of our responsibility as elected legislators. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the question is whether the potential delay in time, the potential cost, and the potential distortion of intent is worth the plain English that supposedly results.

My second problem with the Bill, Mr. Speaker, is that I think there is a potential, in fact a likelihood, that the interpretation of plain English will be subject to litigation like you would never believe. Let's examine the Bill itself by its own test, and look at those key words in the Bill: "direct, plain and understandable." Let's even take those special words and examine them by the dictionary which I found in the back shelf "Plain" has six different meanings, including the legitimate definition of plain as meaning "unsophisticated ... homely ... dress or appearance." Now which of these six meanings shall we give to the word "plain"? Surely not the one I mentioned. Yet it is open for us to do so. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would ask: what's so plain about the word "plain"?

"Direct" — again six different meanings in the dictionary including "straight, not crooked." Is that the meaning or definition that we should select for this Bill, or is it one of the other five? How can we be sure? Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I ask: what's so direct about the word "direct"?

"Understandable" — four different meanings, including "believe or assume from knowledge or inference." Is this the meaning of "understandable" that pertains to the provisions of this Bill? Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I say: what's so understandable about the word "understandable"? You put these definitions into the context of this Bill and just try and come out with any meaning at all that would give any idea as to the communication of the intent of this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, before entering law school, I was involved in another business that took me into the examination of wills. At that time I constantly wondered why lawyers couldn't write a will that would simply express the testator's wishes. I pledged at that time that if I ever became a lawyer, I would certainly not fall into that trap. Then I studied some cases in which sizable bequests turned on a word, and I soon came to the conclusion that one should rely on the words and phrases which the court had interpreted in the past and which did convey the true intent of the

testator. Rather than leaving it to chance, I certainly fell into that mould. In summary, it seems to me to be more important to ensure that the true intent and meaning will be carried out, perhaps in more complex terms, than to leave the interpretation of plain words to the courts to determine as they see fit.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, I would oppose the Bill because I think it directs its attention to the language to be used in the statutes themselves. How many members of the public read statutes? I don't recall ever seeing them on a best-seller list, and I would suggest a much more appropriate and much more meaningful place for plain, direct, and understandable language, rather than being in the statutes, is in the consumer contracts, in the leases, and in the mortgages that the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona mentioned rather than being contained in the legislation itself I think we need those pamphlets and those brochures and so on that explain legislation in a very matter-of-fact and plain way. This is the approach that many jurisdictions have taken, particularly in the United States, and I think it's appropriate. These are the documents and pamphlets and so on that are closest to the public at large, and these are the ones that people deal with on a day-to-day basis; that's where the understandability is required.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the many services that are available to the public to better understand statute law. There are hot lines for various legal services, Dial-a-Law, Legal Aid, the legal referral services, including a first consultation with a lawyer for, I believe, a nominal fee of \$10. There are storefront lawyers, often operated, by the way, by law students. There are seminars and forums for the public at large. So there are many opportunities for the public to access interpretative services and legal services on that basis.

I would also like to recognize the work of our legislative counsel who draft the Bills that come before us. They are certainly real professionals. They constantly strive to be consistent and precise. Yes, I think they even try to be plain, direct, and understandable. As has been mentioned, they follow certain drafting guidelines to accomplish their objectives, and they are recognized through their legislation as the tops in their field in Canada. Through a committee of which I am a member, I have the opportunity to scrutinize each and every government Bill line by line and word by word before it enters this House. Therefore, I can attest to the capabilities of the draftsmanship of the legislative counsel in this province.

Mr. Speaker, for the reasons I have mentioned, I cannot support the Bill, and I urge all members to vote against it.

MR. PIQUETTE: I rise to speak partially on behalf of Bill 204, the Plain English Law Act. This afternoon I was asked to translate a number of things from French into English. Since English was a plain language until the French invaded England about a thousand years ago, I thought it would be appropriate to say a few words in French about plain English laws.

Je suis heureux de vous dire que l'anglais est une langue internationale que j'admire beaucoup. C'est aussi une de nos deux langues officielles du Canada. Cependant, comme le français, le vocabulaire anglais est souvent trop compliqué, surtout dans le vocabulaire dirigé par nos avocats et nos professionnels. Dans les documents officiels, c'est vraiment difficile pour les gens ordinaires comme moi-même de

comprendre plusieurs des documents d'assurance sur la vie, des testaments, et plusieurs de nos documents de taxation.

C'est temps, comme [mentionne] l'honorable Membre de Ponoka-Rimbey, qu'on regarde que l'anglais soit simplifié pour que la communication soit accompli avec les gens ordinaires qui vivent dans nos villes et dans nos campagnes. L'anglais est une vieille langue qui a beaucoup d'influence sur le français, et le français sur l'anglais. C'est pour ça que le Québec a passé une loi pour simplifié l'anglais et le français dans les bilans gouvernementaux et légaux, et surtout dans la langue de communication des documents.

I would conclude by agreeing with the Member for Edmonton Strathcona that this Bill leaves out many important public documents, such as mortgages, life insurance, wills, et cetera. However, it is a step in the right direction, especially if we begin by translating *Beauchesne* into plain English so I'll at least understand what the heck is going on in this House.

Thank you very much.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I'm half tempted to agree with the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche, but only half.

I think of the Member for Ponoka-Rimbey and wonder about his motivation, and I can't help but be very supportive. I can think of no one with a better public record of attempting to make better citizens of our young people than what he's been doing in the educational field for the past 25 years.

I recall 1976 fairly clearly when the Member for Medicine Hat, now the Attorney General, had the resolution on the Order Paper. Like the Member for Calgary North West, he had access to a dictionary. He knew better than to use the word "plain." He used the word "ordinary," which is not fashionable today because of certain political affiliations. That's not fashionable in Conservative circles.

I, too, read the dictionary, and as the Member for Calgary North West said, there are probably many definitions. The one I read was the word "plain" meaning clear, evident, simple, and readily understood, which obviously are not words acceptable to the legal profession. They are certainly not very long. When we consider another definition, Mr. Speaker, we read that the word "plain" also means to mourn, to complain, and emit a plaintive sound, which I don't want to relate to a political party, but it's heard quite often in this House.

I can't help but wonder about the comments by the Member for Edmonton Strathcona when he said that we shouldn't be using examples. In this House 10 years ago, the Member for Medicine Hat had the motion, and last year I sponsored a Bill in second reading. I quoted from some legislative draftsman which had been put into statute and referred to by the Member for Calgary North West. I'll simply quote from *Hansard* of just a year ago:

If, in respect of work [done] or materials furnished for an improvement,

- (a) something is improperly done, or
- (b) something that should have been done is not done,

at the time when the thing was done or should have been done and if at a later date the thing

- (c) improperly done is put right, or
- (d) not done is done,

et cetera, et cetera. That is a product of our system. Clearly the Member for Ponoka-Rimbey is simply saying that for heaven's sake, can't we as lawmakers in this province making laws for future generations come up with something that's understandable?

I simply want to conclude with the comment that Revenue Canada, as the Member for Ponoka-Rimbey has noted, is coming out with a new income tax form. It's simplicity at its finest, and it has three lines under three letters: (a) how much did you earn last year, (b) how much do you have left, and (c) please forward (b).

With that, Mr. Speaker, in view of the hour I'd like to adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion, does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, to speak plainly about this evening's business, it's intended that we sit in Committee of Supply at 8 o'clock this evening. Therefore, I move that the Assembly adjourn until the committee rises and reports.

