

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

Title: **Tuesday, September 9, 1986 2:30 p.m.**

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

**PRAYERS**

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our Father, keep us mindful of the special and unique opportunity we have to work for our constituents and for our province, and in that work give us both strength and wisdom.

Amen.

**head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 238****An Act for the Protection of  
Video Display Terminal Operators**

MR. STRONG: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce for first reading Bill 238, An Act for the Protection of Video Display Terminal Operators.

This Bill would establish, amongst other things, public policy for the sale and lease of properly tested equipment terminals, workplace operation, inspection and maintenance of terminals, including testing for radiation levels. As well, it would establish periods of rest and maximum hours within the workplace in a 24-hour period. The Bill would provide an operator who believes she may be pregnant or is pregnant with the ability to request not to work at a terminal, without loss of pay, seniority, or other benefits, and that requests shall be granted. It furthermore provides for regular eye testing, operator education, and the establishment of workplace health and safety committees to specifically deal with the concerns that operators have with regard to health effects and working conditions.

[Leave granted; Bill 238 read a first time]

**Bill 38****Municipal Government Amendment Act**

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would request leave to introduce Bill 38, the Municipal Government Amendment Act.

This Bill incorporates some of the recommendations of a conflict of interest committee which has reported recently to the government and was jointly chaired by presidents of two municipal associations. The conflict of interest guidelines are incorporated in this proposed Bill. In addition, the Bill deals with the method by which municipalities might finance business revitalization zones and repeals the section on bonusing in order to allow a municipality to make agreements based on their own decisions. Finally, under this legislation the municipalities would have new authority to license cats.

[Leave granted; Bill 38 read a first time]

**Bill 51****Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 1986**

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I further would ask leave to introduce Bill 51, the Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 1986.

This thin Bill deals with two matters amending the City Transportation Act which would affect the way that hearings must be advertised when a transportation bylaw is being contemplated. It would also amend the Regional Municipal Services Act to allow regional agencies to elect their chairmen.

[Leave granted; Bill 51 read a first time]

**Bill 53****County Amendment Act, 1986**

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I would request further leave to introduce Bill 53, the County Amendment Act, 1986.

This proposed Bill would implement the recommendations of the County Act review committee and would change certain procedures in respect to the operation of counties. This Bill would clarify procedures to be followed in an election or plebiscite. It changes the definition of "population" for purposes that the population count has to be calculated and clarifies a number of issues in respect to the county boards of education. Especially, these amendments would result in the elimination of the system of rotation of elected members on boards of education.

[Leave granted; Bill 53 read a first time]

**head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file the applicants' guide to the Alberta small business term assistance plan. The program will be launched September 15. Copies will be made available to all members of the Assembly.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table in the House copies of the report and proceedings of the 77th annual general meeting of the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association.

**head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Monsieur le président, c'est mon grand plaisir d'introduire 40 étudiants de l'école Laurier Heights, qui est une école bilingue dans le district d'Edmonton Glenora. Ils viennent de commencer leur sixième niveau dans l'école, et j'invite tous les membres de l'Assemblée Législative à leur donner un bon accueil à notre Assemblée.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce eight senior educators from Thailand who were sent here by the Thai government and are taking courses or observing methods of instruction at the University of Alberta, Faculty of Education. They are accompanied by their leader, Arunsri Anantrasirichai. Will they please stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly?

MR. SPEAKER: Members of the Assembly, it's my pleasure to introduce to you the new group of legislative interns for

this coming year. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery, and I would ask them to rise as I call their names: Aaron Engen, Margaret Baer de Opazo, Jo-Ann Schwartzenger, Murray Maisey, Kathleen Marta, Tom McIntosh, Catherine Woolfrey. One is absent today: Lindsay Parcells. I hope all members will take due note of this new crop of bright minds and interesting individuals. They all start work for you on September 15. Would you kindly give them the welcome of the Assembly?

## head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Office of the Premier

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I know that many members of the House have expressed concern about the impact on Alberta farmers of the grain handlers' strike and lockout in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Therefore, I wish to advise the House that yesterday I spoke to the Prime Minister regarding this problem and expressed to him our deep concern that this work stoppage could harm the benefits of Alberta's harvest dramatically. I assured the Prime Minister that our government would support efforts to solve this work stoppage immediately and urged him to do so. I was extremely pleased with the Prime Minister's position that he considers this strike tremendously important and is reviewing solutions to the problem on a daily basis.

We want Alberta's farmers to know, Mr. Speaker, that our government will do everything possible to prevent this matter from damaging their cash receipts when they need them so badly and that we will continue to press for a fast end to this work stoppage.

Mr. Speaker, I have also asked our Minister of Agriculture, who has some additional information on this matter, to provide that information to the House at this time.

### Department of Agriculture

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I rise as a follow-up to the Premier's statement to further advise the Assembly of the latest steps taken by our government of Alberta to see an immediate end to the dispute at Thunder Bay. As the Premier has indicated, he has discussed this issue with the Prime Minister. While we had previously urged the federal government to resolve the central issue of the disruption of service at a port which handles some 55 to 65 percent of Canada's exports, depending on the year, this morning the Hon. Charrie Mayer announced the formation of an emergency task force whose terms of reference appear to be to find ways of avoiding Thunder Bay itself. I commend the move. Such an action is a move in the right direction.

However, Mr. Speaker, it would be my hope that the establishment of such would not curtail activities in resolving the dispute quickly. While the idea of a task force is welcome, no amount of extraordinary action which the task force may suggest can overcome the fact that the tremendous shipping capacity which is available at Thunder Bay has been lost to farmers at a time of great need, as our Premier has indicated.

Mr. Speaker, Thunder Bay handles 50 percent more grain than west coast ports, and the Canadian Wheat Board equalizes delivery opportunities and pools returns. Hence Alberta farmers can be expected to share equally with their

Manitoba and Saskatchewan counterparts in any losses resulting from the closure of Thunder Bay.

The work stoppage will really begin to hurt us at the end of this week or the beginning of next week if Canada is forced to default on grain sales which normally go through the St. Lawrence and for which the buyer cannot feasibly take shipment from the west coast.

Mr. Speaker, we in this party do not care to lay blame on either the lap of the union or the grain companies. It takes two parties to create a work shutdown, and we note that both a strike and a lockout are involved in the issue. Blame is irrelevant. What is relevant is that our farmers are being denied an opportunity to obtain a return on their labour. Farmers are being denied the opportunity for cash receipts at a time when those cash receipts are most needed.

