

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

Title: Wednesday, September 3, 1986 2:30 p.m.

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

**PRAYERS**

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

As Canadians and as Albertans we give thanks for the precious gifts of freedom and peace which we enjoy.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly we rededicate ourselves to the valued traditions of parliamentary democracy as a means of serving our province and our country.

Amen.

**head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 39****Appropriation (Alberta Capital Fund)  
Act, 1986**

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 39, the Appropriation (Alberta Capital Fund) Act, 1986. This being a money Bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation of course is the appropriation Act to proceed with the capital funding for universities and colleges as has been discussed in estimates.

[Leave granted; Bill 39 read a first time]

**Bill 48****Workers' Compensation  
Amendment Act, 1986**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 48, the Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 1986. This being a money Bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill provides for an 8 percent increase in pensions paid under the Workers' Compensation Act. This timely, responsive increase provides for an increase in the monthly minimum pension payment from \$675 to \$730, as well as an increase in payments to dependent children from \$139 to \$150 per month.

[Leave granted; Bill 48 read a first time]

**Bill 267****An Act to Amend  
the Employment Standards Act**

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 267, an Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill would amend the Act to provide for an annual adjustment in the province's minimum wage to take inflation into account. Inflation-adjusted minimum

wages would take effect on July 1 of every year in which an inflation adjustment was warranted. The base year from which future inflation adjustments would be calculated would be 1981.

[Leave granted; Bill 267 read a first time]

**head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to file with the Legislature Library four copies of the Gas Alberta Operating Fund financial statements for the period March 31, 1986.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have two reports to table today, the 1985 annual review of the Alberta Gaming Commission and the 13th annual report for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1986, of the Alberta Law Foundation.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the 13th annual report of the Alberta Educational Communications Corporation for the year ended March 31, 1986, as required by statute.

**head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure today to introduce three guests to you and through you to the members of the Legislature. Two of these gentlemen are from Edmonton and one is from Calgary, in fact the constituency of Calgary McCall. I'd like to introduce Joshua Mohanraj, Thomas Mohanraj, and Philip Clark. They're here visiting us today to see how the House does its business. I'd like to ask them to rise and receive the cordial welcome of the Legislature.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you, and through you to the Members of the Assembly, a very dear friend named Tom Brown, who has been a great servant of the people of Banff. Tom served for a number of years as a member of the Banff advisory council, has driven a bus many, many hundreds of thousands of miles. He is accompanied today by his family from Aberdeen, Scotland, James and Ella Brown, and his friend Lorna Surgenor from Edmonton. I hope they will rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Assembly, Mr. Wallace Daley, the president of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties. He's also a member of the Labour Legislation Review Committee, plus a neighbour of mine and a good friend. I ask him to rise in the members' gallery and receive the cordial welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and members of the Assembly visitors from Ontario. Mr. and Mrs. Rhiness and their son Brian and their grandson. They are visiting our fair province. I'd like to wish them the warm welcome of the House. If they would please rise.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

**Oil and Gas Well Safety**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Energy. On July 25 during discussion of his estimates the minister confirmed that only 28 percent of the wells drilled in 1985 were inspected by the ERCB and that a full 13.3 percent of those, or 325 wells, were found to be so seriously deficient in terms of either equipment or personnel trained to control blowout that they had to be shut down. Especially given yet another tragic blowout over this past weekend, what steps has the minister taken to improve the ability of the ERCB to inspect more than 28 percent of the wells drilled?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member did raise in the House some time ago, I believe in question period on July 7, questions related to the blowout report put out annually by ERCB and at that time misled the House — not intentionally, I am sure — with respect to painting a bleak picture as to the work of the ERCB. However, the ERCB in issuing its annual report outlined its inspection record. This is an inspection record with respect to drilling wells as opposed to well servicing. I think it's important to make that distinction, because the unfortunate accident in the last few days was related to well servicing. With respect to drilling crews, the record of the industry during 1985 had improved substantially over 1984, a high priority having been put on rig inspections.

With respect to rig inspections, again, another high priority was placed on sour gas drilling, and the record in 1985 was substantially better than it was in 1984. There's always room for further improvement, Mr. Speaker, and the ERCB is working in that direction to try to improve its record each year.

MR. MARTIN: It may have improved from 1984 to 1985; that's not the point. When we look at 13.3 percent of the wells inspected being seriously deficient, if we took that ratio to all wells drilled instead of the 28 percent inspected, that could mean that a full 1,130 wells could have been seriously deficient.

My supplementary question to the minister is: what assurances is the minister able to give us that some 1,130 wells drilled last year were not in need of being shut down or that 13 percent of wells drilled this year are not unsafe?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, as indicated in that annual report, there were some 2,447 wells inspected as opposed to 2,018 the previous year. Whenever deficiencies are found in the drilling rigs, it's my understanding and recollection that operations are stopped until the deficiencies are improved upon.

As I mentioned earlier, the performance record is improving each year, but we always recognize that we need to do a better job. Earlier this year, in fact in February, we announced a joint government and industry plan to build a training centre with respect to training crews, to be constructed by the ERCB near Edmonton. In particular the centre will be developed to satisfy basic training needs in three areas, including well control. At that centre some 1,000 individuals each year will be put through the program to try to have well-trained people working on our rigs and well servicing in this province.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. It's my understanding from the 1985 report at least that the ERCB has 110 inspectors. If this staff were to inspect even half of all the existing oil and gas wells, they would have to inspect 384 wells each, or 1.5 per day. I would say that's an impossible task. Will the minister be asking the ERCB to increase the number of inspectors employed?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the ERCB can't inspect every single well in the entire province. However, in terms of staffing, we look at those needs annually during the course of our budget to see if we need to increase that. We have had a major inquiry through the Lodgepole inquiry. That report came out with some 39 recommendations for the ERCB and others to follow up on to reduce the likelihood of accidents and blowouts in the future. A great deal of follow-up has occurred with respect to those recommendations, including the one I referred to with respect to training procedures. I've asked for reports from the ERCB as to how they have followed up on the recommendations from the Lodgepole inquiry, and I expect to be receiving a report.

MR. MARTIN: I hope there's some speed to the follow-up on those sorts of recommendations.

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Specifically I know it has to do with servicing wells and we've been talking about something slightly different here, but it ties in to the RCMP — the ERCB; not the RCMP, at least not yet. My question is: could the minister indicate if the rig near Edson that blew out was inspected recently by the ERCB, and if not, why not?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, with respect to well servicing, the requirements for inspections are not the same as for inspecting drilling rigs. In fact there is no need for a licence for servicing rigs or approval for work to be done on a servicing rig. However, the ERCB does follow up on inspections as best they can in this particular area.

In this particular case I don't have any indication that there was an inspection prior to the blowout. However, following the failure the ERCB has been working very closely with Community and Occupational Health jointly to follow up to determine the cause of the blowout. My colleague the Minister of Community and Occupational Health may wish to supplement my comments because, due to the unfortunate deaths in this case, the Community and Occupational Health division has taken a lead role in terms of investigating, being assisted by the ERCB.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplemental to the Minister of Energy, Mr. Speaker. Given his admission that the Energy Resources Conservation Board does not have enough inspectors to go around and that if they are found, the only penalty is being shut down until they put something on, can the minister assure the House that he will look over the regulations with the idea that there will be good and sufficient penalty for those caught with insufficient blowout protection when they are drilling their wells?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, there are priorities in terms of the wells the ERCB inspects, whether they be sour gas wells or wells drilled by companies or using equipment that have not had as good a record as others in the industry. So they do establish priorities in carrying out their inspection techniques. I've addressed the

business of inspectors previously in that on an annual basis, on recommendations from the ERCB and the industry, we ascertain whether or not we have sufficient inspectors in the field and, through the budgetary process, make our determination with respect to that.

Certainly it's a concern every time we have a blowout, particularly when people are injured and lives are lost. We intend to continue to put a high priority on safety in the industry. The record of the ERCB in this province is unlike any other place in the world in terms of being first-class. However, that doesn't mean we can't improve, and we'll try to improve.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplement to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition asked as far as inspections. It's been brought to my attention, Mr. Minister, that because of a tightening up of the budgetary process by the oil companies, there seems to be a need for more inspection than there has been previously. Has that been brought to the minister's attention, and if so, can he indicate that he will indicate to this Legislature that there will be more inspectors put in place?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, that's an important point. The annual report I tabled in this House earlier in the year did in fact show a greater degree of inspection than the previous year. I don't have the numbers for 1986. I could get those numbers, if the hon. member wishes. Again, in terms of determining the number of people that are involved, that is something we review annually. I haven't had any requests that I recall in the last few months, particularly requesting more inspectors. I hesitate to say so, based on memory, but it was my recollection that we had indeed increased the number of inspectors last year. I say that subject to checking.

DR. CASSIN: A supplementary to the minister of occupational health and safety. Since it's impossible to check every well, could the minister outline to us what sampling techniques they use and what record this industry has in the province of Alberta?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I was interested in interjecting beside my colleague the Minister of Energy to suggest in response to what the leader of the Liberal Party had said about blowout preventers, and in the same vein, I think it would be premature to be pointing a finger or laying blame at anyone's doorstep.

We have a very tragic accident here, Mr. Speaker, one that the Energy Resources Conservation Board and the occupational health and safety division of our department are taking a very careful look at, investigating it thoroughly. We will be coming back to the government with recommendations and with advice as to what happened, why it happened, and where corrective action is necessary we will be taking that corrective action. But I can respond to the Member for Calgary North West by saying that considering the kind of activity, the amount of activity, that goes on in this province, our safety record, matched against any other jurisdiction in the world, is superior.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary information, Minister of Energy, briefly.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to emphasize again, following up from the Leader of the Official

Opposition when he talked about the number of serious deficiencies, to point out that when serious deficiencies were identified, in fact the drilling rigs were shut down until those deficiencies were remedied. I think it's very important that we note that.

MR. MARTIN: I wish I had another supplementary, because that had nothing to do with my question. I wasn't even complaining about that; it was the ones that weren't looked after.

#### Labour Legislation Review

MR. MARTIN: I'll direct my second question to the Minister of Labour, if I may, Mr. Speaker. After the long weekend, if the minister has been listening to public opinion as expressed through phone-in programs, letters to the editor, editorials, and phone calls to MLAs, he will know that Albertans are quite offended by his law committee's plans to travel the world.

I'm giving the minister one more chance, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister now acknowledge this public sentiment in a reasonable way by agreeing to reconsider the decision to travel around the world with this committee?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, every aspect of this committee — its membership, the makeup of that membership, the parameters that it's functioning under, and the travel — was given a tremendous amount of consideration before any decisions were made. I doubt if I'm going to be reviewing any of those decisions.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the answer doesn't surprise me at all, but I think Albertans will remember the answer.

My question, though, is to try to figure out which countries we are going to, because they seem to be added on all the time. I'm told that they may be considering Sweden and even the charming mountains of Switzerland. My question is simply this: is it true that Sweden and Switzerland have been added to this world tour, and if not, are any other countries being considered at this time?

DR. REID: No and no, Mr. Speaker.

Perhaps I should add that it would be wise if the member asked me the questions rather than relying on thirdhand information.

MR. MARTIN: I thought you were the one across the way there. Maybe I misunderstood. You're not the Minister of Labour?

My question then is to the minister, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the minister really has spent half as much time thinking about the Alberta swing where the work will be done. Is the minister able yet to provide any sort of detailed information on where the committee will hold public meetings in Alberta, what aspects of our legislation will be concentrated on, or how Albertans' opinions will be sampled?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see that they're waiting for the answer. The situation is, as I've said in the House on many occasions in the past, that we will have a full set of public meetings in Alberta, that we will at least go to Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, probably Grande Prairie and, I would expect, someplace in east-central Alberta in addition. But we're quite prepared to add to that itinerary if it is indicated by the

responses that we get to the interim report that will be issued, I hope, sometime in November.

The hon. leader got a little argumentative as well, and I think he's forgetting that the purpose of this committee is to have a full review of the legislation. If we are going to have that full review, we have to look at many aspects of the current legislation, and I think also we should look at concepts in other jurisdictions, in all fairness to the people of Alberta.