[The House recessed at 5:29 p.m.]

[The Committee of Supply met at 8 p.m.]

head: **COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the committee come to order, please.

ALBERTA HERITAGE SAVINGS TRUST FUND
CAPITAL PROJECTS DIVISION
1986-87 ESTIMATES OF
PROPOSED INVESTMENTS

**Department of
Public Works, Supply and Services**

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have two votes: vote 1, Capital City Recreation Park, and vote 2, Fish Creek Provincial Park.

1 — Capital City Recreation Park

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services is the Hon. Ernie Isley. Do you have comments, Mr. Minister?

MR. ISLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just very briefly. Vote 1 is in the amount of \$850,000 to acquire land for the Capital City Recreation Park in the city of Edmonton. The role of Public Works, Supply and Services is simply to pay for the land. The actual negotiations for the land at market value are carried on by the city of Edmonton; we simply pay the bill. The park was planned and is administered by the city of Edmonton.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Chairman, we seem to be winding down the purchases of land for the Capital City Park. I'm going to be complimentary this evening. Let me say that

I think the support the city has received from the government in the acquisition of these properties and the eventual development of the parks has been well received. I think they are well used. The questions I posed yesterday to the Minister of Recreation and Parks — there is certainly a need, in some people's minds in any event, to expand Capital City Park even more than at the present time.

I have one question of the minister, Mr. Chairman. As you know, the RDA runs quite close to these properties. Are any of these lands within the RDA? I might say that this evening we were at a reception of the real estate board of Alberta. They made mention of the RDA and the difficulty they see in that governments — in this case the provincial government — have imposed a restriction on private property, which then locks it up, puts a freeze on it so that there is no ability to sell to other than government. Although you could perhaps argue that they could sell privately, there really is no market for it because of the RDA restrictions. They can't really develop it. I know that the city of Edmonton will not issue a development permit. Consequently, residents in the RDA have a profound problem. I'm not sure that it's this minister's responsibility, but certainly it is the responsibility of the government to act on the acquisition of properties within the RDA to allow those people the freedom to market their property and have the ability to move to another area.

The other question I might ask the minister — although I think the Minister of Recreation and Parks did respond to me yesterday — is: are there intentions to continue acquisition of lands, particularly on the east side of the North Saskatchewan River, which are at the present time basically in gravel pit form? Indeed, I think those lands should and can be reclaimed and developed into recreational facilities. Are any departments in the government making requests of your department, sir, to attempt to purchase those properties?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding that none of the lands we would be acquiring under this vote are within the restricted development area. Public Works, Supply and Services is also the purchaser of RDA lands but not under this vote. These are strictly lands that are within the designated area of Capital City Park. I would suggest that this should bring us to the point where we have acquired about 90 percent of the land.

I would have to do some checking on the other specific lands the hon. member raised questions about. I'm not aware of any involvement we have with buying any of those lands, other than RDA and Capital City Park.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, the amount to be voted is a single project, it seems, which is the Capital City Recreation Park. The objective is stated to be:

To acquire lands along the eastern part of the North Saskatchewan River Valley in Edmonton and the County of Strathcona as part of a park and recreation area.

The Capital City Recreation Park, Mr. Chairman, is acknowledged to be one of the finest developments of its sort in any city anywhere, and it's just a wonderful thing. The western end of it, of course, is in my constituency, and we are forever grateful that we are fortunate enough to have it there. However, perhaps the minister would explain what is exactly proposed to be acquired at the eastern end and, state what priority it is given over development at the western end.

The bike paths, the trails, and so on grind to a halt at approximately the High Level bridge, so one has to plow on as best one can beyond that point. Indeed, a pedestrian footbridge linking Hawrelak park — although the residents of the neighbourhood still call it Mayfair park, I regret to say — with Laurier park would be a tremendous boon to the facilities, from the point of view of both the pedestrians and the students cycling to the university from the western end of Edmonton north of the river. That is a fairly well-known idea. I wonder if the minister would comment, Mr. Chairman, on the considerations that led to further development of the eastern end and, indeed, what those developments are.

Thank you.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Chairman, the planning and development of the park are totally within the responsibility of the city council of Edmonton. I would suggest that the hon. member's representation with respect to other developments that he or his constituents would like to see in that park should be directed in that direction. Our only role is the provision of land once the city has carried out the actual negotiations. We're not involved in the development or the planning of the park.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Comments, questions, or amendments to vote 1?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, I can't avoid the opportunity of standing up and speaking in very strong support of these votes in Public Works, Supply and Services, especially vote 2, the acquisition of land for Fish Creek Provincial Park. Just briefly, I think the ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, I hesitate to interrupt, but we're only dealing with vote 1.

MR. DINNING: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions, comments or amendments? Are you ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 1 — Capital City

Recreation Park

\$850,000

2 — Fish Creek Provincial Park (Land)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Amount to be voted, \$350,000.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Chairman, Public Works, Supply and Services has been the land buyer for Fish Creek Provincial Park and recreation area. The actual planning and development of the park was carried out by Recreation and Parks, and it is run as a provincial park. The \$350,000 required here will do the final land purchasing for Fish Creek Provincial Park in Calgary.

Thank you.

MR. DINNING: I'll continue to heap praise on my colleague the hon. Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. Just briefly, Mr. Chairman, I believe Fish Creek park, which makes up a good portion of the Calgary Shaw constituency, is really the jewel in Calgary Shaw. We were

far and away the very fortunate parts of redistribution when the constituency of Calgary Shaw acquired from the constituency of Calgary Fish Creek the westernmost part of the park, which is in fact more of a wilderness area and less developed than the east side. Any day of the week, any day of the year, you can go to Fish Creek park in Calgary Shaw and see literally thousands and thousands of people enjoying the benefits of horseback riding, barbecuing, swimming and, in the wintertime, cross-country skiing; definitely 365 days of lots of people enjoying plenty of exercise and enjoying, within the confines of the city of Calgary a truly wilderness experience that most people don't think you can find except in the foothills of Alberta.

So I have to commend my colleagues and certainly my predecessors on this side of the House in Legislatures and governments past for the tremendous foresight that was given in creating this park. The ongoing development and continued maintenance of that park is simply first-rate.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, I would like to echo the comments made by the hon. minister that this certainly is a beautiful park used extensively by Calgarians from all over the city. Just one little problem has been brought to my attention recently, and that is that access to Fish Creek park by a bicycle path is subject to the closing of a gate by Conmac, I believe, because of some kind of a lease arrangement with the city of Calgary. I would hope that those who have something to do with that will make that gate stay open so that cyclists and pedestrians will be able to access the park along that pathway. I've seen letters to the editor by people quite frustrated at being denied access to that bicycle path. But by and large, I don't think I've heard anything but praise, other than that one problem, in reference to Fish Creek park.

I do want to say one thing, though, as far as land acquisition for Fish Creek park. I think the provincial government has had experience with land acquisition whereby they've had to move to expropriation in order to acquire land. I would just say to members opposite that because of that experience I'm sure you can appreciate the situation of the city of Calgary, in terms of its land acquisition program and difficulties in acquiring land for Nose Hill park on the north end of the city. When and if responding to the lobby that is being mounted by private landowners on Nose Hill for changes in the Planning Act, I hope members opposite will keep that experience of land acquisition for Fish Creek Provincial Park very much at the forefront of their thinking.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ISLEY: It's certainly a pleasure, Mr. Chairman, to hear compliments on these two parks from members on both sides of the House, and I will accept those compliments on behalf of government members past and present who have been involved in the development of these parks. As I indicated earlier, our role in Fish Creek is the acquisition of land, and I will see that the hon. member's concerns with respect to bicycle access are forwarded to the appropriate individuals.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member for Calgary Fish Creek want to make a comment on the Fish Creek estimates?