Mr. Speaker, our government urges the federal government to implement whatever steps are necessary, whether through mediation, arbitration, or recall of Parliament, to see an immediate end to the work stoppage at Thunder Bay.

I again telexed the Hon. Charles Mayer, minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. With your consent, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table that telex.

MR. MARTIN: In replying, Mr. Speaker, let me first of all say that I applaud the minister for a very wise ministerial statement. He said clearly that "we do not care to lay blame on either the lap of the union or the grain companies." I couldn't say it better. That solves nobody's problem in a very serious dispute. As the minister said, it's both a strike and a lockout, and blame is irrelevant. The key point is that our western economy is being decimated. Our farmers are not going to get their grain to market, and that's going to have a serious impact on the farmers of Alberta. That's the key point, rather than laying blame. So I say to the minister that I think it's a wise ministerial statement.

Mr. Speaker, mediation seems to be a logical first step. These people should be brought together, and the federal government should make sure they are brought together. If they're not talking, obviously there's going to be no solution to this very serious problem, so I would hope that the federal government would immediately appoint mediators to involve themselves in this to see if we can get these people talking again.

Mr. Speaker, the Official Opposition would call on the federal Parliament and, through them, both sides in this dispute to begin bargaining in good faith and come quickly to an agreement. This dispute is beyond both sides, management and labour. It's affecting many other innocent people, and we in the Official Opposition hope that message will get through to both sides and that something will be done, hopefully within the next week.

Again, I applaud this ministerial statement as a reasonable document to pass on to both sides.

## head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

### West Edmonton Mall Accidents

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Acting Attorney General. I think he knows a little bit about this portfolio. What steps is the government taking to pursue whether or not the law, in particular section 22 of the Criminal Code, has been broken following allegations presented to the Mindbender inquiry today that a

witness had been pressured by a Triple Five supervisor not to tell the truth to the inquiry?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, that story has received some prominence. The key for the law enforcement agencies is always to look at public allegations like that in a very careful way. That careful way is that no steps should be taken and no person should have his name associated with a possible charge until every step in the process has been undertaken. The necessary steps are that if there is credibility to any allegation of a potential commission of a crime, the police would investigate that, and they would do it based on an official complaint duly sworn by a person having reasonable knowledge of the facts.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the Acting Attorney General saying at this time that the Attorney General's department will not follow up on this matter unless somebody specifically signs a complaint, even though it's a very serious allegation?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, where evidence is taken under oath, it is part of the standard procedure to examine the transcripts. I believe the parties who are conducting the inquiry are empowered under the inquiries Act to take evidence under oath. Those transcripts could be examined as to any evidence that might be there indicating the possible commission of any offence. But I stress in the Assembly and elsewhere that the names of people who may as a result of some statement be investigated as to their conduct shouldn't be bandied about. I know the hon. leader did not do that. But I have some concern for any publicity through the media in that respect.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Half a moment. The Chair hesitates to interject, but if there's some question about the matter . . . Also, with respect to *Beauchesne* 357, the possibility of questions being asked "which might prejudice a pending trial," the Chair realizes this is not a pending trial, but the consequent action might flow. It's just a caution from the Chair about the question and the responses.

MR. MARTIN: Fair enough, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate what the Acting Attorney General is saying. I'm trying to deal with the procedure of a serious allegation and how that might be followed up, because all it is is an allegation. Flowing from that, though, I'll leave it — I think I have the answer — and turn to the Minister of Labour.

A question: what assurance is the Minister of Labour able to give the people of Alberta that the rides at West Edmonton Mall are now safe and that the inquiry will be able to get to the bottom of the situation — it's an allegation at this point, admittedly — given that there may be pressure on witnesses to falsify testimony?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, to answer the first of the two questions, in view of the inspection that was carried out at West Edmonton Mall the day after the accident and the subsequent provisions that were made both for maintenance and for the recording of that maintenance, I am quite satisfied that at the moment we can give assurance to Albertans that those rides are safe to the reasonable levels that can be assured for that type of technology.

With regard to the other question that was put, I would prefer not to answer it. As you have warned us, we are dealing with potential allegations. I would prefer not to get into that matter.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question to the minister. The minister is saying here in the Assembly that he can give Albertans assurances that the rides are safe. On what basis can he give that assurance to the people of Alberta?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I said "reasonably safe." It is beyond human power to give an absolute with regard to safety of any mechanical equipment at any given point in time. The provisions that were introduced subsequent to the visit to West Edmonton Mall that Sunday I consider to be adequate for public safety to be reasonably assured.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Labour. Are there standards implemented by this government for the qualifications for maintenance workers on rides such as the Mindbender or the Drop of Doom? Do we have a set of standards for the maintenance workers?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, there are certain standards that are required for all equipment. I would refer specifically to electrical standards where certain voltages or certain types of equipment must be serviced by qualified personnel. I'm satisfied that the maintenance of equipment is currently within those standards. I will leave it to the inquiry to decide whether or not it was prior to the accident.

#### **Fiscal Planning for '87-88**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to the Provincial Treasurer, following up on the memo which I filed yesterday, which I believe the Treasurer called an "area of speculation" before he realized he had written me a memo. In reviewing scenarios, is it standard practice to ask ministers to propose entire budgets for their departments which meet certain "reduction" targets, or is this something new for the new fiscal problems we face?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's always been a course of action of this government to have an effective plan when setting the estimates for any year. Obviously, we have certain guidelines we establish in consultation with our MLAs and our cabinet which in fact will deal with such things as expenditures and the rate of expansion of those expenditures. That's a normal course of action for this government to follow.

MR. MARTIN: Not that I really expected to get the answer, and I didn't. I'll move over to the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, before commencing on this sort of massive, ham-handed cutting exercise, has the Premier established any new mechanism or issued any new direction on such things as wasteful hospitality, travel, or special perk expenditures that may be brought under control?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there is nothing ham-handed about the efforts of the Provincial Treasurer reviewing with his colleagues in the cabinet a variety of options that would give him, along with other members of the Treasury Board, an ability to assess the impact of certain cuts in certain areas or, for that matter, the impact of increases in certain

areas. That's something that we have done in the past and will continue to do in the future.