One has to put this in the context of the economic costs. We know they are considerable both to those involved in disputes and out of work during a dispute, a strike or lockout and to the employers, the owners of the companies, who of course frequently lose production during the same disputes. I think if one looks at those economic matters alone, one can see the justification for a thorough review of the legislation.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, nobody's saying that we don't need a thorough review; that's what this whole session has been about. It's the world tour that we question. But the minister and the Premier have basically accused me of discrediting the committee, and I think I've tried to offer some positive solutions about what should be done with this committee to make it credible.

My question to the minister: will the minister not admit that it's this government's stubborn refusal to consult labour and his committee's plans to travel the world which have seriously discredited the committee in the eyes of most Albertans?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I don't know how the hon. member can say that we have not consulted or will not give labour a chance to express their opinions. There are three highly respected representatives of organized labour on the committee, and they will be representing all of organized labour, not just the unions or the associations from which they come. The same applies to the representatives of management and of the general public. To suggest that this government is not interested in listening to labour or consulting with labour is patently ridiculous.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Labour. Will he set aside a time or has he the freedom now to set a time by which members of the Alberta public and organizations will be able to present briefs to this commission? Will it be before their travels abroad or afterwards?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, as far as the committee is concerned, we'll receive written briefs at any time. Last month, when I made the formal announcement of setting up the committee, and on many occasions since, I suggested indeed that individuals and organizations should start preparing those briefs. We will accept written briefs at this time. What I have also said is that I would seriously suggest that people who are preparing briefs also consider the interim report which will present concepts from other jurisdictions and the comments of the committee on those concepts. In that way we'll have briefs that address potential answers as well as just the problems.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Minister of Labour. The minister indicated there would be an interim report. Could the minister indicate the date of that report and along with that the date of the potential final report?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I've tried to avoid giving exact dates because I don't know how long different parts of the process will take, but I am anticipating that the interim report will be made public sometime in November. I would hope mid-November; that's what I would aim for, but it will be sometime in November. We will then be having public meetings around the province in December, and indeed they may spread into January. As I've said many times, the intention is to have any legislative changes introduced at the spring sitting of the 1987 Legislature.

#### Gas Well Blowout

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, this is to the minister of occupational health with regard to the Edson gas well blowout. In the past two years six separate oil-patch accidents have resulted in death and injury to workers. The recent tragic accident near Edson once again reminds all Albertans of the risk involved in working in the energy industry. Will the minister report to the members of the Legislature the information that the department has thus far obtained about the cause of the Edson gas blowout?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, it was indeed a very tragic accident that occurred on Friday night, and I know that all members of the Assembly would join me in conveying our deepest sympathies to those who've lost loved ones and those who have loved ones still in the hospital.

But, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to visit the site on Sunday afternoon and to meet with a number of the people who are diligently at work trying to put out that well. I could report to the Assembly that as of noon today the fire was out, the well was flowing freely, they were waiting for a capping blowout preventer to arrive, and all things going well, it was hoped by the Safety Boss company that is doing the work on the site that the well would be contained by the end of business today.

As for the cause of the accident, Mr. Speaker, the officials in the department have visited the site and met with all the people who are doing the work in cleaning up the site and putting out the well, none of whom, of course, were on site at the time of the accident, all of those people having been injured or, very unfortunately, killed. It's our intention in the days ahead to meet with those injured workers when they're able to speak with us to find out from them exactly what happened at the well site, what went wrong, and the officials will come back to the government with advice and, hopefully, recommendations.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. I'm sure the minister knows how complicated completing or servicing gas wells is. Would the minister consider setting up a public inquiry examining the circumstances surrounding the Edson gas well blowout, and would he commit to have one undertaken very quickly?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I would prefer to receive a report, some advice, and all of the necessary information before making that decision. We have before us a number of alternatives, including the public inquiry approach. One of those is that the matter may be referred to the Occupational Health and Safety Council, which could undertake an investigation under section 29 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The minister may appoint a board of inquiry to carry out a more formal investigation, or perhaps in consulting with my colleague the hon. Attorney General

under the fatality inquiries board, a procedure is established there.

But, Mr. Speaker, all members of the Assembly should know that the investigators within the occupational health and safety division, working in close concert and co-operation with the Energy Resources Conservation Board, are carrying out such an investigation right now, a very thorough investigation, and following the advice contained within that report, the government will make a decision as to what step, if any, it is necessary to take next.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. I'm sure that public inquiry covers all fields. Setting inspectors to investigate their own rules, their own regulations, and their own work I don't think works out too well, and the public deserves it. But in the absence of that, would the government at least undertake, in addition to this, a thorough review of all safety standards governing Alberta's energy sector, given six separate oil-patch fatalities in the last two years?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I should clarify the hon. member's statement with respect to "their own rules and procedures." Those procedures, those rules, that law is law passed by members of this Assembly, and it is those rules, those regulations, under which those inspectors operate. So let's make it clear that it is not anybody else's rules but the rules of this Assembly.

As for anything special that the member is calling for, I can say two things: one is that those rules, those regulations, those procedures are under constant review, and in concert with members of the oil and gas industry, all subjects relating to safety are under constant review. But again, Mr. Speaker, I say that we are awaiting the advice, the information, the results of the investigation carried out by occupational health and safety inspectors in concert with ERCB people.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. It's just not true; we don't see all the regulations. And I'd like to point out further: when will regulations, for instance, be put in place to make mandatory the wearing of fire-retardant clothing for workers servicing wells? Many companies make it compulsory, but this government still allows it to go by without. When are you going to put that measly little regulation itself in place?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I repeat what I said earlier: I am awaiting the advice of the investigation. I appreciate the representation by the hon. member. I've received similar representations from a number of other people. As a matter of fact, when I visited the site on Sunday, all of those who were involved in capping that well and putting out the fire were, in fact, wearing that fire-resistant equipment. But I'll await that information; I await that advice of the investigation.

MR. MARTIN: Following up on this particular accident. I believe this is to the Minister of Energy. He said that in servicing wells there's no need for automatic inspections. I find that a rather amazing sort of reaction. Is he saying that the ERCB decides maybe they need it, maybe they don't, and will he change that if this is in fact happening, because obviously we've had an accident?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I indicated to the House earlier that with regard to drilling rigs there's a requirement

for licensing and approval subject to — and I will check further into the requirements with respect to servicing rigs. But it's my understanding that it has not been a requirement for licensing the servicing of wells or approval for work to be done. I think if the hon. member were to think about that for a while, he may find very good reasons as to why that would be the case.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary information, briefly.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, if I may just supplement some information that I'd given previously. Just to challenge the hon. member opposite, the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, with respect to seeing regulations, seeing laws: the laws are passed in this Assembly and the regulations pursuant to those laws certainly are public documents, so all the operating procedures are visible, are public documents, and are available for all members to see.

#### Grain Handlers' Strike

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Grain handlers at \$15 an hour are striking the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and causing five other companies to lock out their workers at the Thunder Bay facility. My question to the minister: is the government prepared to call on the federal government to bring in legislation to stop this kind of irresponsible striking at this time and stop some of the irresponsible leadership of union bosses?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I can share with the hon. member that we are telexing the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board today, Mr. Charlie Mayer, indicating our concern with the strike situation, as it could not happen at a more inopportune time for our grain farmers.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Could the minister indicate at this time what capability the port facility at either Vancouver or Prince Rupert has to take wheat that cannot be sent through the port at the Lakehead?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we did look into that in view of the strike situation at Thunder Bay. and I should share with the hon. member that it again proves the worthiness of this government's contribution towards the Prince Rupert grain terminal in that there is a good, strong possibility that the majority of the grain can be handled at Prince Rupert. Presently there is space available. How long that situation will last I truthfully don't know, but we are very hopeful that a good majority of the grain can be handled, as about 25 percent of the grain is exported through Thunder Bay, which is mainly barley from the province of Alberta, in the vicinity of 700 to 800 million tonnes.\*

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. Could the minister indicate what his findings are with regard to the potential marketing of the 1986-87 crop, specifically grain, from Alberta at the present time?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, again, that's very hard to determine. We're very much aware of the aggressive nature that the Canadian Wheat Board is taking in attempting to sell our grain. We're also encouraged by the recent meeting that took place whereby Canada participated to attempt to

resolve the situation as it relates to the heavy subsidies from the United States and the European Economic Community. We're hopeful that there will be some fruitful results from the meeting of a number of nations that would like to see fair grain prices.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the minister indicate whether a co-ordinated front to this current problem will be taken by the western ministers, and will the minister from Alberta lead that front on the government of Canada?

MR. ELZINGA: Maybe I could indicate to the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, that last week when we met as agricultural ministers from across Canada, the Premier of Saskatchewan, Premier Grant Devine, who is also the Agriculture minister, raised this issue in a very strong and forceful manner, and we do have a commitment, I should share with him, which was endorsed by the prairie provinces when it was brought forward as a proposal by Premier Grant Devine. We do have a commitment from the federal Minister of Agriculture whereby he will have something concrete to present to the first ministers when they do meet in September. I believe it's September 17.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture. I'm glad to welcome him back after his long absence. I was afraid that he had joined the labour review committee.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, *Beauchesne* quotes: comments about members' absence or attendance in the Assembly are clearly out of order.

MR. TAYLOR: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I thought there was a lack of attendance. I was just wishing him back, if he had been ill or travelling.

Mr. Minister, what is the potential for the strike spreading to the west coast? Is there any possibility of that? Is there any tie-in between the two unions?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would pay a little more attention to agricultural concerns, he would know that there was a meeting last week of agricultural ministers in [Victoria]. It's obvious he is unaware of that, otherwise he wouldn't have been so flippant in his opening comments.

Let me indicate to him that there is always a concern as it relates to the movement of our grain. We are going to communicate in a very strong and forceful way to the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, with the hope of his trying to bring the sides together so we can reach a meaningful agreement so our grain can again be moved.

MR. FOX: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In terms of facilitating the flow of Alberta grain through to the Prince Rupert terminal, what action is this government taking to push for completing a rail link from Hines Creek to Dawson?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, maybe the hon. minister for economic development would like to supplement this, but I could suggest to the hon. member how he could help in resolving this situation. Since they do have such very close ties with the National Farmers Union, it might be worthwhile if he chatted with the president, Mr. Wayne Easter, whereby

he has completely endorsed the strike to the detriment of the grain producers, not only in our province but in the prairie provinces. If he could indicate to him to maybe encourage meaningful negotiation, it would have a great deal of impact.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister for economic development. I wonder if he could indicate the capabilities at the port of Churchill for taking up some of the slack that might be caused by the strike.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture responded with respect to the capacity of Prince Rupert to handle additional quantities of grain. There is that additional capacity. There is also additional capacity at Churchill that has not yet been reached. I'm not sure of the precise number of tonnes, but it would be in the neighbourhood of 500,000 to 800,000 metric tonnes.

#### Agricultural Strategy

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture, and it concerns deficiency payments for Alberta grain producers. We've discussed this in the House before, and the Premier has referred to it saying that if there is a need, we'll push for it. The ministers of agriculture seemed to be united in their support of this proposal in their conference in Victoria last week. I'm wondering what concrete, specific steps the minister is taking to pressure the federal government for the need for deficiency payments this year.

MR. ELZINGA: As I've indicated to an earlier question, Mr. Speaker, the proposal was brought forward by Premier Grant Devine, who is the Minister of Agriculture for the province of Saskatchewan. We wholeheartedly endorse that proposal. But I must say in all fairness to the federal government that they wish to have an opportunity to assess the situation and develop priorities whereby the money will be funnelled and as to what avenues they should use. There is a strong possibility of a payment under the western grain stabilization program. There's also a possibility of a deficiency payment. We had also received the endorsement of the agricultural ministers to have the Farm Credit Corporation loans reduced to 9 percent. So he is giving consideration to all of these proposals. Again, they have to look at what avenues are available by way of finances.

MR. FOX: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Are the negotiations on the need for a deficiency payment tied in any way to negotiations with the federal government on removal of the PGRT?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, no.