MR. PAYNE: Thank you for the opportunity, Mr. Chairman, but no.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

Agreed to:

Total Vote 2 — Fish Creek Provincial

Park (Land) \$350,000

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Chairman, I move that the votes be reported.

[Motion carried]

Department of Community and Occupational Health

1 — Occupational Health and Safety Research and Education

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, do you have any comments?

MR. DINNING: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to make some comments about the occupational health and safety heritage grant program. This is a \$10 million investment through the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. It's an eight-year commitment that began in the fiscal year 1981-82. It gives me an opportunity to bring some very positive comments and some sincere thanks to the inspiration of this program, at that time the minister of workers' health safety and compensation, Mr. Bill Diachuk. It was through the foresight of Bill Diachuk and the people who worked with him that this program is before us today and is doing the tremendous work that it is undertaking. I want to commend Mr. Diachuk. I know that all of my colleagues in the Assembly share with me those very strong positive feelings about Bill.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to outline the overall purpose of the program; that is, to support research, training, and education activities. There are two main objectives associated with the program. One is the promotion of the health and well-being of all Albertans wherever they may be working, on any kind of worksite in Alberta. Second is the prevention of accidents and ill health that are associated with any kind of employment activity in the province.

I guess the best way of explaining what this program is all about is to give you two or three good examples of the kind of initiatives that the heritage fund has actually funded. Two in particular I'm really quite keen about. The first one is a major grant provided to the University of Alberta to establish a chair in occupational health. Professor T. Guidotti currently holds this chair. He has initiated and provided guidance on several research projects in the field. He has developed a number of occupational health courses for medical students and practitioners, and he has provided clinical services to workers with occupational diseases. It's this kind of initiative that is an investment today that will pay off for many, many years to come. It's through a \$245,000 grant to the university that we're able to enjoy these long-term benefits.

Another grant that would be of interest to all members is one that's been given to the Alberta Federation of Labour. This \$370,000 grant provided for the training of some 30 Alberta union representatives in a month-long course on health and safety for Alberta workers. What followed thereafter was a tremendous effort on the part of the Federation of Labour in that that group of 30 newly trained union representatives then proceeded to train some 220 more union representatives in the areas of health and safety. Those 220

represented some 25 Alberta unions throughout the province. Through a strong network of grants from the heritage fund to this program we were able to expose more and more Alberta unions and Alberta union workers to the benefits, the positive nature, and the importance of a healthy and very safe workplace, which only makes for a far more productive workplace.

A third initiative that the fund has supported, Mr. Chairman, is a series of grants to the Alberta Forest Products Association to help that association develop various safety manuals. That's a grant of approximately \$220,000 over the last number of years to provide for manuals in the area of logging safety and chain saw safety, as well as the preparation of instructional materials, including video material, for use by laymen teachers to go out and train woodworkers in the importance of and the details behind logging safety and chain saw safety.

Mr. Chairman, I'll stop my remarks there but finish by saying that it's through initiatives like this, through some \$2 million in 1986-87, that we will see the continuation of what I think is a very far-sighted program that's sole purpose is the health and safety of all workers throughout the province.

MR. DAY: Just a brief question to the minister. Could he tell us if the government still allows the sale of raw or unpasteurized milk in Alberta? That would be my only comment at this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

AN HON. MEMBER: Let's get the minister's response.

MR. STRONG: I was awaiting the minister's response, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to congratulate the minister and his predecessor in formulating what I think is an excellent mandate in establishing the occupational health and safety research and education program. Although I don't have a major difficulty with the grants or any of the programs they put on, I do have a major problem with funding. The funding for this program is through the capital projects division of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I ask this because I feel that what we have are nonrecoverable expenditures through the heritage trust fund that are termed "deemed assets" through that fund. I'm concerned about this. We just finished going through this in the Public Accounts Committee. One of the recommendations of the Auditor General was recommendation 32.

It is recommended that the cumulative amount of non-recoverable money expended by the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund on Capital Projects at March 31, 1985, be written off to fund equity and that no further non-recoverable money expended on Capital Projects after that date be capitalized.

It's not just my concern. This concern has been expressed by the Auditor General. We have right now, by the Auditor General's figures, in excess of \$2 billion in what he deems nonrecoverable deemed assets. Again, I'd like to state that this type of accounting creates a false impression in Albertans' minds of just exactly how much money we have in the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. My question to the minister is: why could we not fund this program through his department and not through the heritage trust fund?

I understand there's currently an evaluation of the project ongoing through the minister's department. That report is

due and is supposed to be out any day now. I would like to ask the minister: will this report be made public, and if so, when? When the study is completed? Is that when he's going to make the study public?

The other thing I'd like to ask the minister is: has this project been evaluated previously, and if so, was the report made public? The reason I ask this, Mr. Chairman, is that in checking on some of the projects that were funded through this program, we have an underground mine foreman's training package. We gave \$141,522 to McIntyre Mines Limited to develop and produce a training program for the purpose of preparing potential mine foremen. I don't think preparing potential mine foremen is a responsibility of the government of Alberta; I think it's a responsibility of McIntyre Porcupine Mines. Perhaps the minister could clarify that for me.

We note in the estimates that the grants have more than doubled in the '86-87 estimates compared to the '85-86 estimates, from \$850,000 to in excess of \$1.8 million. I'd like to ask the minister to outline all of those programs — who's receiving the money, for what purpose. I recognize that some of them are made available in the report that was issued by his department, occupational health and safety heritage grant program, but I don't think it's complete. I might be wrong.

The other concern I have is over applications for these grants. I'd ask the minister if the applications for these grants are dealt with in any priority or just on a first come, first served basis.

In addition, I've got a bit of concern because of the Swan Hills toxic waste plant. The majority of the transportation routes, I'm led to believe, go through St. Albert. Would the minister consider putting on a special course for the safety needs of workers who will be employed at the toxic waste site to be built in Swan Hills?

That's pretty well it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, as you only have one vote, do you wish to hear the comments of all members before you respond?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, now that I've composed myself I think I could respond to the questions by the member.

First of all, the question of deemed assets is something that ought to be posed to the Provincial Treasurer, as it is under the heritage trust fund legislation where the deemed asset provisions are spelled out. But if I may, Mr. Chairman, in that regard of it being an asset that pays off and is there for a long, long time, I think all of the work that goes on in the heritage fund occupational health and safety grant program is just that. It is research, training, education that goes on today and pays dividends for many, many years to come. I've just cited three good examples: the chair at the University of Alberta, the training that's been undertaken by the Alberta Federation of Labour, and the manuals project done by the Alberta Forest Products Association. So as for the long term benefit, there is clearly a long-term, long time paying off asset right there in the heritage fund today.

The member made reference to the evaluation report. Mr. Chairman, I expect to get that report in the weeks ahead, and once I've had a chance to review it and do some careful thinking about it, I will consider whether it is right or proper to table it before this Assembly.