In terms of wastefulness, Mr. Speaker, we are seeking wastefulness on a constant basis and will always continue to do so. As a matter of fact, as I said earlier in the House, during the review of the estimates, particularly with the opposition I listened carefully for suggestions about reductions and in fact found that by far the total number of their suggestions were to increase the budget, not reduce it.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, as usual the Premier is listening with one ear and not hearing what he should. One of the things we talked about is Speedy Reidy's tour. I don't see you cancelling that.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Education. I notice by the memo that the minister has only three days to go to meet the Treasurer's deadline for this study. What assessment does the minister now have on the effect a \$129 million cut in her budget would have on local school divisions and property taxpayers?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, the priority which this government places on education and which I personally place on one is something which is clear in the record and actions of this government and unparalleled in Canada. But as a responsible legislator as well, I do not want to pass on a deficit to the students who are currently in that school system in this province. I consider there to be a balance between those views. I will look at the directions which we all within the Executive Council will consider, and I will certainly discuss the '87-88 estimates of the Department of Education when they appear before this Assembly. However, I want to assure the hon. member that my commitment and this government's commitment to quality education in this province will continue.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question. That's very nice and very well; glad you love education. But my question had to do with this memo coming up three days later. What impact will this type of cut that you've been asked to give to the Treasurer have on the property taxpayers of the province of Alberta? That's the question I asked.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: As I have clearly indicated, Mr. Speaker, I will be happy to discuss the estimates of '87-88 when they appear before this Assembly.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer. Could the Treasurer indicate whether these same ground rules apply to various Crown corporations and quasi-government bodies across the board? If so, in terms of Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation, will more stringent ground rules be established for that entity?

MR. JOHNSTON: First of all, Mr. Speaker, we of course are talking about the broad responsibility for preparing budgets for '87-88 from all departments and agencies of government. To focus, as the Member for Norwood has done or, for that matter, as the Member for Litde Bow has done, on some particular department and say "What would happen in the 10 percent reduction?" would be an inappropriate comparison simply because we are attempting to deal with a broad-basis approach to this expenditure level, not to focus and draw red herrings across the exercise.

I think all Albertans are generally in support of control of government expenditures.

Moreover, that comparison is a false kind of comparison. What we are doing is taking appropriate action, good management practices, and an overview of all government expenditures, being sure that they meet the objectives we have set down, provide the high level of service to the people of Alberta, and are within our means. That is what government is elected to do.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. In spite of our minister's red herrings, would the Premier now — he shrugged it off for some weeks — consider the establishment of a, pardon the expression, Nielsen type of committee to look at the fat in the provincial budget and prioritize the areas that have to be looked at, rather than ladling it all from one department to another department?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I did consider that, and I don't feel that it is appropriate. After all, we must remember what brought on the need for the Nielsen task force. It was the many years of huge, tremendous Liberal spending and deficits in Ottawa. They loaded debt on the people of Alberta and the rest of Canada, and it was then required by the current government ... [interjections] Sorry, Mr. Speaker, he asked the question; he's got to sit there and hear the answer.

It is not appropriate in our case because the people of Alberta know that they've had a history of governments in Alberta over the past 14 years that not only have spent more than they received but have actually spent less and have put money away for the future. So it is not required in Alberta. We will continue to be diligent about expenditures in this province, Mr. Speaker, and we will never follow the lead of the Liberal Party, who loaded debt on the people they represented.

DR. CASSIN: A supplementary question to the Treasurer, Mr. Speaker. Can I ask the Speaker to reassure this House that he will continue with responsible fiscal management of this province's funds and use whatever means in his power to reduce the expenditure for the betterment of this province?

MR. SPEAKER: The Speaker trusts that the question was asked to the Treasurer rather than the Speaker.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, that of course is the broad mandate which we have already outlined, which we accept as being our responsibility, and which we expect to carry out.

#### Energy Industry Assistance

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from Calgary should have called Sheik Yamani to get the answer.

Could I direct this question to the Minister of Energy? We are concerned about compromises that the provincial government made in negotiating with the federal government. What do "complementary initiatives," for instance, that the federal Energy minister spoke about yesterday in Calgary include? Reduced provincial royalties? Gas deregulation? Are reduced royalties and gas deregulation an integral part of complementary initiatives?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member were to refer to the speech of the hon. federal minister — I would

simply quote the federal minister's own words with respect to provincial initiatives:

Over the past month, we have had discussions with provincial governments. I can tell you that we have established a mutual recognition of the depth of the problem — and the need for all governments to act in accordance with their responsibilities.

That's what he meant.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, it doesn't make any more sense with an Alberta accent than it does with a Quebec one.

Is the Minister of Energy now obliged to go ahead with the November 1 deregulation of natural gas as a result of the federal government's pledge to end PGRT? Yes or no? Oui or non?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader can slur the federal minister's accent if he wishes. However, the situation is that there is no agreement, no strings tied to the removal of PGRT.

MR. TAYLOR: Okay.

Mr. Speaker, has the minister determined how many jobs will be lost in Alberta when natural gas is deregulated, given that deregulation will result in a 20 to 30 percent reduction in the price our natural gas is sold and consequently less money, less jobs?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Chair has difficulty with that line of questioning because part of it relates to a Bill on the Order Paper which is being debated. It also introduces an element of being hypothetical. Perhaps there's a way to rephrase the question.

MR. TAYLOR: I'll rephrase it. Has the minister's department calculated the number of jobs that will be lost because of the drop in natural gas prices when deregulation comes in?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated to the hon. member on many occasions in this House, November 1 is the date we are shooting for in terms of natural gas deregulation. A number of steps need to be taken before we proceed. We are working as rapidly as we can with the industry, the provincial governments of Saskatchewan and British Columbia, and the federal government to see that we can resolve those concerns. That's what we're doing.

MR. TAYLOR: Great, Mr. Speaker. We gain X jobs for PGRT coming off; we lose X plus Y jobs for deregulating gas. For example, has the minister given any consideration to the fact that this government will be forced into extending an assistance package to the petrochemical and fertilizer industries when natural gas is deregulated and we no longer have a natural advantage?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader makes a number of assumptions in his opening remarks. I think those assumptions are such that they need to be checked out; he may very well be wrong. But we do know that one of the advantages we've had in this province over the years with respect to our petrochemical industry is the access to feedstock right here in the province, and that will continue to be the case.

Possibly the hon. minister of economic development would care to supplement my remarks.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, after July 1, after that 20-month period when the government of Alberta assisted the petrochemical industry in bridging a period of time when there was a difficulty with feedstock pricing, to allow negotiations between the petrochemical producers, the producers of natural gas, and the shippers, they've undertaken discussions and reached a temporary agreement that takes them through until November 1. It would depend, of course, upon the conditions that the Minister of Energy outlined as to whether or not deregulation would occur on November 1, but those discussions between the producers, the industry, and the shippers are continuing. I've had discussions as well with the petrochemical industry, and they continue to support deregulation of natural gas.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy. In light of the federal minister of energy's recent announcement, what assurance can the minister give this House that royalties on Alberta gas and oil will not be reduced any further?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, we have indicated to the industry that we welcome the proposals they would submit to us. We've said that we would review whatever those proposals are, whether they be royalties or stabilization programs.