Mr. Speaker, in a previous question I indicated to the leader of the Representative Party, I believe it was, that about 25 percent of our grain was shipped through Thunder Bay. I might have inadvertently said 700 million to 800 million tonnes. It's 7 million to 8 million tonnes.\*

MR. FOX: A supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker. In the event that no federal action is forthcoming on this very serious problem, how long is the minister prepared to wait before he would come up with some concrete proposal for a blended federal/provincial program on deficiency payments?

MR. SPEAKER: The whole question is entirely hypothetical. Final supplementary.

MR. FOX: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister assure the House that it is not in fact the case that the deficiency payment is being soft pedalled by this government because of their commitment to a free trade agreement with the United States?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, that's utter nonsense, and I think everybody's aware of it. We've been very strong in our advocacy of making sure that our grain sector does receive proper support. This government has been very active in their support for the grain sector by way of a number of programs that we have brought forward. I'm happy to list a few of them: the fuel allowance, our fertilizer program, the feed market adjustment program. There's a good many of them.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture. Despite many protests from many grain exporting countries, the U.S. continues to subsidize export sales. For example, they've just subsidized a sale to the Soviet Union from \$13 to \$15. Could the minister indicate to the Assembly precisely what form of Canadian protests to the U.S. the minister has been advised have taken place to date? What is being proposed in the future with regard to protests relative to the American subsidizations?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, what has happened at the national level is that our minister responsible has met with a number of the grain-producing companies to hopefully develop a consensus as to the best approach to take. I know there have been strong representations made by our national government to the President of the United States and a good many individuals in elected positions throughout the United States. I'm sure the United States is not happy with the heavy subsidy levels themselves, but they feel they have to do something to counteract the European Economic Community. We're hopeful that through meaningful negotiations we can have both the European Economic Community and the United States withdraw some of their heavy subsidization for their agricultural products so that we can compete on an equal basis.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Further to his comment that the federal government was asked to reduce the farm credit to 9 percent along with what Alberta is doing, could he tell us if they gave any kind of a deadline to the federal government, in view of the fast hemorrhage from our plan of maybe \$200 million to \$400 million being flipped over from federal government loans into our own provincial loans? Did he give any deadline or did he get any assurance how quickly this can be done so that our own money will go much further in helping out farmers?

MR. ELZINGA: No, Mr. Speaker, no deadline was given, and no deadline was requested specifically. The provincial agricultural ministers endorsed wholeheartedly a position by this government whereby the federal government reduce the Farm Credit Corporation loans to 9 percent. The federal minister had indicated he would give it consideration, and we're awaiting word from him as to what the results of those considerations are. It has been pointed out that the cost will be somewhere in the vicinity of \$100 million to the Farm Credit Corporation in the event that they do

that. So again, as I said earlier, they have to weigh whether they can better use that by way of a deficiency payment or some other type of support for the agricultural sector, but they are giving it consideration.

#### Financial Reporting Practices

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Treasurer. The Auditor General is appointed to review government spending to ensure that proper fiscal management and reporting techniques are adhered to by this government and that there is proper review of these expenditures by this Legislature. The government is setting a dangerous precedent now by patently disregarding certain recommendations presented in the Auditor General's most recent report to this Legislature.

Why is the Treasurer continuing to utilize the tax expenditure technique despite the Auditor General's statement that it distorts the province's reported revenues and expenditures and weakens this Assembly's ability to review normal expenditures of this government?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, from time to time I've had an opportunity to comment on the tax expenditure process and have made it very clear to all hon. members that although tax expenditures are under some discussion both here and across other governments as to whether or not it is a reasonable way of reporting, we in the province of Alberta have found on numerous occasions significant numbers of opportunities to provide adequate and detailed information to support the revenue offsets, which is really in question here. It's not that we're trying to camouflage at all the disclosure, and it's not that we're trying to mislead anyone as to what the costs of these programs are; it's simply that we're applying the consistent approach to dealing with these programs on a year-to-year basis so that some comparable analysis can be made.

I should go on to say, Mr. Speaker, that we have provided ample opportunity to discuss the amount of money which would be required in terms of the expenditure offset. This is not at all a camouflage or a subterfuge; it's upfront reporting. There's an ample opportunity as well in the Public Accounts to review the amount of the cost of these programs, and that, of course, is handled from time to time by a committee of this Assembly. So we should be very clear that it's not at all an underhanded approach. It's consistent with other governments, a consistent way we have treated it, and I think it's a fair approach to the process.

MR. MITCHELL: Given that the Public Accounts Committee will review about three or four departments this year, it's hardly ample opportunity.

Can the minister please tell us how he justifies tax expenditures of \$739 million reported in this Auditor General's report for 1983-84 and \$550 million in 1984-85 without any review by this Legislature? That's as much as 5 to 10 percent of normal operating government expenditures which are not reviewed by this Legislature. Could you please justify that?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well again, Mr. Speaker, the member has misled the Assembly in that it's not been reviewed; of course it's been reviewed. There is ample opportunity. I hear the member across the way speaking the last two weeks about an amendment going through in the Minister

of Energy's legislation where in fact he has had an ample opportunity to comment on what have been tax expenditures. The minister has offered an abundant amount of information as to what the cost of these programs would be, and we from time to time are reporting on a consistent basis what the impact of this would be on our budget. So of course, Mr. Speaker, there's ample opportunity to discuss it and to debate it, and all members know the amount because the member just mentioned that \$700 million would be spent. Therefore, he must be aware of the tax expenditure side.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Might we complete this set of questions? Do you agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Supplementary question.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Has the minister explained to the Auditor General why he will continue to count \$2.5 billion of deemed assets already spent, deemed assets in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, despite the fact that the Auditor General has said since 1978 that this is wrong, and what is the Auditor General's reaction to that explanation?

MR. JOHNSTON: I guess you'd have to ask the Auditor General, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MITCHELL: Could the minister please confirm that the practice of accounting for deemed assets in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund is not only a problem to the Auditor General but also contravenes the official, generally accepted accounting principles which are sacred to the accounting profession of which he is a member?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, now I do recall the general accounting principles, and I'm sure all hon. members would appreciate if I went on for about 50 minutes to explain to the hon. member just what is fundamental to the reporting process.

I've attempted before, Mr. Speaker, to indicate that the deemed assets in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund are an important form of diversification to this government, a very important form of diversification for this province, and the successes are clear. I've gone on to note that we have made some major successes in diversifying irrigation, in the electronics testing centre, in health research, in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. The people of Alberta know these are assets, they want us to account for them in this fashion, and they have a continued future use for the people of Alberta. They are reported properly.

MR. SPEAKER: It's interesting when we come to the end of question period and we get an extension how quickly people seem to feel that they've suddenly gone over into debate.

Final supplementary, Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, if the government has been so good on reporting the value of tax credits, rebates, write-offs, et cetera, to this House, why didn't the government agree to Question 131 standing on the Order Paper in my name for 1981, '82, '83, and '84 ...

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry. Out of order.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

#### Bill 17

#### Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1986

[Adjourned debate August 29: Mr. Fox]

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I made most of the comments that I had to make concerning Bill 17 in general as an omnibus amending Act. We support most of the provision of the Act which are intended to make our highways safer and rationalize some of the descriptions as they now exist. We do have concerns, which I've expressed, about part of that that we can go into in greater detail in the committee stage, but in terms of the second reading of Bill 17, I'll be urging my colleagues to support it.

MR. SIGURDSON: Just one very brief comment, Mr. Speaker, is that during the introduction the minister made, he said he wanted to keep in line with what other provinces were doing, specifically British Columbia and Saskatchewan, and thus the reason for allowing radar detectors. I just want to point out that while we're not debating seat belts at this point, those two provinces also have mandatory use of seat belts.

MR. CHUMIR: Very briefly, I rise to speak in support of most of the amendments with the exception of the very puzzling amendment legalizing radar detectors in this province. As I talk to people in this province, there is in fact virtually universal bewilderment at why the government would take this step. So I would suggest that it would be a service to this province and also to the credibility of the government if the minister could give some rationale which makes some sense as to why this change is being implemented.

The burning question is obviously whether there is any possible way in which this change in our laws could enhance highway safety in light of the fact that one of the main purposes of the Highway Traffic Act must be to protect the public and the safety of highway travel. Speed limits are obviously and therefore axiomatically safety reasons, and accordingly we note the maxim that speed kills. However, it's clear that the primary purpose of radar detectors is to determine when radar is in the area. The only rationale for this is obviously to enable a motorist to exceed the speed limit, if he determines that radar is in that area. What other reason could there possibly be? If this is the case, legalizing radar detectors obviously encourages speeding, and it would be very interesting to hear the minister's observations as to how the public interest is served by this change in the law.

As the previous speaker noted, it has been suggested that the rationale is that we are simply bringing our laws into conformity with surrounding provinces and the state of Montana. However, this raises the question of why we in the province of Alberta should move toward the lowest common denominator in safety. Why don't we, for example, stick with other provinces such as Manitoba and Ontario,

which still make radar detectors unlawful, and attempt to achieve a higher standard? In this regard I might also note a matter that I know is of some concern to members of the government, that legislation of this nature encourages what are known as scoff-laws, those who scoff at the laws. This legislation does so by encouraging motorists to ignore speed laws.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that it is incumbent upon the minister and would request the minister to please clearly tell this House precisely why the provincial government is moving at this time to legalize radar detectors. While he's at it, perhaps he can clear up the issue which has been raised in this House as to whether radar detectors are in any way effective against radar, in light of the new gun style of radar which is in use. In other words, is there any situation in which these radar detectors may be effective? If not, is there in fact some merit to the suggestion that perhaps the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs might investigate the issue of the truth in marketing in relation to what are very clear claims by merchants that these radar detectors are in fact capable of detecting radar prior to their use?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Might the minister sum up? Mr. Minister.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, the comments that were made on Friday last relative to, really, the price of radar detectors as opposed to the amendment we have here, which is a repeal. As I had stated in my opening comments, the repeal provides the individual with the right of choice to purchase a radar detector or not, to use a radar detector or not, and we are attempting to clear up some of the confusion that had, for whatever reasons, become part of the everyday conversations in the communities relative to the use of radar detectors and then be consistent as well with our neighbours in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Montana.

I might add that when I was minister of tourism some time ago, I wrote to the Minister of Transportation and the Solicitor General suggesting that they might consider removing that problem we had because of a number of factors. We spend a fair amount of money attracting people to the province, and then some small item like a policeman taking a radar detector away from a visitor who has come from wherever, where they were in fact legal, would cause some difficulties. If nothing more, it would clear up that issue.

I think the issue comes back to the point I made just a moment ago that the amendment based on the repeal of section 61 will bring Alberta into line with the other provinces. That repeal will allow individual decisions to be made as to whether you purchase or not or use or not. Let me suggest that that may in fact be diametrically opposite to the individual's right to hook up seat belts mandatorily, to be told that one must do that. I bring that one back into it because it was raised only today. I'm not making the argument on seat belts right now. I'm still listening to the debate in that particular area, but I had to say that because it was raised by a couple of the members opposite that if you have the individual right, in this case to purchase or not — by clearing up the confusion, that particular section would in fact allow us to move on with the business we have with the other amendments that are in place.

I don't think it would be unfair for me to state that when I mentioned that particular point, in July I believe it was, that the new radar guns that are out can get you at 100 to 200 yards, I think the term I used was that at that

stage you're dead in the water. Having sat in a car and watched them come, there's no way you can put your brakes on fast enough to ensure that that's not caught.

I think the idea of having a radar detector ... First of all, let me qualify another one, Mr. Speaker. I don't own one, nor have I ever owned one, nor will I necessarily use one at this point in time. And I'm not noted for being ... I was trying to find a word that would allow me to get from here to Peace River as quickly as I could without doing some of the things that one might consider I have possibly done in the past. That's not a confession.

AN HON. MEMBER: How about "Booming along"?

MR. ADAIR: As a matter of fact, I like that.

What I did want to get to, though, was that there are other methods by which one can use the system to control speeds on the highways.