The member asked the questions: do we do this kind of evaluation, and has it be done before? Mr. Chairman,

the whole notion of the program is an ongoing evaluation. Every time we get a new research, education, or training application, it's looked at on its own merits. So the evaluation is done there. Evaluation is done on an ongoing basis throughout the project, whether it's the preparation of manuals, a course provided by a labour organization, or an occupational health chair at the university. Evaluation is done at the end of a project. I can guarantee for the hon. member that the dollars are not shipped out the door and then forgotten about. It's only through co-operation with the recipient of the dollars that the donor — in this case the government — and then those constituents and constituencies benefit from these grants.

Mr. Chairman, the member asked the question about an up-to-date version of all initiatives under the grant program. I believe we're looking at the same document. It's entitled Occupational Health and Safety Heritage Grant Program status report, April 11, 1986. I can advise the hon. member that this is our most up-to-date version of this report. Others will be prepared in the days ahead, and when they are, I will be providing that to all members.

The member asked the question with respect to application for these grants: do they come on a first come, first served basis? No, they're not. I mentioned that we undertake ongoing evaluation from the initiation of the project to its very completion. We operate under two key priority areas — and I outlined those at the beginning of my remarks — the first priority being the prevention of accidents and illnesses and the most effective way of reducing those accidents and illnesses on the worksite. Priority number two is to assess and identify the known and potential hazards in high-risk worksites in this province and to come up with the best possible protection of our workers so that their exposure to the ill effects of those high risks are placed at a minimum.

So I want to underscore again the two key priority areas: the promotion of good health practices at a worksite and the prevention of illness and accidents at the worksite.

AN HON. MEMBER: That includes no smoking in the Chamber?

MR. DINNING: Not a bad idea.

The member asked one last question on a certain site in Swan Hills, and I think the more correct name of the site is the special waste management facility. I'm convinced that the company undertaking the management of that facility will train its employees in the very best fashion so that all employees and, more importantly, all Albertans are fully protected and in no way harmed or placed in jeopardy by exposure to those special wastes. The occupational health and safety division of the Department of Community and Occupational Health stands ready and will be there to provide all of the assistance that's necessary so that those workers are properly trained in safe and healthy practices on the worksite.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of questions I'd like to pursue with the minister with regard to the areas of grants and what have you. I'm wondering if the minister has given consideration to assisting programs, in particular the apprenticeship programs at NAIT and SAIT and other activities where people are training for low- to high-risk jobs in their chosen trade. We might do well to offer a training program or subsidy for a couple of days at the apprenticeship schools to assist those young people in learn-

ing about safety before they actually go out into the work force. There's no sense in trying to train somebody on the job after the accident. We should look at training them, through a grant to our education system, prior to their being trained for the function they're going to do and prior to their entering the work force.

That is an item I brought up with the previous minister a year or two ago. I would like it known at this time that I feel we should be expressing some safety grants through occupational health and safety to our educational system, in particular in those two areas where there is a high degree of training going into low- to high-risk jobs. I would like the minister to comment on those. He has my thoughts on those two items.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. member raised a very good point. The role of NAIT, SAIT, and other like facilities in the province is to provide training for apprenticeship programs. I know — and I'm sure my colleague the Minister of Manpower would confirm this — that a very important part of that apprenticeship program is the safety side. I take the idea as a very good one. I'll look at it as a special one- or two-day session, as the member suggests.

I want to underscore the very important responsibility that an employer has in ensuring that his or her employees on the worksite, whether it's at the top of a 37-storey building construction or in this very Chamber — I don't think we were advised by all of our employers of the hazards we'd find when we walked into this Chamber, but there are many. I want to underscore the importance of employers in the provision of safety training. But I also want to underscore the important responsibility that unions and organized labour have in providing that same safety instruction, safety awareness, to their membership. I look at some very, very responsible practices by a number of unions in this province, and I think we are very well served by both unions and employers in the training of their employees and members.

If I may, I failed to answer one question put to me by the Member for St. Albert. It was: why are we funding this program out of the heritage fund and not out of the department? I'm always pleased to receive representations from all corners of the House that we ought to be spending more money effectively and efficiently in providing for the safety of Alberta workers, so I accept that representation. I'm very pleased that this long-term research education program is in place here in the heritage fund.

I ask the member to turn to vote 3 of the Department of Community and Occupational Health General Revenue Fund vote, and there he will see approximately \$2.5 million in research and education services. I believe that sum of money, devoted to occupational health and safety services, is an important investment by the General Revenue Fund in the long-term health and safety of Alberta workers.

MR. WRIGHT: In answer to the last point of the minister about the categorization of this money, I suppose it could be argued that if the research, training, and education represented in this vote in some way diversify the economy, then it is a worthy expense of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund per se, but that really would be stretching the meaning of words. I must agree with my hon. friend from St. Albert that really this is more money on a very worthy cause for the department but out of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and that the Auditor General is right.

Mr. Chairman, may I make a suggestion for the research that will be done under the aegis of the chair of — occupational health, did you call it? — that is, to deal with the most abiding single problem in compensation cases, which is the problem of pain, the identification of it and the scaling of it. You can't see pain, so you are always running into problems of workmen who claim that they are crippled from their particular occupation. It's painful if they raise their arms above shoulder level, for example, or their back hurts, but the specialist — and they're nearly always orthopedic specialists — say that this is not an objective symptom; it's a subjective symptom, which is a polite way of saying that it's all in their heads. Why? Because they can't see it on an xray. We know that scar tissue in soft tissue injury causes restriction of the working of that muscle and is productive of enormous pain from time to time, yet it can not be seen on xrays. So one has to take the word of the workmen or working women, and this is a problem.

According to that well-known organ of medical information, *Time* magazine — this was about a year ago — they have discovered by chance that it seems the same equipment that is used for the detection of breast cancer can also detect pain. It seems that the working of the phenomenon is that there is a slight rise in the temperature of the soft tissue, just as there is with cancer.

So if we could become leaders in the field of mechanical, electronic, but at any rate objective detection of pain and the scaling of it, not only would it be a feather in the cap of this university, Mr. Chairman, which is always close to my heart, but it would also be of inestimable value to injured workers. I assure the Assembly that is the single most abiding and contentious problem in workers' compensation cases is, I repeat, soft tissue injury which allegedly gives rise to crippling pain.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. minister is the most soothing and uplifting of his brethren in this Assembly, I believe, and always leaves me with a warm glow. I do believe his speeches are cutting into the sales of Valium in this province. But this member would be left with an especially warm glow and lots of uplift if the minister could assure me that not one penny of this vote will be spent until the pensions of injured workmen are updated from 1981. I understand that our wages as members have not had a rise since 1979. But we voluntarily became members of this Assembly. Injured workmen did not voluntarily receive their injuries.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, I suppose we could have a most enjoyable debate, quite a lengthy one and perhaps even soothing, about the purpose of the heritage fund. The hon. member referred to the diversification of the Alberta economy. I think we could spend hours on just how the heritage fund and this government have done an awful lot of work, tremendous effort, and had a lot of success in the diversification of the whole province, but I think we'll save that debate for quite another day.

I appreciate the suggestions made by the member with respect to research. I can advise the member that some work has already been done in this field under the program. A back injury prevention initiative to the tune of some \$76,000 was undertaken by the Sage Institute, Mr. Chairman, and I know that work continues in that area. Conferences and training sessions funded by the heritage fund have also been undertaken. Clearly, looking at workers' compensation statistics in the 1985 annual report of the board, back injury is the number one factor that causes an injured worker to make a claim to the Workers' Compensation Board. So I

definitely agree that the more work we do in the field of back injury prevention the better. Clearly, one of the key ways of preventing that kind of accident is through training. There is really very little else you can do. It's on-the-job training, on-the-job awareness of hazardous practices that cause severe back injury.