#### **Grain Handlers' Strike**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. I want to say that I appreciated the statement of support and the action by the Premier and the minister today with regard to our agricultural concern.

My question is with regard to details at this point. In terms of commitments from the Prime Minister and the federal government, was there any commitment to timing of action in putting in place the mediator or recovering Parliament to deal with the strike lockout?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the federal representatives gave us assurance of their deep concern as it related to the agricultural sector's movement of grain from western Canada. We didn't feel that we should tie their hands to any detail at this time. We should leave it flexible enough for them to come to grips with how they can come to an immediate end to a very pressing matter that has a detrimental impact on our agricultural sector in the west.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. The indications are that some 400 cars that were going to the east are now diverted to west coast ports. Could the minister indicate whether that plan is in place and whether there is a longer term plan that could significantly affect the sales of Alberta wheat.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, prior to responding in any specific way to the hon. member, I should indicate to him that, as I indicated in my statement, there is a negative impact on Alberta farmers because the Canadian Wheat Board equalizes the hurt that is caused by this strike. So there is going to be an equal amount of hurt coming to our province, even though we do ship a lesser amount of grain through Thunder Bay.

I read the same press reports. They did indicate that there has been a change of direction for 400 grain cars, as has been suggested. But as I understand it, that is the purpose of the task force announced by the minister of the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Charlie Mayer, to examine ways whereby they can divert grain to other terminals throughout Canada, hopefully to meet our grain sale commitments.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. A longshoremen's strike on the west coast could take place within a week. I understand the conciliator's report comes down as of today. Could the minister indicate whether, through discussions with the federal minister, the Prime Minister, or other sources, he has learned of any plans in place to deal with such a strike situation that could occur on the west coast?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I know they are concerned about it. As the hon. Member for Little Bow has indicated, there is a possibility as it relates to the longshoremen because their contract does expire on September 22. But it should also be pointed out that the grain handlers' contract does not expire until well into the new year.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. It's nice to know that the Prime Minister is now answering his phone calls, at least until after the Pembina by-election.

I'd like to ask the Premier what extra bee he put in the Prime Minister's bonnet to get him to solve the strike at the Lakehead. That contract has been expired since December '85. This government has had eight months and has done nothing until now. What did he do to suddenly get him to start moving? Or is he going to move?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it may be that the leader of the Liberals had some trouble getting replies to his phone calls when he phoned the former Prime Minister — or the current one, for that matter. I don't have any trouble in that regard.

My discussions with the Prime Minister were good ones. He expressed his concern, which matched ours, and that he and his colleagues were dealing with the work stoppage on a daily basis and appreciated the phone call, the offers of support, and the strength of our feelings that we want Alberta's farmers to be protected in every way possible.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, if I could share supplementary information with the House, as again it relates to the hon. member's inaccuracies. There has been a federal conciliator's report brought forward, so there has been some action on the part of the federal government.

MR. TAYLOR: Action? They're on strike. What kind of action is that?

MR. ELZINGA: Again the hon. member is incorrect, but we're accustomed to that in this House, Mr. Speaker.

The grain terminals accepted that report; the union rejected it. If he'd like details as to the report that was forthcoming from the federal conciliator, we'd be more than happy to give it to him.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I think everybody would say they're concerned. That's an easy thing to say.

My question is to the Premier. They had a recent major cabinet meeting, and I did not once see this particular dispute mentioned. Did the Premier say to the Prime Minister that we did not notice this and wonder if it was even brought up at the latest cabinet meetings they had?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's not my habit, as it is the hon. Leader of the Opposition's, to get information through the media.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Agriculture. Considering that lost grain sales may never be regained and in order to explore all avenues to halt the devastating effects on farmers caught in the current strike by grain handlers, has the Minister of Agriculture, along with the communiqués he has already sent, also sent communiqués to the leaders of the federal and provincial NDP to ask them to use their ties with labour leaders to get them to reconsider the crippling timing of this strike right in the middle of harvest?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, in response to the very legitimate question brought forward by the hon. member, some days ago in this House I asked the hon. Member for Vegreville if he would help us resolve this situation by making representations to the affiliate of the New Democratic Party, that being the president of the NFU. They have endorsed the strike. We would hope that a farm organization and representations by the NDP would involve themselves in trying to bring the two sides together.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of clarification. [interjections] For the sake of the NFU and for truth in this Assembly, there are even NFU members who are Conservatives. They are not an affiliate of the New Democratic Party. I wish the minister would retract that because it's unfair to both sides. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: The point is made on both sides of the House. The Member for Edmonton Centre.

MR. MARTIN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would ...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Points of order at the end of question period.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that the member is lying. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, rest assured that the Chair will recognize the member on a point of order at the end of question period.

#### Medical Students' Training

REV. ROBERTS: Moving along, Mr. Speaker, in his response to my budget estimate query, the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care has stated that the cost to the province of educating one doctor in Alberta is \$80,000, although I've heard others say that it's well over \$100,000 to train one doctor. Now that hundreds of medical students are returning to the two medical schools in Alberta, I have some questions to the Minister of Advanced Education about areas in which medical students learn so little. For instance, why are there no courses of instruction for doctors and little clinical work

done in the areas of addiction and substance abuse when clearly these are major and growing areas of debilitating disease in Alberta?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I don't have the answer to those questions. I'd be pleased to go to the source that the hon. member ought to have and get them for him. Our universities are autonomous. The faculties, of course, are governed by deans and distinguished medical staffs, and the courses of studies are developed there.

REV. ROBERTS: In their recent curricula review they were disappointed there weren't more suggestions from government. What initiative is the minister taking to encourage medical schools to make mandatory courses in nutrition and community health, which are now mandatory parts in the new curriculum at the Harvard medical school?

MR. RUSSELL: The same answer stands, Mr. Speaker, although I don't mind relating to the hon. member that when I was Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care the matter of the lack of training in economics and in nutritional matters and the apparent lack of interest in the whole area of gerontology took up many hours of discussion between myself and members of my staff.

REV. ROBERTS: A supplementary. Now that you're Minister of Advanced Education, will the minister at least take some initiative to meet with the respective deans of the medical schools to, as he suggested already, initiate some elective courses in the areas of health care economics or the role of physicians in containing health care costs?