MRS. CRIPPS: Take your foot off the gas.

MR. ADAIR: The aircraft is still in use, and certainly there's no question about that point about taking your foot off the gas, because within recent weeks I put my car in cruise control but forgot to take my foot off the gas. The airplane reminded me of that particular problem I had, and of course, I paid for it. The other one is the following of cars, which can still be done, is still done, and would still be there.

In essence, I firmly believe there's a greater awareness of what speed you are travelling if you have the opportunity to use that machine. Someone mentioned Ontario; I don't know who it was. My understanding is that in Ontario one of the situations they have in what they call high-accident-rated areas is permanent radar that they switch on at, say, 4 o'clock and switch off at 6:30, which covers that high area of traffic movement and tends to slow the people down, particularly those who have radar detectors.

But the radar detectors aren't the only section of this Act that we are amending. A number of the other ones are obviously — as a matter of fact, in my mind all of them are very positive indeed. The one that is of interest to us right now with school just going back in is the eight-light system for the school buses and the emergency vehicle designation and those other particular ones that are in place.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 17.

[Motion carried; Bill 17 read a second time]

#### Bill 20

#### Women's Secretariat Act

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to move second reading of Bill 20, the Women's Secretariat Act. Speaking briefly to the contents of the Bill, in essence it can be seen as a minidepartmental Act. It establishes firmly in legislation the Women's Secretariat, which has in fact been a reality for the people of Alberta since 1984. The secretariat succeeds the Women's Bureau, which was established in the mid-70s and has the responsibility for ensuring that the government, in all aspects, recognizes the special problems that may be there with respect to women's issues and tries to assist the government in moving toward full and equal participation of women in our government and in the policies the government enacts.

The Bill itself is self-explanatory. Not dealing with the details, I should say that the secretariat Act is very much expanded in terms of its role and mandate from the original Women's Bureau Act and provides us with the necessary resources and mandate to ensure that the activities currently being developed to fulfill the roles I've spoken to are in fact carried out.

Just to give the Assembly some brief idea as to the role of the Women's Secretariat, I can say that it's playing an increasingly important role in interdepartmental co-ordination, chairing and co-ordinating a number of interdepartmental committees to deal with specific issues of interest to women. It also is planning the same increasing role with respect to federal/provincial/territorial intergovernmental working groups which are established as a result of annual meetings of the ministers responsible for the status of women in the country. By way of example, the secretariat participated in the status report on wife battering, which was tabled in this Assembly, as well as currently being involved with working groups on child care, native women, immigrant and visible minority women, and training.

The latter topic is, of course, to be a main topic of discussion at the First Ministers' Conference in November. The Women's Secretariat is, in fact, co-ordinating the activities moving up to that meeting, where we hope we'll be able to announce a number of initiatives in addition to those already in government which will tend to break down barriers to that full and equal participation I was speaking of earlier that may still exist.

The secretariat, in addition to those interdepartmental and intergovernmental roles, has played a very important information function throughout the province. I might say that last year, the '85-86 fiscal year, the secretariat received and dealt with over 17,000 requests for information. The secretariat as well helps to develop and distribute information on quite a variety of topics of interest to women in the province. They include family planning, family violence, child care, out-of-school care, pensions, and a whole list of issues which I'm sure members will be familiar with and will realize that that is one of the functions of the secretariat.

There is also a small grant program which the secretariat co-ordinates and administers. That, of course, is to assist women's organizations throughout the province in meeting their goals and objectives and fully being able to allow for participation of their organizations.

Mr. Speaker, with that brief overview, I might just say that in a general sense the move to a Women's Secretariat in 1984 under the leadership of the former minister, the hon. Provincial Treasurer, signifies one of the government's many moves to ensure that there is full and equal participation of women both in the government of Alberta and in Alberta in all respects and I believe will help us in the years to come to further that cause to which I believe all members are committed.

In that respect I would ask for the support of the members in second reading of Bill 20.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address some of the concerns I have with Bill 20. I would like to congratulate the minister inasmuch as he did have the good sense to separate the contents of Bill 7, which had been introduced just a few days before the election was called. I think that's really a move in the direction of benefitting all Albertans, not just women. I think it helps strengthen both the Women's Secretariat portfolio and its mandate and could help do the

same with respect to the women's advisory council were it not so deficient in other respects.

However, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make some comments with respect to those just delivered by the minister in moving second reading of his Bill. He noted on a number of instances that we're talking about promoting the full and equal participation of Alberta women. That phrase is not in the mandate of this Bill, and I am quite alarmed by that. It was in Bill 7, which I thought was a seriously deficient Bill in most other respects, but at least it did have that reference. It seems to me that what the minister has done is taken the direct guts out of this particular Bill and out of the body which will be advising all kinds of departments, himself included. Why on earth would we take out the phrase which was in Bill 7 and which referred to the Women's Secretariat, "to promote the full and equal participation of Alberta women in the life of the Province"? Is it that we don't want our bureaucrats undertaking a specific purpose in their work? Is that the case? If that's the case, then let's hear it. If it's not the case, then it seems to me that we're already starting to move away from one of the most important principles of establishing or formalizing what we've already had under the auspices of the Women's Bureau.

The point here is that it's important that in the context of the minister's other Bill, Bill 19, we have bodies both internally and externally — that is, internal to the government and external from the government — helping direct government ministers, fellow public service employees, and the direction of the government overall in promoting equality for women.

Mr. Speaker, in noting the importance of this Bill and what I might call its sister Bill, I'd like to point out that I couldn't think of a more timely occasion on which we should be debating this Bill than subsequent to the comments made by the Member for Calgary McKnight on July 24, as noted in *Hansard*. The member said:

I'd say that many more women are taking their rightful place in society because they have help from their parents, they were fortunate enough to be given brains when they were born and had enough sense to work hard.

I might say to all members of the Assembly that I hope one of the first things the secretariat will be mandated to do by the minister, as a matter of recognition of the principles of this Bill, is to instruct MLAs on the government side in particular that women have been trying to take their rightful place in society for hundreds of years and that in fact it's entire systems which have prevented it, not lack of brains and not lack of hard application. It's an outrageous series of comments by the member.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, perhaps this Bill, rather than going over plowed ground.

MS BARRETT: Rather than — pardon me?

MR. SPEAKER: Plowed ground: previous debates in the Legislature.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I hadn't actually raised this particular matter before, and it highlights, as a matter of fact, the need for this kind of Bill. It also talks, I think, about the need for the minister to make full use of a Bill he's come to the Legislative Assembly to ask approval of I'll go on then, Mr. Speaker.

I happen to note also some weakening in the overall thrust of this Bill. Either this Bill is designed to help promote, through means of government transactions, full and proper equity for women in the life of the province or it isn't. Therefore, I wonder why the minister has diluted things by using the word "may" in many instances. If it's because the minister honestly believes we shouldn't order people to have a look at, analyze, and make recommendations about government policy, then I'd like to know why. I'd like to know why we're not prepared to do that under the provisions of this Act, similarly with respect to conducting research and collecting data and that sort of thing. Either we've got a Women's Secretariat designed to meet the needs of all Albertans or it's just designed to meet the needs of the government of the day. I don't think the latter in any sense justifies promoting this sort of Bill. The former, of course, does.

In sponsoring second reading of this Bill, the minister made note of the fact that there are provisions within the Bill to make grants. There is a small grants program to assist women's organizations so that they can help meet their goals and objectives. Well, Mr. Speaker, this could be a problem. Because the mandate of the Bill itself is something less than specific, the provisions for granting money to organizations throughout the province might be equally nonspecific, in which case I would like the assurance of the minister that in promoting the principle of this Bill, it is not his or the government's intention to provide grants for women's organizations or any organizations which actually are not in pursuit of equality for women in the life of Alberta. I think that's really important.

This brings me back to the difference between Bill 20 and Bill 7. If this Bill stated as its expressed purpose that the secretariat would work toward the promotion of full and equal participation in Alberta for Alberta women, then, you see, all the other details that come into play would have to be in keeping with that principle. Mr. Speaker, this is why I'm worried about this Bill. It's not, by the way, that I am opposed to the Bill in concept. I'm not. I think it's actually a good Bill. It has all the components of good potential, shall we say, with the exception of the items I've pointed out.

I would like to note that I have not heard any reference from the minister with respect to the legal education and action fund for Alberta women, and I wonder if upon closing debate on second reading he would be inclined to reveal whether or not it's his intention to help provide funding under the auspices of this Act to that organization or to others which are similarly organized and in pursuit of mechanisms to provide equality for women in Alberta. I look forward to those comments and will save the rest of my comments today for the next Bill.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to the minister for separating the two Bills, one for the secretariat and one for the advisory council. I think it was a positive move in the right direction and was in response to many requests he heard from the men and women of Alberta. I believe it was a good move.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, let's get it right. Let's make sure that both these Bills are what we really want and will serve us well over time. I have some difficulty with each of them, but speaking to the secretariat Act, I believe there is a need to identify more clearly the objectives of the secretariat, not just the activities. I would like to see that paragraph reinstated here. In addition, there is a

need to clarify in legislation the duties and responsibilities of the secretariat. In my view, the secretariat should be mandated to be responsible for reviewing existing and proposed legislation and programs to ensure that there is fairness and equity for women in Alberta.

The legislation as presented to us appears to me to be permissive, Mr. Speaker. Under item 2(1) we see that the secretariat is established, and under 2(2) it shows us what it may do. I would infinitely prefer to see what it will do or shall do or is established to do. I believe that legislation should express that direction and that that is essential. If those "mays" were simply dropped and it specified that the secretariat will identify, maintain, conduct research, promote, and undertake, I believe that would express more clearly what the people of Alberta want from this department of government, this secretariat.

Mr. Speaker, the Abella report offered to all Canadians good in-depth discussion on the merits of mandatory versus voluntary programs in employment equity. The report also requested that there be legislation in place to promote the proper collection of data on what is happening across our country as well as employment equity across Canada. As a result, we've seen Bill C-62 introduced. The report suggested the need to identify discrepancies within and between occupations and occupational classifications and spoke very specifically about affirmative action, that in fact anyone who thinks affirmative action, however much appreciated and lauded, could be left to the marketplace is simply kidding himself, that we have to have something a lot more specific and directive in order to achieve affirmative action in our times. Abella was very clear about this, and her recommendations and the recommendations of her commission I believe have resulted in C-62, the federal Bill, which I still think has many frailties and weaknesses.

Mr. Speaker, this particular secretariat Act does not reflect the idea that the secretariat should be in a position to research and review employment equity and the potential for women to achieve upward mobility in every part of government and, further, to provide an example to the private sector, to private business and industry. In fact, I believe that the secretariat should be in a position to promote legislation in Alberta for an employment equity Act so that we in Alberta could together move toward the adoption of affirmative action as the Abella report has advised and, further, that such legislation would apply to not only the provincial public service but also provincial corporations. [a baby in the gallery cried] There's a newcomer to this Legislature, and I hope she'll stick around because we're going to see more of them.

I was saying, Mr. Speaker, that it would apply to not only the provincial public service but also provincial corporations and commissions and authorities that exist under provincial control and eventually to those who want to do business with the province of Alberta and, further, to set the example to private business and industry.

In short, Mr. Speaker, we do in fact have federal legislation now in the form of Bill C-62. I believe it, too, has certain weaknesses, but in reflecting on it and on this particular Act, there is no reason why the drawbacks of that federal employment equity Act cannot be addressed and changed and applied through this provincial Act and through the provincial context to provincial activities and provincially regulated industries. There is no reason why the province cannot take the initiative to establish a provincial mechanism for the gathering of occupational statistics as well as other statistics they may do by this legislation. But they're man-

dated to gather occupational statistics as to what is happening in our employment situation in Alberta and to establish in law an enforcement agency that could administer such a public program and see that similar programs are helped to be extended to the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it's up to this government to provide leadership on the whole issue if it plans to encourage the private sector in this direction. I think the government has every reason to build those kinds of ideas into this particular legislation.