As for the member's last comment, I appreciate his continued, consistent representations — by his colleague all the way over to the left there as well — and as I've said on a couple of occasions in the past, I hope to bring such an initiative before my colleagues in cabinet and caucus. We'll be doing our best to uplift the member from his chair, and hopefully within a period of time we might even be able to uplift him to the gallery behind him.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Chairman, I too want to make a few comments regarding this Department of Community and Occupational Health. I concur with those who have stated that we've come a long way in recent times in research and in training workers relative to health and safety. At the same time, I think we've also trained employers to accept the argument that it was not the right of management to tell us when it was safe and wasn't safe. They have now learned to accept that workers have a responsibility in the workplace and that workers also have a say in whether or not a job is safe. I speak directly from personal experience inasmuch as I spent some 18 years in a plant working as a process controller. During those 18 years I did in fact see the growth of acceptance that safety is important. Management agrees that the workers have an interest and should have a say relative to safety in the workplace.

The grants that were given to the Federation of Labour are certainly appreciated. I agree with the fact you alluded to, whereby they have utilized that funding to train workers in health and safety. They have been able to mushroom, to expand the training to other parts of the labour force so that there is an expansion of the knowledge relative to safety. There is a problem in this, however, in that it still seems to maintain that not all employers are prepared to accept the concept of safety committees in the plant. By and large, there is a growing acceptance. However, there are still those who will not accept. I would like to see the minister make some movement in the direction of having mandatory safety committees struck in all places of work so that there is a contributing involvement of both the employees and management. I think that would go a long way toward improving safety factors and hopefully, of course, a lack of injuries in our workplaces.

One other area that I want to address is that in the last several years there has been a movement to what has been called privatization in the public works area. As a city alderman I was quite vigilant to watch that on projects the city let out to so-called private developers and private enterprise people — while I have no problem with private enterprise, there were those who tendered on jobs and were successful in the tender but who I felt used safety as part of the tendering process in that they were able to underbid a contractor who perhaps was unionized and who would have been abiding by the safety regulations.

I was able to point out to management in the city at the time cases where contractors on road projects were using young men and women in running shoes, or they were using jackhammers with no ear protection. There are those kinds of people still out there. I suggest that there has to be more surveillance and inspection of those kinds of projects. I know the city in this case had the responsibility.

to ensure that the contractors working for them were abiding by the city safety regulations. It seems to me that this department, too, would have some responsibility in terms of applying regulations and pressures to ensure that there is no violation and shortcutting at the cost of employees' safety and health by some employers.

Thank you, sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton Centre.

AN HON. MEMBER: The red vicar.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you. I coined that, let me tell you, when I first said about the red dean.

Mr. Chairman, I actually want to echo some of the comments other colleagues have made and perhaps reinforce some of the things that have been said already in terms of the priorities in this area. It's incredible to me to continue to read some of the statistics that come out of occupational accident rates. Perhaps the minister could give equivalent rates in Alberta for what I have read to be the statistics Canada-wide; that is, every 6 seconds in a 40-hour workweek a worker is injured on the job in Canada, every 12 seconds in a 40-hour workweek an employee is disabled in an occupational accident, and on-the-job accidents total 1.2 million per year across Canada. Four billion dollars in compensation is paid out. I'm wondering if the minister has equivalent figures for these rates in Alberta.

Not just to mention the dollar figures and the statistics but the catastrophic effect on family life when these accidents and diseases lead to permanent disability and death — I speak from personal experience insofar as my own father was found dead on the factory floor, and though it was determined to be of natural causes, to this day I'm not convinced that that is the total picture and entirely the case.

Moreover, something seems to be happening in terms of the whole area of occupational health, which is that the more money put into it at this point does not seem to be leading to a decrease in the number of these accidents and statistical figures. In fact, in Canada between the years '83 and '85, despite a total increase in funding for occupational health of about 50 percent, accidents continued to increase to a level of 24 percent. Something is wrong, and I'm wondering if the minister has appropriate figures or a similar sense that something is wrong. Despite the fact that we continue to increase programs of occupational health and increase funding for it, it does not seem to be curbing the rate of accidents or loss of time on the job.

However, what has been hinted at and what I would like to give emphasis to and ask the minister for a bit more in terms of percentages, is that what really seems to be curbing the accident rate, what really seems to be addressing the real issue is when moneys are not applied to employers, academics, and clinicians but to programs in and through workers. This is what in fact is beginning to stem the tide of the increase in terms of occupational accidents: seminars, safety programs, and training programs for workers. Given this government's attitude to organized labour, there still seems to be a sort of stereotype of the dumb worker on the job. He really doesn't know quite how to manage himself, so we'll give money to the academics or to management or to the employer to tell him how to do it. It's about time we woke up and saw that the dumb worker stereotype cannot be allowed to continue any longer. Rather, when workers are taken seriously, as we've said, and are given the opportunity, it's not the worker that's at fault.

It's the workplace that's often at fault, and when moneys are given to the workers to help address the situation which they know most intimately, which is their workplace on the job, then accident rates and so on begin to be curbed. Sharper and more vigilant union members are really what is needed.

The minister has mentioned his three priorities: the U of A chair, the chain saw workers' program, and the AFL. In terms of these dollars, I'm wondering if it's an increasing percentage that's being given to the workers themselves and to the unions at their level so that they can, as we've said, in a sense mushroom the positive effect of health promotion and accident prevention in and through the workers themselves and not through the sort of poor worker stereotype which is continuing to exist. It seems to me that in other jurisdictions they're beginning to wake up to this and they're seeing the benefits that are resulting.

In fact, one worker finished a 30-hour first-level course, and when he went back to his workplace found 27 complaints. He brought the safety infractions at his workplace to the Minister of Labour, and corrective action was taken in each case. I think it's proof positive that when we begin to educate workers about the dangers in the workplace they can begin to remedy those dangers. So I guess my questions are: what are the Alberta figures commensurate to the national figures? Does the minister see an increase in the number of accidents despite the fact that there's an increase in the number of dollars going into it? What percentage? And is an increasing percentage going not to the academics, not to management, but to the workers themselves in and through their unions, which I and colleagues of mine believe is what really is going to curb this tragic increasing trend of accidents in the workplace?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PIQUETTE: I have just a couple of questions. This is in relation to what the minister was saying about the various programs which he was indicating are being funded for occupational health going basically to the unions. The question I was going to ask him is about the nonorganized workers. How are they being provided with occupational health training? Are those programs being effective? One of the things I was reading in the occupational magazine just recently was the appalling statistic of accident rates among unionized workers compared to the non-union sector. There's approximately a 40 percent greater accident rate in non-union workers than in the workers who are organized and have safety programs in place. I found that statistic quite appalling, and there's no doubt that there has to be a greater effort on the part of the government if they're going to be making their occupational training educational program more effective. They will have to address the non-union workers to a larger degree than the minister was indicating in his preamble. So I'd like him to respond to that.

I'm not quite sure if the other question I want to raise should relate to the department of transportation, but it is to do with occupational safety. I was made aware that there's no provincial regulation in terms of how truckers have to attach their loads to their trucks. With the Swan Hills disposal site coming up, I'm concerned whether the government will be creating legislation to make sure there are certain guidelines which will protect the public in making sure that these chemical barrels or whatever that are sitting on these trucks are going to be properly attached or chained to the trucks. We've had a number of accidents in the past

when some of these things have fallen off vehicles, and there's really no regulation at the provincial level by which these companies have to abide. I'm wondering if the government are going to be looking at that aspect before they move on to the whole aspect of the disposal of hazardous chemicals.