MR. RUSSELL: Certainly that's a suggestion that we'd be glad to take under consideration along with the others we've received, Mr. Speaker.

REV. ROBERTS: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Not to leave anything untouched here, as the minister has already said, geriatrics is a neglected area. Since 60 percent of doctors' work is with the elderly, when will the minister encourage improvements in the area of geriatrics medicine as well as in the areas of death, dying, and palliative care and make some positive steps specific soon?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is opening up a debate which is very interesting. It would be nice if young students all enrolled in the courses that the government believes they should enroll in, but that isn't how life works. I believe many young Albertans entering the facilities of medicine are aware of the challenges and openings that are there, not only in gerontology but in the field of psychiatry, and the job opportunities that are available for them when they leave the academic environment. But it's very difficult to persuade an independent-minded young person to take those courses if other fields of study are of higher interest to them.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, just to supplement my colleague's answer, I want to make members aware of some initiatives that this government is supporting in the field of community health and at the universities in our province. One that members might be interested in is that the government, through the Department of Community and Occupational Health, provides a bursary for students in the area of speech pathology. Of course, that's a very important

initiative in our health system, in our health units throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, there are a host of those initiatives. I welcome the member's comments and suggestions, and certainly would welcome any others. Perhaps he might like to put that matter on the Order Paper and we could have a very timely and useful debate on the matter.

MR. CHUMIR: Supplementary to the Minister of Advanced Education, Mr. Speaker. The recent problems of the Alberta children's hospital in Calgary have reflected the national shortage of doctors to treat children. Does the government feel that it has any role to play in structuring the medical education system to fill the medical needs of the community, or is it leaving this totally to the universities?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm a little puzzled as to how to approach that question. Our whole society is based on rights relating to mobility. Our whole health care system is based on an element of portability and universality. Certainly it's not because of lack of funding that at any one time there may be one or more shortages of a particular kind of specialized staff at one of our hospitals. While the hon. member has correctly pointed out that there is a shortage this year of specialized pediatricians at a hospital in Calgary, on the other hand there is developing a center for very specialized cardiac care, including organ transplantation, at a hospital in Edmonton. So those things come and go. There is an ebb and flow to them, and the hospitals within our nation share resources.

I think it's fair to say that as a provincial government we've done more than our share by way of making equipment and financial support available to try and encourage all the necessary staff that we can, not even to mention an unmatched program of medical research which is attracting many specialists in a great mass of brain power to this province which is going to benefit the whole country. Notwithstanding those efforts, I think we're still going to from time to time experience shortages, as other communities do in certain specialties.

#### **Children's Mental Health Services**

MRS. HEWES: My question is to the Minister of Community and Occupational Health. In 1985 the former Minister of Social Services announced the establishment of a children's mental health project to design and implement an effective and co-ordinated service system in the area of children's mental health. Not surprisingly, the project committee's October '85 report suggested that children's mental health services in the province of Alberta are often unco-ordinated, fragmented, and poorly articulated. May I ask the minister when the committee's formal consultation paper on children's mental health services, scheduled for early 1986 release, will be available for public information and input?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member's question. As a matter of fact, I had a very thorough and lengthy briefing on that matter this very morning. I look forward to releasing the document with the co-operation and consultation of my colleague the Minister of Social Services as well as my other colleagues who are involved in that very important area. I hope to release that document in the days ahead and look forward to a very extensive consultation throughout the province so that all Albertans can have a chance to respond.

As the member has raised the issue, so too has the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon in days past. It's something this province is very, very concerned about, and I believe the focus on the family as a very important and essential unit in the delivery of good quality mental health care is something that document is going to focus.

MRS. HEWES: That's good news.

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In the interim will the government be taking any immediate action on any of the committee's recommendations in order to improve the state of children's mental health services in the province?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I think it would be a little premature to respond one way or the other on that, but I'm looking forward to this consultation paper and to the results of the process that will follow its release.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, can the minister give his assurance that the evaluation and implementation of the committee's recommendations will not be delayed further by the separation in ministerial responsibility between mental health services and child welfare, particularly in light of the fact that children's mental health services were described by the committee as fragmented and unco-ordinated even before that separation occurred?

MR. DINNING: Perhaps my colleague the Minister of Social Services might like to supplement my answer, Mr. Speaker, but I can say yes.

MRS. HEWES: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. When can we expect to see the implementation of a co-ordinated, comprehensive, and effective plan for delivery of children's mental health services, given that the issue has now had a six-year chronology that began with the 1980 McKinsey report?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I couldn't give a commitment as to final timing. We will release this paper, as I've said, in the days ahead. We will have a thorough consultation process. I would hope that following that process we would be able to take some quick and well thought out and responsible responsive action.

MS LAING: Mr. Minister, in view of the fact that in 1984, 47 children under the age of 19 died by their own hand and 50 to 100 times as many tried, what initiatives is the minister taking to deal with this most serious problem?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, there was a lengthy debate in this Assembly on a motion put forward by my colleague the Member for Olds-Didsbury on that very important subject. If the member would like to go back and review the *Hansard* debate, she would see that there was a very good debate at that time.

Mr. Speaker, if I may just cite some of the initiatives we are taking, we are the only province in the country, the only jurisdiction in the world, that has a provincial suicidologist. That person is housed within our department and is responsible for a number of programs of education, information, and training throughout the province. Our Suicide Prevention Provincial Advisory Committee under the chairmanship of Mrs. Maxine Richardson is advising me on any number of important initiatives in the whole suicide field.

Mr. Speaker, I won't let my enthusiasm for this important initiative get away on me. If I may, I'll contain my comparison to the only province "in this country" which has such a suicidologist on staff.

#### Secondary Education and Student Fees

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, last week school opened, and issues of curriculum and costs have arisen, so I would direct my questions to the Minister of Education. On June 24 the minister stated in the House that in terms of implementation of secondary education policy only two changes would be taking place this fall. In view of the minister's comments a week ago Friday, has she changed her position on this point, and is the curriculum now being implemented?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister, the time for question period has expired. Might we complete this series of questions? Is there agreement?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Did the Chair hear "no"? Do we agree to give unanimous consent to carry on with question period?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Hon. Minister.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I welcome an opportunity to clarify what may have been a misunderstanding. The two changes that affect the secondary school curriculum this fall are that the pass grade will move from 40 to 50 percent and the B options will be dropped — not all options but simply those entitled the B options — unless there is a particular local preference for those.

The health and education program, which is the question the hon. member is asking, is optional for school boards in the fall of '86 and will be mandatory in the fall of '87.