Finally, I have some concerns with section 7 of this secretariat Act, Mr. Speaker. This section gives the minister jurisdiction to establish a council, board, or committee to act in an advisory or administrative capacity and further describes how the minister is to empower such a council. On the one hand, we have the secretariat Act providing through legislation that the minister may establish any board, committee, or whatever. I don't doubt that from time to time an administrative advisory group might be necessary, but I would respectfully ask the minister to reflect on that and to respond to my comments. I'm not sure why we need this section if, on the other hand, we are creating the advisory council for women which, hopefully, will do precisely what this section is set up to allow the minister to appoint.

I would never like to see circumstances develop, Mr. Speaker, where the minister or a department might feel that the women's advisory council was getting too much information, making recommendations that were in fact unacceptable and making these known to the people of Alberta, and it became inconvenient and the minister was in a position simply to create another council to run interference. I'm sure that's not the intent of this section, but I believe the potential is there in how it's worded. I think it needs to be clarified by the minister for the people of Alberta that the intent is not to allow the minister to simply set up another council in competition or incompatible with the council that, hopefully, we will see set up as the result of other legislative activity.

I want to hear the minister's response as to why section 7 of the secretariat Act is needed, and if not, I think it would be important to ensure that it be deleted as an amendment in third reading.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to reiterate the appreciation of the separation of this Bill and Bill 19.

I too am concerned about the lack of philosophy or focus in the beginning of the Bill. My concern is that the activities and focus could be defined through the breadth or narrowness, depth or shallowness of the present minister or the minister who is then in charge. That is my concern: that the minister define exactly what would be looked at. Traditionally, when we've looked at advances for any one group to increase their participation in society, whether that be women's suffrage, workers' rights, civil rights, or aboriginal rights, what the issues were and how they were to be redressed came under a broad statement of the philosophy that these people have a right to full and equal participation in society. I therefore believe that that must be articulated in this Bill, that there be a clear and concise commitment to the promotion of the full and equal participation of Alberta women in all of society in this province. I believe that such a mandate must be explicitly stated so that all activities that fall under the Bill address that mandate and do not get off course or off focus. Although, as I have

stated, the Bill spells out many of the activities that are mandated under the Bill, we're not clear what the purpose and the breadth of that vision are.

The second concern I have is the source of initiatives that will come under the secretariat. I think it would better serve the needs of the community if employees of the secretariat themselves could initiate the direction it is going. Even in the community, in the nonprofit sector and in community agencies, we look to a grass-roots thrust to look at what the needs are, what issues must be addressed, how they can be redressed, and what the solutions are. I have a concern that the initiative as stated in this Bill seems to come down from the top, from the minister. I would suggest that there needs to be an avenue from the grass roots that it can be initiated from.

Again, when we look at the areas where services have been provided that were not provided in the past in terms of battered women, assaulted women, child care, advances in education, and those kinds of things, those have always come about as initiatives from the groups affected, from the grass-roots community. So I think we have to be very careful about this and we must be sure that community direction and input is possible there. We must be sure that the secretariat is not stifled by the minister's focus or the limit of his focus, as he may not fully understand the problems that the people he is addressing are having.

I'm glad to see that the secretariat will be reviewing legislation. I would hope, however, that the secretariat would also be able to formulate and recommend legislation. Again, it's people working in the area that know what the needs are, what the proper redress would be.

Another area I have concern about is the area of payment for appointment to the secretariat. Again, it seems to be at the discretion of the minister. It would seem more appropriate to be in terms of the kind of expertise, the kind of commitment given by people, so that it's not so unclear what it's going to be.

I think the guidelines in regard to the granting of moneys are very much of concern because of the lack of a general mandate. We would hope that when money is granted to organizations, they are in fact serving the mandate of promoting full and equal participation of women in society. If that is in the beginning, then we don't need to worry about it underneath and in other sections of the Bill.

Again, I would say that working with groups that have come from grass roots has brought about changes. There are often many roadblocks put up through the government, through existing guidelines; we have to be really careful that those kinds of things do not happen in this area.

Thank you.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a few comments on Bill 20. I assume it is a Bill that is intended to be an affirmative action kind of initiative by this government. In any case, in introducing it the minister said that the purpose of the Bill is to promote full and equal participation of women in our society, and yet that expression is sadly missing from the Bill. I think the minister has fallen into the trap that all too many of the ministers in this government tend to fall into, and that is to word everything vaguely in the Bill and leave everything up to the minister to decide with his cabinet colleagues behind closed doors, of course, and announce later. And that bothers me in this Bill, the same as it did in so many of the others.

I might point out examples of how things are so vague. The use of the word "may" on page 1 has been referred to already by a couple of members. "The Secretariat may identify ..... may maintain ..... may conduct ..... may promote." Why not "it will," and then hire people who will go out and do that? Don't hire them or put them into the secretariat if they don't have that intention and purpose to start with. If you just use the word "may," it means you could hire somebody and they could sit back on a beach in California or somewhere and do nothing. So let's be specific and more affirmative, I suppose, in our actions and ideas behind these Bills.

On page 2, the minister can "prescribe the term of office of any member." Why don't you set it up for two years or four years and rotate every second or third year or some kind of specific program? You leave it so vague that it could be used to let the membership of the secretariat lapse or something. It doesn't make any sense to not bother to do that. Why don't you bring Bills to this House that specify what it is you're intending to do and why, and where convenient, reasonable, and sensible put the details in the Bill instead of leaving it to ministerial discretion later? That is much more serious. The one I picked there is perhaps a little on the frivolous side, but possibly not, depending on how it's used.

On page 3, the minister "may make grants." To whom? For what purpose? That's to be decided by the minister later if you look at section 2:

The Lieutenant Governor in Council [which is the minister and his cabinet friends] may make regulations  
(b) respecting the purposes for which grants may be made.

Why didn't you put some of those purposes in the Bill so we could look at them and see them, because it would mean that you can also do it, as in section 2(d),

respecting the persons or organizations or classes of persons or organizations eligible for [those] grants.

Why isn't there some direction as to which organizations might qualify and which ones won't? The way it's worded there, you could have two contradictory groups both getting money from the same source to promote their aims in working against each other.

We need some affirmative action, Mr. Speaker. This Bill does go some direction toward promoting affirmative action, but it's a long way from pushing as hard as we should for the full and equal participation of women in our society. The need still exists — make no mistake — if you think about the difference in the level of wages for men and women in our society. I remember some numbers for the Alberta government from a few years back. I've still not been corrected; you can correct me if I'm wrong on it. I remember that the average per employee in the government of Alberta was something in the neighbourhood of \$17,000 for men and \$11,000 for women. When you took away all the differences between years of service and training, there was still a \$3,000 difference. I don't know that that has been corrected over the last few years. This government commissioned a report. It was tabled, and the government said, "We don't necessarily agree with all of that." Nothing has been done about it, as far as I know.

Obviously, the need is still out there. We in our party have tried to recognize that. We've set up a women's section within our party to see to it that some of the issues relating to the concerns of all of us do not get shoved aside or left aside or ignored and that women's issues, euphemistically called, do not get ignored. I would challenge your party

to do the same thing. We have very specific sorts of rules for how many males and females must be on the federal council of our party, for example. In considering the executive of our provincial party, because the numbers are smaller, it's a little harder to be specific because certain positions are specified one at a time, but we did take that as a very serious consideration when choosing the last six general vice-presidents.

I wonder if the governing party of this province has anything similar to that. When you're choosing candidates, do the women always get the leftover ridings and the ones that nobody else wants because they're not winnable ones anyway and that sort of thing? When you look at the numbers that get to run and the amount of high-profile women candidates, I think you'll find that our party has done quite well, but not good enough. We will have to keep on doing better.

When arguing the pros and cons of affirmative action, I've often had people say, "But affirmative action really imposes a kind of reverse discrimination on society." In other words, you discriminate against men if you push a woman forward in an affirmative action manner. I have asked a number of people who are knowledgeable in this area about that, and I got a rather interesting explanation from a person who said, "If you take two people of equal ability and put one of them on a hard, fast track and put the other one on a slow, heavy sort of track and run them for a number of years for the same length of time, obviously the one on the slower track is going to fall behind." So if you are going to have true equality, you can't just suddenly say, "Okay, now you can both be on the same track," because the one person is very far behind the other. Therefore, for a time you need to reverse the tracks if you are going to have true equality and give that person a chance to catch up. I submit that in our society now we need affirmative action in many areas.

MR. MITCHELL: I would just like to make a few brief comments, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the minister for awaiting these comments.

I would like to point out that I believe the meat and the important issues in this discussion really will arise in the discussion of Bill 19, which will establish the women's advisory council. Bill 20, it seems to me, is very much an administrative Bill and will establish something that has already been operating and, to some extent, being within government, will not be able to address the issues and the problems in the area of women's issues in the aggressive manner that we hope the advisory council could one day be structured to do.

I would like to establish that our caucus and I support this Bill in principle. We support it in principle because we see that there is an insidious prejudice in our society against women, a prejudice that I think is all the more insidious because we perpetrated it upon our own children. Fathers and mothers perpetrated it upon sons and daughters; we do it to ourselves time and time again, and somehow we have such a difficult time to raise ourselves above our traditional socialization and see the lack of fairness that is so evident in the way society is inclined to treat women. It's for that reason that we support this Women's Secretariat in principle, largely because we feel that we have to do whatever can be done, whatever we have to do, to redress that lack of fairness and that this is certainly better than nothing. It's a step that's been in place for several years, and it's a step in the right direction.

As my colleague from Edmonton Gold Bar and others in the opposition have pointed out, there are ways this Bill could be improved. I will simply emphasize some of them. There is no stated purpose in this Bill; time and time again we see in this government a failure to establish objectives, purpose, targets, and directions in which it should be going. Very little will be accomplished without those stated objectives, and I fear that the Women's Secretariat will not accomplish what it could if it had a clearly delineated mandate, a mandate that was specified in this legislation which seems to the minister to be important to have. There are many "mays"; that is, this council may do this, it may do that. That's very weak language. We would like to see that it shall do this and it shall do that. If I can give an example, one area of particular concern is with respect to:

The Secretariat

- (a) may identify, analyze and make recommendations about Government policy, programs and legislation that affect women.

The minister will remember that I questioned him in the House several weeks ago concerning the process of the Women's Secretariat reviewing legislation. It would seem to me that this is at best an ad hoc process, that there doesn't seem to be a policy in place to ensure that all legislation goes past the secretariat, only that legislation which might strike some minister or official in whatever given department requiring that review would go past the secretariat for review. I think we should have a very clear process that says that all legislation shall be presented to the Women's Secretariat for review and recommendation prior to that point in the process of developing legislation at which there is no return. That is to say, it should be done early enough so that changes can be made by the department, by the minister concerned, to accommodate the recommendations and the concerns of the Women's Secretariat, which will be based upon their view of women's relationship to a given piece of legislation.

I would be concerned that Bill 20 does not discuss the relationship of the Women's Secretariat to the Department of Social Services. It is the Department of Social Services that has such a tremendous impact, with its programs and services, on those many areas that are of specific concern to women: day care, day care standards, support for battered wives, family violence, and those kinds of programs. Yet the relationship of the Women's Secretariat to Social Services is not clear.

Those are just some brief comments. As I said, I don't see that this is really the issue; the Women's Secretariat Act is really the issue. The issues will become clear in that regard with discussion of the advisory council Act, Bill 19.

I would like to close, however, by saying that I feel a tremendous sense of frustration every time I look at a Bill like this or like the advisory council Bill or I review and assess what this government is doing in the area of women's issues. It is not providing leadership. In fact I feel a sense of frustration because this government steps out to do something and it seems it's only as a last resort. Every activity that it does is couched in this desire to control, to stifle, to make sure that this issue doesn't get out of control and doesn't cause some kind of problem or embarrassment or upset the traditional views of society that seem to be held by this government. It's the contrary that should be the case and should be the motivation for this government in dealing with women's issues.