MR. NELSON: Yah, team. Mr. Chairman, I know the minister is really interested in my comments as he is in all others. I want to get back to NAIT-SAIT. I would like to suggest to the minister that the employer is a partner in the education of the young people that are in these apprenticeship programs, and I'm wondering why we would hesitate in providing some grants to the educational facility before the accident to ensure some training is given, rather than to define what happened at an accident after someone was killed or injured and also rather than give it to a company to determine why an accident might have happened. I'm quite emphatic about this, as you probably noticed by my getting up a second time here on such a small budget item, but I think we have to get the point across to the minister and the people in occupational health and safety, as we can in other areas, that it is important to have safety taught before the fact and maybe save a life after the fact. I would certainly encourage the minister to examine this in the serious vein that it is given and so on.

I know the workers have to take responsibility for their actions on the site. It's not always the employer that's at fault, and certainly that has to be recognized. But at the same time, we can do some better things in our educational facilities.

Thank you.

MS LAING: Just a couple of questions, Mr. Chairman, in regard to education and training. I'm wondering if there's been any recognition of possibly multilingual training programs and signs to meet the needs particularly of new Canadian workers. The other thing in that area I'm concerned about is the whole issue of adult literacy, because sometimes we hear of workers that have been hurt because they cannot read the guidelines in regard to safety.

I'm wondering also if there's been any research done in looking at the relationship between fatigue and accidents. It is my understanding that many accidents, in fact, occur at the end of shifts. What kind of relationship would there be between the number of accidents and extended shifts?

The third area I'm wondering about: are there any guidelines in relation to the use of visual display terminals, given the information we have about the health hazards in terms of extended usage?

Thank you.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, there were an awful lot of very good comments there, and I welcome them all. I think I'll start with the comments made by the Member for Edmonton Beverly. But before I do, I just want to add one further note, and that is of the good work, very valuable work, done by this government's Occupational Health and Safety Council. This is a council that was set up some years ago under the Act and is under the good leadership of Mr. Andy Little, a former member of this Assembly, a predecessor of my colleague from Calgary McCall, if I'm not mistaken.

The Member for Edmonton Beverly spoke of mandatory safety committees. Mr. Chairman, I don't suppose this is the place where we could get into a great deal of debate

on that issue, but I'd welcome an initiative by the member if he'd care to put that motion on the Order Paper for what would be a very good and very productive debate.

I want to underscore, Mr. Chairman, the importance and the responsibility that must be placed on workers and employers at worksites. Clearly, more and more safety inspectors and government inspectors are not going to do the job. I know the hon. member agrees with me. We cannot bring out massive numbers of inspectors, because it's not a very productive way of spending money and it's not the way we want to run our work sector. I believe that the initiatives we take under this program — as well as under vote 3, occupational health and safety services, under the department vote — in research, education, and training are what are so crucial. These funds are going to promote that awareness and that understanding of the importance of a safe worksite, that it's a very productive worksite. I believe that the solution is not so much in more inspection; it's in more education and more training.

I go to the comments made by the Member for Edmonton Centre. The red vicar has a tremendous preponderance, a tremendous tendency, to rely on fascinating, exaggerated statistics. The Reverend Billy is just infatuated with numbers that I don't believe really tell the full story. I've seen that after doing a bit more research on those numbers, and many of them are just that; they're numbers. They don't tell the story that he's laid on the Assembly in days past. I welcome his contributions, but as I said, I don't believe they truly provide the full story. I don't think I'll get into that debate. The bottom line is that one injury, one death, one fatality on any worksite, is one too many. That's the bottom line of any kind of initiative or program that we undertake.

He spoke of those people who are undertaking this research, education, and training. I believe he made a very good point in that we want to see more of that kind of education being done by the workers, and I hope he won't take away the responsibility or the importance the employer has. I think funding of both employers and workers is awfully important, and I see it happening more and more.

I'm not sure whether the member has this document. If he'd care to ask the Member for St. Albert, I think he'd some interesting statistics. If I may, I'm just going to read some of the recipients of these funds. I mentioned the Alberta Federation of Labour and development of occupational and industry-specific educational materials. I won't get into all the titles — international brotherhood of boilermakers, local 146; the Alberta Forest Products Association; the Association of Safety Personnel; Oilfield Contractors' Association; Trucking Association; and the steelworkers of America. I think it's a balance. It's an approach that we've taken to try and provide a balance in the distribution of our funds. I think the provision of dollars to all those people, whether they're employers, unions, or non-unions, as the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche spoke of, is very important.

Academics, universities, those people in our learned institutions, also have a valuable role to play. I believe an initiative such as the chair in occupational health can only pay off more and more dividends in the days ahead. So I believe a good balance in the distribution of those funds amongst academics, workers, and employers is something that we will continue to practise in the days ahead.

I'm not going to get into the comments the Member for Edmonton Centre made. He put some interesting words in front of the word "worker" and the attitude and approach that this government takes to workers. I certainly don't

think the member is in command of his facts. He's not recognizing the tremendous confidence this government has in the workers of Alberta, in their ability to act productively, safely, and responsibly in all of their affairs, particularly as far as our interests here tonight are concerned, on the worksite. So there's no notion that we lack confidence, because we have full confidence in the organized and unorganized labour movement in this province. We believe, as they believe, that a safe workplace is the responsibility of the worker and the manager.

Just briefly on the comments made by the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche. What about non-union workers? They, of course, make up more than half of the total work force in this province. I believe that with continued responsible action on their part and on the part of their employers, working with the initiatives and output of this kind of program as well as the initiatives that we support within the Department of Community and Occupational Health, those workers are ably cared for in the the heightening of understanding and awareness level of the importance of safety. The initiatives here are not for just the organized worker in this province; they are for all workers.

As for his question on connecting trucks, I think I'd ask him to ask that question of my colleague the Minister of Transportation and Utilities. I believe he could answer the question far better than I could.

Just one last comment, Mr. Chairman, on the valuable contribution by the Member for Calgary McCall. I know this gentleman is a true bottom-line man. He is suggesting that perhaps we are not serious enough about our responsibility in training the apprentice worker or the about-to-be apprentice worker in the safety area. I guess I have to take some exception to what he suggests. Given his interest in the bottom line, I think there's no better place to learn about safety than on the worksite. Working in the classroom in school, at NAIT or SAIT — SAIT in our case — it's good to be in front of that big black slate with a little white chalk all over it, but there's no better place to learn about safety and safe practices than standing on a worksite with your hard hat and steel boots on. You don't have to wear a hard hat or steel boots to the classroom. It's on the worksite where that kind of education, awareness, and training must take place. I don't want to take anything away from what the member has suggested, because he has made a very valuable contribution. I think we can do more in our schools, and I appreciate his suggestions.

As for the intervention by the Member for Edmonton Avonmore — multilingual training programs, multilingual signs, and adult literacy — they're all interesting initiatives, Mr. Chairman. Frankly, it's not something I've considered, but I will do so in the days ahead. We have limited resources, and we're attempting to provide those resources where they best fit and prepare the most number of workers for the worst kind of risks at a worksite.