MS LAING: The minister also stated on June 24 that she intended to appoint a public advisory committee to aid and ensure that the implementation of the new policy would progress and would meet needs. Has that committee been appointed, and if so, who is on this committee?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: It hasn't been finally appointed, Mr. Speaker. I have sent out letters to the various groups I think should send representatives to that policy implementation committee. I am also considering other members to be appointed to the committee and hope to have it in place by the end of this month.

MS LAING: Has the minister involved parents of school-age children in looking at this new policy, to ensure that they understand the implications of the decisions made by the department?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, one of the groups which I hope to have effective representation from on the committee is, in fact, parents. If I can find a student, I would like a student on that committee as well.

MS LAING: A final supplementary to the minister. This is in regard to costs. In view of the high unemployment



rate and the large number of families on social assistance in this province, has the minister considered banning user fees in education — that is, those fees for book rentals, lockers, per credit course charges — to ensure that all children in Alberta receive an equal opportunity for a solid education?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I will always believe that Alberta children should have equal access and opportunity to education, and I believe they do. The head of the Alberta Federation of Labour has approached some school boards in certain cities in the province in an attempt to get those boards to pull off certain fees which are incidental to the students' needs. They are extra charges for things like field trips and rental plans for some textbooks. I don't believe that the fee structure is unreasonable in the minds of Albertans, and I do not intend to make a direction to school boards that they no longer implement those fees for their students.

MR. CHUMIR: Is the minister in a position to tell the House when the long-awaited School Act will be tabled for public review?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: I kind of thought people were sick of my talking about the School Act and when it would come in, but clearly, I hope legislation will be introduced in this Assembly in the spring of 1987. As I've also committed in this Assembly, I hope to have a framework document available for public review prior to the introduction of legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order, Leader of the Official Opposition?

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. It had to do with reviewing a misleading statement by the Minister of Agriculture. I'm not particularly worried about the New Democratic Party, but he said that the National Farmers Union was an affiliate of the NDP. That's untrue. The NFU, as I believe the minister is well aware, is an independent farm organization. They're unable to protect themselves here in the House, so I think it's only fair that the minister retract that statement which, as I believe he knows, is untrue.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I am more than happy to concede to that request, but let me share with him that I indicated that the NFU was an affiliate of the NDP. I have always been under the impression that — in every election I've been involved in they've endorsed the New Democratic Party, but in the event that the hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party wishes to disassociate himself from the NFU, I'm willing to accept that.

But I want to share with the hon. member that my position is that I want to work with all farm organizations. I might on occasion disassociate myself from statements they make, but I want to associate myself with all organizations. I will retract if the hon. member finds that my word "affiliate" was too strong, but I'm reminded of a saying of my father's: where there's smoke, there's fire.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister, perhaps one could give a less qualified response. Just withdraw.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm more than happy to withdraw.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair on this occasion had some concern with the question as phrased by the Member for Red Deer North, let alone the response and the other events that ensued. The difficulty, of course, is that the House on occasion has wandered away from precision with regard to questions and answers. There are indeed citations from *Beauchesne* that can be referred to, and the Chair indeed will do so with respect to citation 359, and hon. members may well see if the House has been adhering strictly to the letter of the law or not. With respect to questions, citation 359 reads:

A brief question seeking information . . . and so forth.

(1) It must be a question, not an expression of an opinion, representation, argumentation, nor debate.

There's no doubt that with respect to some of the questions, things have somewhat wandered.

Having said that, one should also, of course, refer to citation 358 in *Beauchesne*:

(2) Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, should deal with the matter raised, and should not provoke debate.

So it's two-sided: question and answer. I'm sure all members of the Assembly will take those wise words of *Beauchesne* into consideration with respect to future question periods.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order. I would like to raise the question of whether the Leader of the Opposition should deal further with the imputation that the Minister of Agriculture was misleading the House. That statement was made. According to *Beauchesne*, it cannot be made. If the leader would say that he didn't intend to convey that the statement was intentional in the aspect to which he referred to it as "misleading," that would suffice.

MR. MARTIN: In the same spirit of generosity that I heard from the Minister of Agriculture, I will withdraw my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair indeed appreciates everyone's generosity.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, in light of a number of problems facing western Canadian farmers and Alberta farmers specifically, and as well the continued loss of income and sales of western Canadian grain through Thunder Bay because of the strike/lockout, I rise to request unanimous consent of this Legislative Assembly to move the following motion pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 40:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of Alberta to request the government of Canada to reconvene the House of Commons in emergency session to legislate an end to the strike/lockout of grain handlers at Thunder Bay, and

Be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly affirm to all rural Albertans its commitment to the protection of the future of agriculture in Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard a reading of the motion, does the Assembly give unanimous consent?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Unanimous consent has been received. Mover of the motion, the Member for Little Bow.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the members of the Legislature for that support for this resolution. The copies are being handed out.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The support was given for the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: What does that mean? Would the member please be seated.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I again want to say that I wish to thank the Assembly for accepting this emergency resolution. We all recognize the effect of the strike/lockout at Thunder Bay being faced by Alberta and western Canadian farmers. It's a very serious matter and one of urgency that we all recognize. The purpose of this resolution and its introduction today is in support certainly of the Premier's statement and the minister's statement for action by the federal government, that action in turn to be motivated by the resolution and the resolve and the acceptance of that resolve by this Legislative Assembly.

Like many Albertans, many farmers at the present time as they talk around their kitchen tables and in restaurants and on the streets, I believe it is time that we take some action with regard to strikes and lockouts such as these. They're not responsible at this point in time. The implications and the spinout and the backspin that occur across Canada in our communities are tremendous.

What am I recommending in terms of specifics? The Prime Minister should immediately bring together the leaders of the companies and the leaders of the unions and say very clearly to them, "I have a timetable." First of all, a mediator could be appointed, but very quick action must be taken by that mediator or the leaders of the companies and the leaders of the unions. I would suggest that by Wednesday of this week action of resolve between those two parties must take place. If resolve does not take place, then the Prime Minister of the country should say, "I'm giving notice to the Members of Parliament that on the following Monday Parliament will reconvene and we will pass the necessary legislation to put the people back to work so that the grain through that port can move off to Europe and on to the continent and sales can continue and income to western Canadian farmers can be held at a somewhat stable position."

There are three very strong reasons why this action must and can be taken. The state at Thunder Bay: we have some 500 members of the Brotherhood of Railway, Airline and Steamship Clerks on strike at the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool; we have some 700 members of the unions locked out by five major grain companies. We have in their possession a report by the conciliator, Vincent Ready, that recommended a settlement: \$800 as a signing bonus, an immediate 2 percent increase, and a 1 percent increase as of June 1, 1987.