I would like to see a Women's Secretariat and an advisory council that actually cause us problems, that make every one of us feel completely and utterly uncomfortable about our set prejudices and about the way that we view women's relationships to society. If we don't, if we are not confronted at that level, at an emotional level, by what this body does, then I believe that this body and others like it will not achieve what in fact they should set out to achieve. To structure this Women's Secretariat in a reserved kind of fashion in a way that is not aggressive, to structure it so that we are comfortable with it seems to me to beg the very questions that this Secretariat and the other body that will follow from it, the advisory council, are designed to ask and to answer. It's with that sense of frustration that I reserve my support for this Bill in principle, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to make a few comments on the Bill at hand. After listening to the next leader of the Liberal Party — and I'm sure the present leader's shaking in his boots, eh, Nick? [interjections] Lead it back into oblivion.

Mr. Speaker, just speaking very briefly to the Bill. It should be noted, of course, that some years ago the Liberals created a women's bureau and then decided it was not such a hot idea, so they took all the power away from it. So I question the motive of some of the discussion that is taking place here today when I think about some of those kinds of activities.

Also, we must remember that when you're dealing with legislation of this nature using the terms "may" and "should" and various things like that, I guess it's a matter of how you use them and the way they're put. There has to be some flexibility for the minister to be able to operate and use the Bill for the best possible use of the women of this province.

This is a partnership, Mr. Speaker, a partnership between the women of the province, the government, and the Legislature of this province. The minister, being the person responsible for administering the Act, must have some flexibility in that partnership to work with those groups of people, the women, that bring forward issues that need to be dealt with. Without that flexibility, every time there is something that has to be done, you guys want them to come back to the House and get more permission, which is absolutely ludicrous.

Mr. Speaker, the intent and sincerity offered by the minister and the government in presenting this Bill should be noted. Let's look backward and determine what government in the Commonwealth had the first female Whip. I think the hon. Minister Social Services was noted as being the first female Whip in the Commonwealth. I think that was a sign that was followed through by consideration of long-standing studies of women's issues and by the determination of this government to ensure that this is done properly with the full input of those responsible women in the province who wish to deal with their concerns in an open manner. Certainly, as we all know, we have the young lady that's directing this Secretariat, and I think she must be commended on her appointment and also the fact that she's doing an excellent job.

Mr. Speaker, I think to start fiddling around with little words like "may" and "should" and what have you is a misnomer, because this is a partnership of the Legislature, of the minister in particular and the women of the province. Let's give both participating parties some benefit of doubt,

positive benefit, for the encouragement of goodwill, the encouragement of positive actions in the future that can be brought forward by this type of action by the government.

I must say that I commend the government in taking a first step, if that's what you wish to call it, to ensure that women's issues are brought to the forefront of the province and that they are dealt with in an open fashion with some flexibility in a partnership of goodwill.

Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR: I'll try to keep it short, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to see the Minister of Education here also.

Voicing along the lines of many of the other speakers, certainly my colleagues in the Liberal Party, it's a Bill that doesn't go far enough. But maybe being around the Legislature and observing it for longer than they have, I realize it's light years ahead of the old Tory attitude as far as women are concerned. I know they have all these sayings: more joy in heaven for a sinner repenteth, better to light a candle than curse the darkness, and all the rest. I think the new minister should take some joy in the fact that he has been able to drag his party this far into the 20th century without a revolution. I don't think he should feel that badly when he hears all the criticism, and if he can advance as far in the next couple of years as he's brought the party in the last six months, we will maybe have a very good women's Act with teeth in it.

But what I wanted to comment on for a minute — and that's why I like to see the Minister of Education here. All these things, of course, quite often get very personal, and in my particular situation, through the years I have had seven very emancipated or liberated daughters and a number of grandchildren. As a matter of fact, just the other night I was quite impressed when one of my granddaughters told me that she'd enrolled in shop in junior high; she wasn't going to have anything to do with house ec. I thought at the time — and I've often brought it up and chatted — that the limitations on women today are not so much what the business world puts on them as what they put on themselves. Consequently, they run into a cultural trap. I'm not saying that there aren't a great many things that could be cleaned up in the business and political world to make it so there's no gender gap, so there's no gender bias.

But it starts out, I feel, in the education factor, starting out as early as kindergarten with the books they read and the toys they're given. They're supposed to be good little girls that wear dresses, and the boys are the only ones allowed to wear trousers to come to school. There are certain sports girls go into and certain sports boys go into. In other words, the whole education thing limits women in the ability of what they think they can accomplish, so much so that in Calgary last year we had a survey run — I think the Minister of Education is probably familiar with it — where 73 percent of women in the 16-year-old group felt that they were going to make a marriage with somebody that would look after them for the rest of their life, that there would be enough money coming in. If 73 percent of women in modern-day society think they're going to make a marriage to look after them the rest of their life, anybody can see what that puts on them. It takes them out of the math programs, it takes them out of the many different professions they should be studying and working at.

Where did 73 percent of them get the idea that they're going to live happily ever afterward with some man supplying the money, when in fact there's nothing in our western society to support that? That education is a sort of come-

about because of a gap or a lack of education in our schools, I think. Starting way down at four or five years of age, you tell them that the point is how important it is for them to equip themselves for later life: how important it is to equip themselves to raise a family, quite often as a single parent; how important it is to their own well-being, their sense of pride, to educate themselves to their full ability and to train themselves for the full talent they have. Yet somehow or another when we have that percentage in our high schools, it shows we fail miserably. This is one of the reasons I'm pleased the Minister of Education is here. I hope she can record and maybe have input to this secretariat that they look very strongly at the whole orientation process.

My experience in business has been that most businessmen are avaricious. Most businessmen want to maximize profit. If there is a woman out there who can do a job better than a man, he'll get it because he'll make the business more money. The idea that there's some broad conspiracy of men in business trying to keep women out isn't there as much as one might think. My own experience through the years has been that when I found a woman of talent in my organization, it was very hard to bring her forward because she had been educated that maybe she couldn't take it. Maybe she was worried about it. Maybe she felt she had to follow her husband or she had to move here or there. In other words, the whole orientation of women's culture is that even though there's not as much opportunity as they should have, they're not taking advantage of the opportunity that's there because of the fault in early education.

The only point I wanted to make was that I hope the Minister of Education will be consulted often by the hon. minister from Calgary to get her input and her structure and that she will have a committee putting very strong ideas forward in trying to orient the women of our society to the fact that they should educate and advantage themselves as much as possible of what's here in our society from the very youngest age.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I feel that this Bill recognizes the problems relating to women's issues, and it enables women to communicate directly with government. It gives women the ability to make recommendations regarding government policy programs that affect women. Instead of just talking about these issues, I think we can now act. The move towards the Women's Secretariat signifies a move to ensure women's participation relating to government. It identifies significant historical changes in economic and social status, particularly for Alberta women. It looks at all women in this province. It includes discussions on topics such as the increasing rate of women in the labour force, the participation in union membership, and women's income compared to men's, as well as incomes of elderly women and female single parents. There is an increase in the number of women entrepreneurs and women rising in levels of education, and there are all kinds of programs and opportunities for women to promote their education.

I think these areas I've mentioned do address the promotion of full and equal participation of Alberta women. Reference in this program is, in full context, promoting women's equal rights. As a woman myself, I have no problems with equal rights. I feel that as a businessperson I have been given equal opportunities, and I know many women in my constituency who feel they have had equal opportunities.

I think we mustn't lose sight of the family unit. This is something that hasn't been addressed, and 90 percent of

women still enjoy being at home, raising a family, and keeping a family unit. I think a lot of women have been forced to go out to work because of economic conditions. A lot of them are working part time, and a lot of these jobs are just temporary. They do want to go back to the home and promote the family unit.

I feel that this Bill addresses most of the concerns and issues of women in this province. I do feel, once again, very strongly about emphasizing the family unit in the Bill. I think this group is only as strong as the people who participate in it.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I was going to speak to Bill 19, but the hon. leader of the Liberal Party has incited me to get up and make a few remarks. I appreciate the opportunity to do that. He brought up the very important issue of education and the very important role it plays in ensuring that women in schools and young girls in schools don't see themselves as different from any boy. In fact, I was pleased to note his comment about his granddaughter going into shop. I can tell him something that my niece said to me recently when she spoke to me about what I was doing and what I thought was important in the Legislature. I started talking to her about some of the important initiatives that we're taking with respect to women. She said, "Nancy, why are you so hung up on women's issues? I'm equal to any boy in my class, and all the boys know it." It was an important message to me, because I think the message in fact is getting through. To the credit of the feminist movement which has taken place throughout North America and elsewhere since the '60s, young women are seeing themselves as totally equal. I think we have to continue to build on that momentum. That is certainly something I take keen responsibility in as Minister of Education.

I also want to take issue with one point the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon made; that was that our party had been dragged into this legislation. That is not the case, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I was out on the campaign trail just as he was. I am a very active advocate for women's issues and women's rights, and I take issue with his saying that we were dragged into this.

I want to highlight just a few of the things we are doing within the Education department which I am very interested in. With respect to the materials used in the classroom, there's obviously the written curriculum, the resource materials. There's a hidden curriculum, a sort of attitude which could pervade, which says women have this role and women should go into these classes. I think we can work as advocates and in an activist way to get rid of that kind of attitude in the hidden curriculum. However, in the visible curriculum, there has been a major audit of our materials within the classroom, both resource and materials that are actually used in textbook form, with respect to sex stereotyping. I thought it would be important to read into the record some of the questions used by that review team in their audit of school materials.

One of the questions is: are males and females portrayed in nontraditional roles at least occasionally? In unacceptable books boys are consistently shown as doing things, while girls stand back and admire them. I think that's an important question for that review to look at. Second, are any women shown in positions of leadership and authority? Thirdly, is nonsexist language used in that resource material, and fourthly, do the main characters include both males and females? Some reading books 20 years ago, Mr. Speaker, were

developed on the premise that boys don't like to read stories in which girls are the main characters but girls will read stories about characters of either sex. I think those are some of the things that are coming out in that important audit of those materials.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about a group which has been assisted by the Women's Secretariat in this province and has done just an excellent job, in my view, in bringing women into nontraditional studies at the university level as well as bringing men into nontraditional male studies. The group, called WISEST, which is the acronym for Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science and Technology, was formed at the University of Alberta and is attempting to bring young women into the engineering, science, and technology faculties. They're doing an excellent job. I have certainly indicated to them my support for those important initiatives and my support too for the present chairman of the Alberta Women's Secretariat, a woman who is very, very dedicated to the role of women in this province and their equal participation in our work force, both within government and beyond, I would say.

I would like to support the Bill. I think it is a very important initiative of this government and one which I take very great pride in supporting with the Minister of Culture.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: May the Minister of Culture conclude the debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to first of all thank all members who participated this afternoon in second reading of Bill 20. Despite the various comments about specifics, which we may disagree with, I sensed a commitment to the concept of the Women's Secretariat and in fact to moving forward to ensure that we move toward the government's commitment in the Speech from the Throne and as articulated in many other places: the full and equal participation of women in Alberta life.

To deal specifically with some of the questions, Mr. Speaker — and I probably won't have a chance to deal with all of them, but with most. First of all, with respect to the Member for Edmonton Highlands who questioned, as did several of the other participants, why the clause of full and equal participation isn't in this one. In part the answer relates directly to the reference made to the splitting of the two Bills. That clause is in, and we will have an opportunity shortly to debate Bill 19. It is appropriately there because as a citizen's body that organization is much more in a position to advocate than a civil service body. I emphasize that the Women's Secretariat is in fact an arm of the government responsible for carrying out policy. As much as some people might wish, Mr. Speaker, it's not the intention of the government to do away with its responsibility to articulate direction on a regular basis and to develop mandates and potential.