As for the relationship between fatigue and accidents, yes, there are a number of programs in here, particularly in the area of stress. That is becoming a disease, an occupational disease, that frankly I'm very concerned about and that is something I'm going to be working closely on with my colleagues both in this program and in the whole community and occupational health field.

As for radiation, Mr. Chairman, radiation health is funded to the tune of some \$559,000 this year in vote 3.2.5 of the Department of Community and Occupational Health, so we have a very good program, a very positive program,

that is constantly on the outlook for those kinds of hazards one faces in a radiation workplace.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

Agreed to:

Total Vote I — Occupational Health and Safety Research and Education	\$2,000,000
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MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, before I move that the vote be reported, I'd like to provide to you answers to questions that were put to me during the Committee of Supply on our departmental estimates on July 31. I'd like to file those with the Assembly, and I'll provide you with extra copies.

I'd like to move that the vote be reported.

[Motion carried]

Department of Energy

1 — Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. minister, do you have any comments on vote 1?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Chairman, hon. members will note that in vote 1 this year the total amount to be voted is \$31.4 million, which appears to be down from last year. I said "appears to be" because the total amount of money allocated for funding of AOSTRA is actually \$66.1 million, which is required to fund this project during this fiscal year. However, effective this year the government has decided to phase out the funding of AOSTRA projects from the capital projects division of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund and gradually replace it with funding from the General Revenue Fund. So this year we've got a split. We've got \$34.7 million that will come from the General Revenue Fund, which was in our estimates, and \$31.4 million that will come from the capital projects division of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and that's the amount we're dealing with today.

[Mr. Payne in the Chair]

Mr. Chairman, AOSTRA has had an excellent 10-year history in this province in terms of research and development of technology and, in fact, is known throughout the world for the tremendous research that has been done. That work is continuing. With the potential that we have in heavy oil and oil sands in this province, certainly we have to be looking to those sources of energy in the future for security of supply in this country. So all the work and technology that has been developed over the years goes towards that objective of developing those sands and the different heavy oil projects in the future.

I would note, Mr. Chairman, that this year we tabled in the Legislature a 10-year review of the Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority. I recommend that if hon. members wish to get involved in looking into details of some of those projects, it would be an excellent review to look at. In addition to that, AOSTRA submits an annual report outlining the funding for the different projects, and

the last one tabled, of course, was for those funds committed to the end of March 1985.

Mr. Chairman, those are my opening comments relative to vote 1.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Chairman, I have two general concerns that I would like to raise with the minister. The first has to do with what I perceive to be a disproportionate share of funding from this estimate that goes to largely foreign companies. My information is that Shell, for example, has received some \$69 million; Amoco, \$24 million; British Petroleum, \$19 million; and Union Oil, about \$25 million. The Premier just recently sort of mused about the possibility of an interconnected system of oil companies in small plants instead of these megaprojects. I guess my first question is: why not get the small Canadian companies in on the ground floor by involving them in the research instead of just at a later stage in the development of these projects?

I'm also concerned at the moment that some of this money may be wasted now, given what's happening in that whole heavy oil sector. A number of large plants, such as the one at Burnt Lake and other plants in that area, have been shut down. It's not just the shutting down of the plants and losing the jobs that are associated with that kind of construction that's important. It's also the fact that with the shutting down of these plants, you lose the teams of expertise that have been built up over the years: the engineers, the scientists, and the technicians. I would assume that these developments have probably gone hand in hand with what AOSTRA is doing. I agree with what you said earlier. I think Alberta has a reputation for being a world leader in terms of these developments and projects and this information and technology. But given what's happening in the oil industry, are we in danger of losing this expertise and this advantage that we've had? That's the first general area of concern that I'd like the minister to address.

The second area of concern has to do with how AOSTRA operates. These are just questions that I suppose I could've asked you outside the House. As I understand it, the authority has developed some 12 processes that are patented in Canada. I'd like to know what benefit Albertans or the company gets from those patents. Is there a return to AOSTRA from the fact that it is AOSTRA that has developed those patented processes?

Those are the two basic concerns I'd like the minister to address, Mr. Chairman.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased that the hon. member is raising questions relative to AOSTRA and the involvement of a wide range of companies that take part in different research projects. I wasn't able to quickly add up the total amount of money that the hon. member indicated went to some of the larger corporations, but it struck me that it wasn't a significantly high proportion of the total money that had been allocated over the past 10 years to oil sands technology and research. However, the question of foreign companies receiving money from AOSTRA is actually dealt with in the back of this document, on pages 63 and 64 of the 10-year review.

In fact, AOSTRA has been more than willing to accept initial applications from any company anywhere in the world. However, they expect that the project will move to Alberta or be worked out here in Alberta when large sums of money are involved. We don't think we have all the good ideas in this province or in this country. Certainly good ideas come from many other places and all over the world.

We welcome these ideas, and they can come here. But the major objective is to have the work done in Alberta. As a matter of fact, if I refer to page 64:

The policy of the Authority is to have all contracts for services, material, and equipment awarded on a competitive basis, giving recognition to quality, price, and date of delivery. To the fullest extent to which the same are procurable or possible, Albertan, or failing which, Canadian labor, parts, materials, equipment, sub-contractors, suppliers, and services shall be used in all AOSTRA-sponsored research projects.

Mr. Chairman, that's my response to that.

Certainly a lot of money is required to do research in the heavy oil and the oil sands areas, and by and large it has been primarily the larger corporations that would have the available money to participate in the major projects up there. But in terms of research ideas, AOSTRA also caters to the small, individual inventor, and they do have an inventors' program. So there are many, many types of applications and many, many different kinds of projects, ranging from institutional research to mining and extraction to upgrading of bitumen, and the list goes on and on. That is the response to the first part of the question the hon. member asked.

He made a point about projects slowing down in terms of pilot projects that have been under way and others that were moving towards opening. Certainly the lower prices have had a negative impact on that. However, AOSTRA, as we would all agree, believes that prices are going to rise in the future, that our heavy oil and oil sands have a tremendous potential, and that research must go on. You don't just do research in the time when prices are high or medium. Research is for the future and many years into the future, so you do it on an ongoing basis. This is why we have a cash flow program for moneys to be expended right up to 1991 for different projects. The point is very valid in that when you do have projects slowing down, you have expertise that may move on to other things. However, with the institutional research that we have — we have a tremendous amount of talent in this province — I don't think we're going to lose a significant part of that with respect to the actual research part funded by AOSTRA.

The hon. member raised a second question with respect to 12 processes and patents. Obviously, I don't know which particular ones he was referring to, but again, page 63 in the 10-year review, which is entitled Information for Applicants, outlines very clearly the technology ownership and use rights in AOSTRA/industry in situ agreements and assisting in the development of unproven inventions covered by patents or patent applications.

In general, AOSTRA owns all new technology generated by the projects in which it participates at a level equal to or greater than 50 percent. In cases where AOSTRA's participation is less than 50 percent, the technology ownership is a subject of negotiation. Mr. Chairman, this is a very involved area, because the ownership rights include a number of items, including the ownership of patents and the know-how. But I think the basic information is in the document I referred to.

MR. PIQUETTE: This is a question relating to the revenue side of AOSTRA. You said that there is ownership of 50 percent in terms of research and patent provided. Is there any documentation that indicates that we are recovering some of these assets or some of these expenditures? We're looking at a total expenditure of \$301 million over the past

number of years. Is this program supposed to be a revolving fund in terms of the revenues generated by the research that is successful in terms of getting some of these projects on-line? Or is it simply a one-way street: money invested but not returned in terms of a payoff that is made through research?