The current average wage level for those workers at the present time is some \$14.50 an hour. That's a positive amount. I'd like anyone in this Legislature to look at the

farm income and the balance sheet of Alberta farmers to see whether they have a positive \$14.50 as their income. We don't have it. I can tell from my own experience and my own books. With an above-average production, I'm in a negative position with my 1986 crop practically in the bin. I phoned the Department of Agriculture today and talked to them. Their statistics likewise indicate that farmers in Alberta are in a negative income position.

Take the area of Lethbridge, for example, with high yields of soft wheat, the price of which is \$2.48 as of today, which is a very, very low price for our produce. High yields are some 98 bushels per acre; low yields are 60 bushels per acre. The variable costs are \$222 per acre. The total cost — that would be adding in depreciation, land costs, and some rentals — is \$369.35 per acre. The return would be around \$329.98. The return to equity is a negative \$39.37. On the low side our return to equity is a minus \$107.50. Both are in a negative position. In terms of hard red spring wheat on the dryland, the return to equity for the farmer is a negative \$10.25 per acre.

That's the way it is in agriculture in 1986. We have a strike at Thunder Bay that is only compounding that problem, and it must be dealt with. We have 1.5 million tonnes of grain backed up from Thunder Bay toward the west that is not moving at the present time. We're trying to move it around, as the minister announced today, by this special task force. But why should we allow that kind of thing to happen? I think it is time, in terms of the economic conditions, that government must show action and leadership. We as western Canadian farmers need it now more than ever.

The second reason — and it relates partly to some of my comments in the first reason — is the state of the farm economy and the farm problem. Alberta farmers are losing some \$2 million per day. Western Canadian farmers are losing some \$10 million a day, and that's directly related to the strike/lockout at Thunder Bay. We have at present a backlog of our 1985 crop; we have a carryover of some 23 percent of that crop. Indications are that we will produce 29 percent more in our 1986 crop than in the 1985 crop, and if you look at that in terms of percentage, we may be storing over 40 percent of our grain on the farm under normal conditions without a strike/lockout. With the price of grain down some 29 percent, with sales such that we cannot sell all of our inventory, we know we are going to have a crisis in the spring of 1987 like never before in the agricultural sector of western Canada and in this province specifically.

A most difficult time is going to be faced by governments, not only this provincial government but the federal government, because of our agricultural problem. We can't let some of these situations like the strike/lockout compound and make the economic balance for farmers more difficult than it is. Other reasons certainly face us. The possible strike on the west coast that I raised in question period today could create a most difficult and devastating situation. If this Legislature passes this resolution today and gives support to the Prime Minister and the federal government to take quick action by the first of next week, I believe that will indicate to those people on the west coast that have any idea at all of striking that immediate action will be taken and they will be put back to work. We as government must give those kinds of directives. We must show that we're leading in this province.

Lost sales. I've been in contact with the Canadian Wheat Board, the Alberta Wheat Pool, and the grain transportation

agency in the last few days, and they indicated to me that there is a possibility that our sale to Russia — the current one of some \$260 million for 2.5 million tonnes of grain — is in jeopardy because of the strike/lockout at Thunder Bay. They're asking for action as well.

I believe the other matter that is raised is that people say, "Well, let them strike at Thunder Bay and we'll divert it all through the west coast." That depends on whether there is a strike or not. But my research indicates that the west coast facilities of Vancouver and Prince Rupert are at capacity. Some 580,000 tonnes are in storage there in those two facilities. The working capacity of those two facilities is around 570,000 tonnes, which means they're at capacity. Certainly the ideal — if labour were willing to co-operate and management were willing to take on more responsibilities, it could be increased to some 1.2 million tonnes, but that's not what the conditions on the west coast are today. The capacity is filled.

How can we divert our grain through to the west coast and ship it out across the world? As the minister indicated earlier and I understood in question period yesterday, some of our grains must go through the eastern ports in order to go to the European market, and soft or pastry wheat is an excellent example. There will be some indication that we should maybe modify the terms of this resolution and just say gently to the federal government: "Please appoint a mediator in the next few days and let the union and the owners take their time discussing the matter for a few days to reach a settlement." Well, they've had a long time to reach a settlement already. They could have requested a mediator in the last four or five or 10 days, and they have not done that; to me that is a direct act of irresponsibility. That means that someone in leadership must take the initiative and tell them what to do, and I believe that's what this resolution does today.

Any amendment to this resolution which backs us off to a soft position that allows us to keep a nice relationship with the union or the leaders of these various port facilities or the various companies isn't good enough for western Canadian farmers today. We have to show strong action. I appreciate that the Premier made a very strong statement today saying that they will support strong action by the federal government. I would also say to the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture, though, that there must be a timetable, and that has to be said with this resolution. If the Prime Minister of Canada has not established a timetable during this week, then I think the next step of this Legislature, as government, is to demand a timetable so that the strike/lockout is stopped. We know the situation this week is crucial; next week it will be devastating to the grain sales of western Canada. We can't afford it.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say those few things and say them in support of our Alberta farmers and certainly western Canadians who are facing some very difficult times.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, just speaking a short moment in support of this motion, I know it's all too easy as a westerner or an Albertan to bash the unions when things don't seem to be working out right as far as the delivery of farm products is concerned. But I think it is wise — I wanted to make a couple of observations. First of all, there are those, particularly in Alberta through the years — this government and the government before — that seem to take a certain amount of pleasure in trying to set the farmers against the unions and the unions against the farmers. But

I think anybody or any diligent student of history and economics in Canada and western Canada would have a great deal of trouble indeed trying to show there's any genuine friction between them.

In general, when the labour movement and the working man's returns have flourished, so have the farmer's returns. It hasn't been a case of one living off the other; it's often been the case of taking votes from one and money from the other and promising to protect them from each other. In other words, the politics of the situation have quite often sicced labour and farmers on each other when in fact any thorough study of the economy of western Canada shows that they both do well when each one is doing well. When one is doing badly, it's almost sure to spread over to the other side. One of the things I want to make clear in our party's endorsement of this motion calling the House back is not the idea of any sort of union bashing, because indeed the people who make the lowest incomes in Canada are the farmers and the people who are working in areas like handling grain or transportation.