This Bill does have some clauses in it — and again, I move on to another question by the member and by other members with respect to perceived vagueness — which start with the term "may" rather than "shall." That is specifically because legislation should, in my opinion, be flexible enough to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the people today who require those directions. Frankly, with all due respect to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the Assembly is capable in all instances of foreseeing every kind of step that must be taken by a government body, be it the

Department of Labour or Transportation or the Women's Secretariat, to deal with the difficulties that arise. Consequently, departmental Acts, as is this Women's Secretariat Act, allow for flexibility so that the secretariat, in this instance, can in fact deal with those difficulties as they arise. We put in legislation the general approach that will be taken and those that can be anticipated, but we don't want to preclude the other options that may be there. I believe, frankly, that that is a wise and well-accepted approach to dealing with difficulties. To put inflexibly in legislation, be it mandate alone or specific principles by how a department or secretariat will operate, I think is to limit the possibilities and the potential for solving some of the questions that we have to deal with over time and some that inevitably will arise that we don't yet know the answers to.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton Highlands dealt with a number of other matters, some of which didn't relate directly to the Bill itself, but did ask about grants and parameters for grants. Again, that section in the Bill is in keeping with the same kind of section that's in most departmental Acts. We may need from time to time, as is often done, to amend the criteria for grants and the direction of grants to meet a specific need. In my other responsibility as Minister of Culture, I give out quite a number of grants daily. I very often see grant situations where we should be assisting an organization, but they don't fall within the strict parameters we've established. We've got to have the flexibility to be able to deal with that. In this instance, we have only a small budget of some \$50,000 in terms of grants. Those allocations are made to organizations to try and assist them in coming together and meeting primarily.

To answer specifically the question — though it isn't really related to the Bill — about the legal aid fund that was discussed on the Charter of Rights, it wouldn't fit into the parameters that are currently there for grant programs, nor would \$50,000 in total, I think, meet the need of a couple of hours of legal time, for some lawyer's costs that I'm familiar with at least. So that specific grant funding wouldn't be possible out of that pocket.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton Gold Bar dealt with some of the same questions and made some interesting comments with respect to issues that we could debate for many hours in the Legislature: employment equity and that kind of direction. Again, the secretariat is the arm that will carry out the policy established by this Legislature and by this government, and my opinion is that we can't do away with that responsibility on an ongoing basis by putting it into a piece of legislation in a very specific form.

The Member for Edmonton Gold Bar also mentioned some concern about establishing committees, boards, and councils. Again, that clause is a usual one for a departmental Act. It merely allows for the flexibility of establishing, say, a committee of experts on the problems, for lack of a better example, of native women or something else where we may need the expertise and advice of a body and the expertise might not be found in the advisory council. I have no specific plans at this point to utilize that section of the Act, but that possibility exists and should as we investigate issues that should be dealt with and spoken to. There's no insidious plan to circumvent the advisory council or to supplant that piece of legislation with a committee appointed by the minister. I think the flexibility needs to be there in case

we may need some specific area of expertise, and that's the only place I could foresee dealing with that.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton Avonmore had a number of points again . . . If I could read my writing, it would be of great assistance. She talked about the input of grass roots to the minister rather than having policy made here and going down to the secretariat, and I have a lot of sympathy with that kind of direction. There's no question that all of the answers will not come from the minister, nor will they come from the government or the Assembly. In most cases they have to come from the people, in my experience, who are directly related to the problem, who in fact experienced the difficulties or are very empathetic to the issues and know how to deal with the problems. This legislation doesn't preclude that. I would hope that indeed we would in all respects try, as much as is possible, to get those ideas and consult with those individuals. I don't think, though, that in any sort of legislation we can have employees of the government or, for that matter, citizens at large being responsible for our duties in this Assembly in establishing directions, criteria, and proposals which we in government and in the Assembly have to do. I don't think you could put in legislation, Mr. Speaker — I suppose there might be some consultative phrase or something of that sort — anything that would say the responsibility for initiating new programs and so on comes from anybody other than ourselves. That's clearly the responsibility of legislators and of governors.

I would have to say the same thing would be true of payment of staff. In all of our public service the government has to determine levels of payment and does so justly or unjustly, correctly or incorrectly, depending on individual judgment I suppose. In this case that would be essential as well. They are public servants. I can't see how you'd establish some sort of pay scale in legislation or some set criteria for pay scale. I think you have to leave that to the judgment of the managers and debate that judgment if it does not seem to be appropriate, in this Assembly or in other forums, committees, and so on that we have attached to it.

The Member for Edmonton Kingsway had a number of interesting comments. I suspect the member may have read the legislation wrong in some respects. I have down here "beach in California," and I'm just trying to recall the specific of that suggestion. I think he was saying that if the Bill didn't say specifically what people are to do, they might want to lie on the beach in California instead. Again, as with all other parts of the government, we tend to be able to keep them fairly busy, and I anticipate that happening with the Women's Secretariat. In fact, they are a very dedicated group of individuals who work long into the night and over the weekends. I guess it's a good opportunity for me to express my appreciation for that work. I don't think that at all relates to whether you put some predetermined purpose in the Bill or you don't put a purpose in the Bill.

The terms of office. He talked about section 7 and the flexibility of terms of office. Clearly, if you have a section that's designed to be flexible on whether you should or shouldn't establish a committee for a purpose that can't yet be anticipated, a committee or board or whatever, you also have to have the flexibility of how long people would serve on such a committee, board, and so on. Clearly, you can't predetermine what is intended to be a section for flexibility. We may need two people to investigate a specific situation for a two-week period, or we may require 17 people to investigate something over a two-year period. In any case, it's an enabling piece of legislation in that respect.

With respect to the — and I don't want to get into too much detail, Mr. Speaker. I was a little confused by the comments of the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark. He started out with support of the Bill, and I'm not sure if he ended up supporting the Bill. At the beginning he mentioned something I agree with, that in fact this is to a fair extent an administrative Bill, and if it isn't followed by a commitment and direction the government establishes, it won't accomplish much. I happen to agree with that. If that is not there, it will be another group of public servants. But in fact it's not. It's doing a great deal now. It is a committed group of individuals, and I hope to ensure that that continues to be the case.

He then went on to talk about the need for purposes and so on, which we've dealt with. I must say that I take exception to his statements about the frustration he felt, that we were not moving and this was dragging feet. In fact, this government from its very beginning, 1971, established the first Bill of Rights. It's first Bill was the Bill of Rights. Since that time I can articulate step by step what the government has done to try to ensure equality. Has it achieved equality? Yes, with respect to its laws and directions. Has it achieved full and equal participation? Probably not, as no other part of the world has that I'm familiar with at this point. But the movement is clearly in the proper direction. I hope to talk about that more in Bill 19. I do take exception to the suggestion that this government isn't committed or has not been committed to this aspect of Alberta life.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Calgary McCall made some good points with respect to flexibility that I've already echoed. I'd like to thank the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon for his complimentary comments although, along with the Minister of Education, I would not agree that I had to drag my colleagues into the 20th century. I'd like to take credit for our total progress in this area, but I'm afraid I wasn't here in 1971 when we started with the Alberta Bill of Rights. I wasn't the minister when the Women's Secretariat was formed and initiated by the Provincial Treasurer and, indeed, when many of the other steps were made. So while I certainly hope to be a minister who will progress the cause of full and equal participation, I thank him but can't claim credit for all that has been accomplished to date. I certainly appreciated his remarks with respect to stereotyping and other areas we need to address that my colleague the Minister of Education has dealt with. I can assure him that my colleague and I are already working together on this issue and hope to, to a great extent, in the future.

I won't deal with the comments from the Member for Calgary Glenmore in any detail, except to thank her for them and the direction she suggested and some of the points that were made.

I might just say in closing, Mr. Speaker, before we vote on this particular Bill, that it is one step, one further step, among many that have been taken and many that will be taken, another one I hope in a few minutes. I believe it's an important one. The dedication of the Women's Secretariat and the mandate we will give them in this Bill will enable us to progress the cause of full and equal participation in the future.

[Motion carried; Bill 20 read a second time]

**Bill 19**  
**Alberta Advisory Council**  
**on Women's Issues Act**

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 19, the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues Act.

We have had a good deal of debate on the general direction. I would like to address some remarks, however, to the introduction of this particular Bill. The purpose is to establish a 15-person council that would advise on women's issues to help deal with the full and equal participation of women in the life of Alberta.

In introducing the Bill, I'd like to give my sincere thanks to all of those women and women's organizations I talked to and consulted with after my appointment and prior to the final development of this Bill. Embodied in the Bill are provisions which have been suggested by people across the province as a result of discussions that have taken place. I do believe that by the introduction of this Bill, we establish an effective council which will bring to us the benefit of women throughout Alberta in terms of dealing with the sometimes complex and very crucial issues that face us.

Mr. Speaker, I have already spoken to the fact that a number of steps have been made in terms of progress. This is one fairly major step we take today, should the Assembly choose to pass this Bill. The council will be the only one in western Canada which will be established by legislation, not by order in council or other decree of government. It will be the fourth in the country that falls into the category of being under legislation, and thereby it underlines our commitment and our belief that such a council should exist and there are issues to be dealt with.

The council in its operation will deal with a number of areas, and that's articulated in the sections of the Bill, which I suppose we would more appropriately debate during Committee of the Whole where specific provisions are to be dealt with. I might say that it's my intent as minister, as much as the legislation will give me flexibility, again should this be passed, to allow the council as much freedom as possible in fulfilling its mandate so that we can have the benefit of its thoughts, concepts, and suggestions in trying to fulfill our responsibilities as articulated by the government, and indeed if passed, it would be by the whole Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I should mention that there are quite a number of areas I hope the council will deal with when it's established. There are a number of issues I would likely ask them for advice on. I fully expect there will be other issues they will bring to my attention, that I wouldn't have thought of or asked them to deal with. I believe fully that through this step we will establish a council that is as good as if not better than those that exist in the rest of the country. We fully assessed the legislation that exists elsewhere, and where there isn't legislation, as is true in most cases, we've assessed the mandate and operations of the council, starting with the first one established by the federal government in 1973 and throughout the provinces and the one territory that have councils. I might say for the information of members that if this is passed, all provinces in the country with the exception of one and one territory will have councils. In that regard I think our council will have the benefit of the investigations, operations, and workings of other councils to take into consideration in its starting.

To outline the government's commitment, the government had previously appointed a chairperson of the council and

established an office, so we're already well under way with the commitment that's made. That chairperson has been meeting with women's organizations and individuals throughout the province, making them aware that this is in fact coming. We have publicly solicited nominations for this council, some 270 to date from all walks of life and all parts of the province, and should this legislation be approved by the Assembly, it would be my hope that in the not too distant future we could see the remainder of the council members appointed. Obviously those appointments will be made by Executive Council, as are all to councils or advisory committees in the province. My recommendation to Executive Council will be that we have a cross section of individuals from all parts of the province representing a variety of issues that we might already be able to ascertain so that those resources are there to relate to. Of course, the main criterion would be that the individuals appointed be of high quality and have the ability to fulfill this important and crucial role.

In terms of issues that might be dealt with, there are a myriad, Mr. Speaker. In many respects I hope the council will choose to assist with issues that we are identifying at an intergovernmental level in establishing working groups around, so that we can have the advice of Alberta women and the resources when we go into those deliberations. For example, on issues related to native women, immigrant women, child care, and those that have been identified, I hope we might in a timely way be able to unite the advice that comes from the council and the directions that will be taken in this government and nationally with respect to improvements. As I already indicated, that won't be exclusive, however. In addition, I would expect the council to have issues they would want to raise with us.

In saying "us," Mr. Speaker, it should be evident that while this council reports to me as minister and, I believe, must have a reporting mechanism in order for anything to be accomplished in terms of change and direction in this Assembly, it will really relate to most of the departments if not all the departments of government. From time to time I certainly will be taking their advice as it relates to the ministers involved, and I would expect that on many occasions the council might wish to meet with ministers in addition to myself.

Mr. Speaker, many steps have been taken that we can call progressive and that have been showing a great improvement in the move toward full and equal participation. To identify a couple, more than 50 percent of the individuals in university are women. Interestingly, women are succeeding in businesses they're establishing in this province in far greater numbers than are men. I don't know what that says about the rest of us. Generally speaking, I think those two facts alone say to us that within a short period of time the leadership in this province will be more and more equal, a move toward full equality in that respect because of the training that's being received and the initiatives that are being taken. We still have answers to develop in areas of employment, wage differences, in terms of the specific problems faced by groups in our society, and I hope this council will assist us in doing that.

Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I hope the whole Assembly will support this legislation. I reiterate my thanks to the individuals and groups who helped make it a reality, and I would ask for members' support for second reading.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that this Bill is before us. It's been a long time coming, and the Alberta

situation and our track record in Alberta demonstrate very clearly the urgent need for a Bill for an advisory council for women. The Alberta situation is one that is not a source of pride to me or to many women in Alberta. We're just playing catch-up in this province to what's happening in the rest of the nation and the continent, and I submit that it's time to get ahead of the game in this province so we don't have to be embarrassed with our obviously poor statistics. It's a shocking situation when I have to read in the paper that Alberta's record in women's wages compared to men's wages is, if not the lowest, one of the lowest in the country. It's not a source of pride to me, and it's time that we got the data and got to work correcting that situation. I would hope that this advisory council is aimed to do some of those things.

Mr. Speaker, over half the women in this province work. They contribute to the tax base, yet their opportunities for equity are still not there. That's visible over and over. It's visible with women in government, the number of deputy ministers that are in our civil service, and women in business and industry. Just a few minutes ago in the House there was an interesting stereotype. There was a comment about the very competent person who is the executive director of the Women's Secretariat, referred to as "a young lady." I'm certain it was meant as a complimentary remark, but to me it's illustrative of exactly the reason we need this kind of council to help us all change. I don't say that as a criticism, Mr. Speaker. We are all guilty of stereotypes, and until we all understand why we need this advisory council and start paying attention to the kinds of things they're going to tell us, that situation will not change. We must dedicate ourselves here and now in this House and make a promise to one another never to be guilty of those kinds of stereotypes in our thoughts or in our words.

Mr. Speaker, the need is everywhere. Whether it's pay equity — you know, we watch other provinces working at creating legislation of equal pay for work of equal value. We can't even get equal pay for equal work in Alberta. We have an increasing divorce rate and the situation of many women raising children as single parents. We have created legislation to recover court ordered payments from one spouse to another; still no real monitoring yet to tell us how well that's working, although I've had reports both positive and negative on it.

We have increasing numbers of women in the work force, many of them in part-time situations where they have no benefits and are working at either the minimum wage or a little above it; increasing numbers of women who are poor, women in poverty; increasing family violence, the need for women's shelters; child abuse, men and women under stress who respond in the only way they seem to be able to, unless they have support which is missing in so many of our programs in our communities; immigrant women who have language problems and are isolated and forced to work in circumstances that are less than positive; women in the professions, who are not able to develop the upward mobility they desire, limited by attitudes and by acculturation. We have women in Alberta over and over, Mr. Speaker, who are forced by environment and economic circumstances into situations for which they are neither trained nor prepared, yet they're forced to do that in order to keep themselves going and keep themselves alive.

The situation of older women is increasingly evident, women between 55 and 65 who have no means of support, in many cases widowed. They are able to get some pension funds, but the divorced woman is out of luck. She didn't

have the good sense to become a widow before she got rid of her husband; therefore she doesn't qualify for the same kinds of benefits and is in a disadvantaged position. Women are still underrepresented in Alberta in public life. Our support systems are still delinquent in child care, in training and retraining of women, in health care and nutrition for women.

Mr. Speaker, equality of opportunity, in spite of all the rhetoric and in spite of all the talk about it, still eludes us and will continue to elude us until we put our minds to it and are serious about what we're doing. So finally, a Bill is presented here. It's arrived. The great moment has come. Men and women of Alberta have been aware of the inequities and have been asking for a mechanism to study, and they want something that will recommend action for change and provide the balance that we need. So we've got the Act. It's time to do it. It's past time. It's time to get ahead, not just to play catch-up. But again I say, let's do it right. Let's get it right before we put something into law.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that this particular Act has some serious errors of omission and commission, and there are certain grave flaws in it that would need to be corrected before I could be comfortable acceding to third reading. Yes, I'm glad that the minister has brought it in, and I congratulate him for bringing in a Bill as opposed to an order in council. I think that's a very positive move. Most of us have studied those pieces of legislation in other provinces, and I think this has an advantage in that respect. To create two Acts, as I've spoken to before: the council is independent; the secretariat is substantively a government department. They are two different things. Bill 19, however, must be written to create and maintain an objective and independent body not only in law but also in perception and in its functioning. Bills 19 and 20 must make it clear what the different mandates of council and the secretariat are. It must be abundantly clear. They are separate. They must be understood to have separate and different objectives, procedures, and processes.

Let me go to the Bill itself. The first thing that's wrong with it, Mr. Speaker, is its title. Its title does not express what I believe men and women of Alberta have a right to and have expected from this government. It is called an Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues. I don't know what women's issues are. I have a great deal of difficulty with that expression, as do most women. I believe it should be called a women's advisory council. It could be called the advisory council on the status of women, as most of the Acts throughout the country are. It could be called the advisory council on women's equality. It could have a number of different titles. But the wrong title is Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues Act. It's a poor title, a weak title, and it doesn't express what I think this government and the minister want to achieve out of it. The present title is too narrow. It invites narrow definitions. Child care is not a woman's problem. The present title invents exclusions of issues of major concern to women, such as peace, health, environment. There is something dreadfully wrong with the title.

The purpose, I believe, should be to advise and report to the government and, underlined, the citizens of Alberta. It's not just there, Mr. Speaker, to relate to government legislation and programs; it's also there to relate to the organizations, the institutions, the communities of our province toward the development of a positive environment for women. It's important to understand that it's not going to be there solely to advise the government. We don't want

to create an Act that either in reality or in perception would allow for a council that could be muzzled. The Act further should empower the council. It shouldn't just specify the purpose. In the section under 2 it should indicate what the powers of the council are, not simply what its purpose is.

In 2, Mr. Speaker, there are some omissions. It should have a specific relationship to research. Research should be specified in one of its empowerments. We should add: "by making research available to the Alberta public as well as the government through publishing or other appropriate means." I believe it should also be empowered to receive and hear petitions. So it should be empowered, not simply have its purpose described.

The makeup of the council members. Mr. Speaker, I have no problems with the gross numbers, but I believe the appointments should be made from nominations solicited from interest groups, from organizations, from groupings of people in our community, and not as specified here. Perhaps some of the following could be considered: organizations and societies that are constituted to improve the status of women in society, those organizations that already exist.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt. There's great difficulty and confusion in the minds of many members in the Assembly with respect to second reading. We are getting somewhat overly involved in the detail of the Bill which, while the comments are quite germane and appropriate no doubt, really should take place with respect of Committee of the Whole. Perhaps refer to the principle of the Bill again, please.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, in referring to the makeup of the committee, I was attempting in my own way to indicate that in providing a committee and an advisory council that is representative geographically, demographically, of the people of Alberta, we have to use a different mechanism to do it and have to solicit nominations from organizations such as those that are presently in existence in the province of Alberta: status and nonstatus native women; ethnic women; homemakers; farm women; women in business, industry, labour, professions; mentally and physically disadvantaged women; older women over 55, I suggest, should be represented; women under 25 should be represented; low-income women. I understand that the representation will attempt to be broad in its scope, but I believe a better way to get at it would be to solicit nominations from those in the community, from those groups already in existence.

Mr. Speaker, just a couple of final remarks. I don't believe we have any need to have the executive director of the secretariat as a member. Again, this muddies how the independence of the Bill and of the functioning of the advisory council is going to be seen by people as we move along through its work. It's important to me that we reinforce the separate functions, that these two bodies are co-operative, collaborative, but are certainly quite separate and independent of one another. Similarly, I see no reason for a sunset clause in it. I believe that is an unnecessary clause in the Act. It doesn't appear in any others across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we will have an equitable situation with men and women in our society by the turn of the century in this province, because I believe by then we may have achieved a balance in numbers in people who are in positions of power, control, and management in business, industry, labour, government, the church, and our com-

munities. But until we do, we desperately need an advisory council for women that is helping us to see, not just in government but throughout our communities, public and private alike, the steps that need to be taken and is supporting us to take those steps.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the minister's comments.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, upon moving second reading of Bill 19, the minister stated that he hoped all members of the Assembly would approve second reading. I humbly suggest that the minister might be hoping in technicolour. I say that because it has been abundantly clear to anybody who has been paying attention — and I would hope that that at minimum embraces MLAs for the Alberta Legislature — that women wanted a council on the status of women which would be independent, be at arm's length from the government, and have a specific mandate and not have it diluted and made lukewarm by a particular government of the day. It's been quite clear since the introduction of this Bill that in fact that's what's happened.

I'd like to start out by saying that in wrapping up his summary of his motion to give second reading to Bill 20, Mr. Minister said that the reason the reference to full and equal participation of women in Alberta's society was left out of Bill 20 was that it was going to be in Bill 19. I would like to point out that that is not entirely true. What we've got in Bill 19, the Advisory Council on Women's Issues Act — as if there's such a thing as women's issues — is a subsection that refers to opportunity for equal and full participation. Mr. Speaker, there is a big world of difference, and it has everything to do with the principle of this Bill. I would say that the government has chickened out. It chickened out at the level where it was really important, and that is in terms of public input.

On July 24, 1986, under consideration of my Bill 208, in which I had listed all those things the government would conveniently like to sweep under regulations in this Act — I had put them in the Bill I was sponsoring so we couldn't have any fiddling behind closed doors — I would like to note that two members of the government side pointed out how difficult it was going to be to have women's associations nominating members for the women's advisory council. "After all," as one member noted, "we've got 160 such women's organizations." Well I humbly submit to the government that we've got about 1.15 million women in the province, and there's a potential for 1.15 million women to nominate themselves. If it was chaos the government was trying to avoid, I don't see how that was going to be accomplished in the consideration that led to absolutely no parameters for consideration of nominations to this council.

Mr. Speaker, the minister said in supporting second reading of this Bill that he would be recommending a cross section of women to the Executive Council as it chooses the members to sit on this committee. I pose to the minister: if he's that serious about it, why not put it in the legislation? All these things do speak to the essence of this Bill. Either we are going to have a council on the status of women or some similar body or we're going to have something that's more like a facade, something that's more like an excuse. It's nice that we've got this thing in front of us. I suppose

I have to be grateful for at least having something that's two pages on paper with black type on it, but I'm afraid that's the extent of my gratitude in this respect.

We don't have a council on the status of women in Bill 19. In fact, I note again that even though I had pointed out in many instances on this Assembly floor that there is no such thing as women's issues, those issues which are of greatest concern to women ought to concern all members of our society, and knowing even under private discussion with the minister that there is some validity in this observation, I can't believe this Bill was returned to us with the ridiculous name of a women's issues council. I submit to you that a thing like discrimination in employment, one of the most offensive parts of being a woman in this province given the incredible wage gap when comparing identical education, is not a women's issue. If it is a women's issue and if it's the government's view that this is a women's issue, the government ought to throw out this Bill and start all over again.

I just wonder, Mr. Speaker, if child care is a women's issue. I thought men took part in creating children. [interjections] Not Tory men, I take it, by the joking and the laughter. This is an outrageous display of insensitivity to what it means . . . . [interjections] Oh, I'll get back to the Bill all right. But what I'm commenting on is the outrageous insensitivity to what it means to be a person responsible for child-rearing. If any member thinks he or she can laugh at the implications that go with that, then let them go ahead and go on record as having laughed. Let them get to their feet and say, "I laughed; I think that's funny." Women don't think it's funny.

Mr. Speaker, let me ask the Minister of Culture, who sponsors this Bill, if he thinks violence against women is a women's issue. I'll tell you something; it's not my experience that most of the time women go around beating up women. Let's face the facts. There is no such thing as women's issues, and the government should have the guts to call this Bill what it should be, a council for the status of women and a council to promote full and equal participation, not a council to promote so-called opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm advised that it's now 26 and a half minutes past 5 o'clock. I wonder if it would be appropriate for me to adjourn debate on second reading of this Bill.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the Member for Edmonton Highlands, those in favour please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn till 2:30 tomorrow afternoon. I should mention to members before ending that it's proposed that tomorrow evening we continue with debate on Bill 19 and other Bills for second reading on the Order Paper.

[At 5:28 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 4, the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]