That was the only question I had to ask the minister.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Chairman, table 2 of the annual report outlines the revenues to AOSTRA over the period from 1976 right up to 1985, with almost the total amount coming from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I say "almost" because there is an amount specified in there as revenues received from technology sales. That totals some \$13.5 million over that period of time. The hon. member may think that's not that much compared to the total amount of money that has been spent, but those are technology sales, and if you notice from the annual report, those numbers have been increasing as time goes on.

Also, Mr. Chairman, AOSTRA is spending some considerable effort in looking at opportunities in other parts of the world. For example, just this past spring AOSTRA was able to sign technology agreements in co-operation with a number of bureaus and corporations in China, specifically with the Research Institute of Petroleum Exploration and Development, the Liaohe Petroleum Exploration Bureau, and also with another bureau in China. So in Brazil, China, and other parts of the world considerable efforts are being made to sell the technology. Certainly there is potential with the industry that is developing in China, and AOSTRA, along with the Alberta service and equipment industry and the petroleum sector, is developing business opportunities in that part of the world.

So, Mr. Chairman, there are some revenues that are coming in from technology sales. I'm assuming that that includes the funding the hon. member referred to, but I'm sure if he were to examine the annual reports, he'd probably find on an ongoing basis the answers to that particular question.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Any further questions?

Agreed to:

Vote 1 — Alberta Oil Sands Technology

and Research Authority

\$31,400,000

2 — Solar/Wind Energy Research

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, do you wish to make some preliminary comments?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Chairman, the total amount voted here is \$1 million. This is the first year for this particular vote. This \$1 million is used to promote research and development of alternative energy sources, specifically solar and wind. Over the years we've seen different cycles of different energy conservation and renewal energy projects, with considerable effort being put into them when prices are high and less funding going into them when prices are low. But there are technologies that have matured and are now considered as serious contributors to the future energy mix required by not only the developing countries of the world but also the industrialized western world. Whether it be solar, wind, biomass conversions, or energy from waste,

there are a number of opportunities for energy potential in the future.

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

This particular \$1 million, as I mentioned, is primarily aimed at being expended in the southwestern part of the province, of course, where we do have a great deal of wind and sunshine. There are a variety of options as to how the research may develop. The department has been spending some time over the last number of months looking at a variety of options, discussing these with a broad spectrum of people from universities, research people, and utility corporations, and is now in the process of developing a proposal and is very near that.

I mention that because there has been no decision made yet as to the actual direction of this type of solar and wind research that would be done in that area. A group in the department that has been working on this has been looking at a variety of options and are tending to focus in a particular direction. The recommendations related to that will be made to me very shortly.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to commend the government on bringing forward this initiative with regard to solar and wind energy research. It's something I have been an advocate of for a number of years since coming to this Assembly, recognizing the amount of wind that flows through southwestern Alberta, particularly my constituency, and also the high number of hours of sunlight we have in southern Alberta. So I'm particularly pleased that we are now proceeding with this research initiative.

With regard to commenting on it specifically, I'd like to ask the minister to consider expanding the scope of the solar and wind energy research facility to include the other alternative energy sources he suggested in his remarks tonight, including biomass and perhaps converting some of our farm production into fuels, which is another interesting area which is being considered in parts of the world. Also, in terms of the program that's being proposed, he might consider development and demonstration initiatives in terms of coming to some conclusions. I would strongly advocate including not only the solar and wind but other alternative energy sources in any research program which is finalized.

If the minister is able, could he comment on exactly where this program is going in terms of the total dollars which are going to be allocated to it, or is that something which will be determined once the program has been defined?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, to the minister. I'd just like to say that I think the program is commendable and certainly will have some benefits. In terms of the wind research, could the minister indicate whether the Small Power Producers of Alberta would be involved in any of that research, be part of the program, or have access to the allocation of funds that are set out in this estimate?

MR. PASHAK: A similar question. I'm just wondering whether the department itself was going to be carrying out this research or were asking for projects to be submitted. I, too, commend the minister; I'll make that unanimous. I think it is a good project.

Another project you might wish to consider is somehow capitalizing on the hot air that is sometimes generated in this Chamber and seeing if it could be used for a more constructive purpose.

MR. PIQUETTE: I hope the minister has heard about a poplar-burning generation plant that's being proposed for part of my constituency, and perhaps that could be another project. We have a lot of poplar growing in northern Alberta, and in terms of economic development additional research could be carried on along with a very worthwhile project like the solar/wind, which is not feasible in northern Alberta. I would hope you've received the submission for the charcoal plant that's being proposed for Athabasca, and we would enjoy having your assistance so that when it comes before the hearing of the ERCB, that project is looked upon with favour by the government.

MS BARRETT: My question to the minister with respect to small power generation is: if it is his intention to carry on this program in such a way as to accommodate the requirements of the Small Power Producers Association, can they look forward to some long-term co-operation now under the auspices of this program, or if not, would the minister indicate perhaps on another occasion under what program they might?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the comments from the members, and certainly there is potential here for considerable progress to be made. Some of the demonstration projects that have come forth as ideas, in response to the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, include an electric-generating wind farm, small- and large-scale wind-powered irrigation systems, direct water pumping with wind turbines for wildlife habitat preservation and control, and other solar energy related projects. I've just mentioned a couple of them. Energy from waste or production of alcohol fuels from farm crops are relevant to the south and the southwest of the province and could be considered in due course, thus building up a concentration of renewable energy technology over a period of time.

I know that the discussions the people in the department have had have been with utility companies. I don't know exactly who they've been talking to, but I know that there's considerable interest in that part of the province in terms of small power-generating companies. I'm sure that the departmental people would welcome the opportunity to hear from these people with ideas or particular proposals they might have, or if there are people in the members' constituencies that have ideas and would want to bring them forward, I would welcome them.

I really didn't follow what the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche was describing. He talked about poplar. I thought he was dealing with trees for a while and then dealing with charcoal plants. I assume they're two different ...

MR. PIQUETTE: Small power-producing electrical plant with a by-product of charcoal.

DR. WEBBER: Okay. It sounds like an interesting project. I don't know what the details would be. I'd be happy to hear about it from the member sometime. This particular solar/wind research funding project will be established in

the southwestern part of the province, but this doesn't preclude ideas and proposals coming from elsewhere.

I think I've responded to the Member for Little Bow with regard to the power utilities, and also to the Member for Edmonton Highlands if I understood the question she was asking.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

Agreed to:

Total Vote 2 — Solar/Wind
Energy Research

\$1,000,000

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Chairman, I move that the votes be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. CRAWFORD: Chairman, I move the committee rise, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has had under consideration the following resolutions, reports as follows, and requests leave to sit again.

Resolved that from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund sums not exceeding the following be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1987, for the purpose of making investments in the following projects to be administered by:

Community and Occupational Health: \$2 million for occupational health and safety research and education.

Energy: \$31,400,000 for the Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority; \$1 million for solar/wind energy research.

Public Works, Supply and Services: \$850,000 for Capital City Recreation Park; \$350,000 for Fish Creek Provincial Park (Land).

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the report, does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the business tomorrow will be Committee of Supply once again, with the continuation of the estimates of the capital projects division. There remains the portion of the Technology, Research and Telecommunications department and the Transportation and Utilities department. Both ministers will be available tomorrow. Should there be time after that, the proposal is to spend some time on Government Motion 12.

[At 9:50 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]