Secondly, and I think this is more important when we get down to analyzing the situation, after addressing my first comments to the other side — let's not get out there and blame the unions — I would now address a comment to my NDP friends. I am as loath as they are in many areas to have the government order people back to work. I think it is probably the last step of a government impoverished of ideas. But in this particular case we have a long precedent of strikes at the Lakehead or the ports of Canada being settled by convening the House of Commons. I believe it started in 1948, so it is a tradition. We have a very Canadian tradition — it's almost fixed now — that Parliament is called or recalled or, if it is sitting at the time, goes into the situation and actually becomes the arbitrator, because the labour forces and the farmers across this country are two fairly equal forces as far as votes are concerned. Sometimes the best place to hash out their differences is on the floor of the House of Commons.

When our party supports the idea of calling the House back into session in Ottawa, it is not with any idea of forcing labour back, but it is a long Canadian tradition. Parliament has done this time and time again when it comes to the use of our ports and grain handlers. I think it's become accepted now; it's become almost the only real system of arbitration that works. Parliament actually takes over because they have representation, you might say, from both agriculture and labour — and if it comes to ports, sometimes it's manufacturing — that can get down and do the arbitration before everybody in Canada, before the TV cameras, before the voters of Canada, and it's the best place to settle solutions. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we'd like to support this amendment with the idea to get grain moving and get fair and equitable treatment for our workers at the Lakehead.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to speak very briefly on this motion too in view of the fact that we had an opportunity to make a ministerial statement on this very important topic. I'm somewhat confused, and to erase that confusion we're going to propose some amendments to the motion suggested. What the hon. Member for Little Bow said is totally different from what his resolution proposes. That's where we're going to amend his resolution to coincide with what he said, because we wouldn't want the hon. member to introduce a motion and then say something that doesn't totally coincide with what he has done.

On that note and prior to suggesting the changes we are going to make, I think it's also important that we leave the flexibility within the federal government's hands so they can act very quickly. That is why in our ministerial statement we weren't about to indicate any specific route they should take to allow them the opportunity to act very quickly to resolve this very serious situation as it relates to the agricultural sector. We're very concerned. Our Premier has talked to the Prime Minister. We've had the opportunity to chat with the minister of the Canadian Wheat Board.

I must say that I'm happy with the second part of the motion of the hon. member:

Be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly affirm to all rural Albertans its commitment to the protection of the future of agriculture in Alberta.

This government has already reaffirmed and confirmed its commitment, and it's great to see the Legislative Chamber as a whole confirm and endorse the worthwhile programs that we have introduced, such as the farm credit stability program, the farm fuel allowance, the fertilizer assistance, our hail and crop insurance coverage and review, our feed grain market adjustment program, our red meat stabilization program, the many water programs we have, and the assistance we offer to our processors. We'll be happy to see the endorsement by the Legislative Assembly in the event that the other parties endorse the motion introduced by the Member for Little Bow.

I can't see the need to reread my ministerial statement, so I'll just refer to it in my remarks and suggest that in looking at this debate, individuals take the opportunity to refer to the earlier part of *Hansard* when the Premier and myself indicated the action we would like to see taken as it relates to the work stoppage at Thunder Bay and our attempt to resolve it. On that note I will share with you and then distribute to the House the amendments we are going to propose.

We would first suggest that we strike the word "urge," the fourth word in the first line, and include the words "endorses the position of."

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we are suggesting striking the word "to" in the first line and inserting the words "in requesting", so it would read: "The Legislative Assembly endorses the position of the government of Alberta in requesting the government of Canada to ..." Then we strike from "reconvene" to the words "legislate an." In other words, the words that will be stricken will be "reconvene the House of Commons in emergency session to legislate an." I'll share with you what we are going to add, and I'll distribute it. We add the words "take any and all actions necessary, which could include reconvening the House of Commons, as indicated in the ministerial statement today." We insert that portion and go back to the original motion: "to end the strike/lockout of grain handlers at Thunder Bay," and we add the word "immediately." The motion goes on as indicated by the hon. Member for Little Bow. I have copies here.

MR. TAYLOR: You've confused us enough that we'll agree to anything.

MR. ELZINGA: Well, it's not the first time the hon. member has been confused.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, having had time to peruse and talk about what I think the Minister of Agriculture

said, as I supported the ministerial statement, we in the Official Opposition will support the amendment. I think it is a better amendment because it takes into consideration all the necessary things. For instance, we haven't even had a mediator. It seems to me that we need a mediator before we talk about the expensive process of bringing back the House of Commons. I think it makes it clear, though, that we see it as a very serious problem. It's serious, as I said, to the economy of western Canada. It's serious certainly to our farmers and indirectly to all of us. This Legislative Assembly is urging that all necessary steps be taken at this point, and I think bringing it home from the Legislature is a good statement.

As I said, I liked the tone of the ministerial statement. It seems to me that's the way you get around disputes, rather than blaming one side or the other. It seems to me that the tone of what we're doing with the ministerial statement along with the amendment makes the most sense that we can from this Assembly in sending a message to Ottawa, but more than to Ottawa, to both sides in the dispute: it is serious; get down to negotiations. This is what the people of Alberta want, and there is responsibility on both sides to do this. So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition, if I may, we will certainly support the amendment.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, speaking to the amendment, I will go along with it as indicated here with these comments. Number one, we do not want to take away from the seriousness of the situation or we don't want to let the governments off the hook by becoming too — I use this term with all apologies — porridge-mouthed. I find that some of that comes from Ottawa every once in a while. We don't want to be that way. We must be clear on the fact that we're ready to take some action, which means, as I said, that by a certain time this week the Prime Minister brings the companies and the unions together and says: "Look, the game is over. Action must take place — if not by a certain period of time, say Friday, Parliament reconvenes and back to work you go." In designing these amendments, I hope it was not the intent of the minister or the government of Alberta at the current time to let their federal counterparts, the Prime Minister and the federal Minister of Agriculture, off the hook. We must still ride their backs to make sure that what we want is done.

I know politicians. In Ottawa a week can slip by and someone forgets that it's already Tuesday, that that Tuesday followed the last Tuesday, and they didn't realize where the rest of the week went. Sometimes in negotiations a week slips by without anybody realizing what's happened unless somebody establishes a timetable. When you're out on the farm and losing income and just looking at your books, weeks are long weeks. It's time to be more concrete and defined in our actions. Mr. Speaker, I hope the amendment does not distract from that. On the basis that it doesn't — I take the assurance of government that it does not — I'm certainly willing to support it here today.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, speaking for the amendment and so the hon. Minister of Agriculture can mark it down as one of his red-letter days, being behind supporting an amendment, I don't want to sound picky, but I think maybe I could get the approval of both the mover and amender to a couple of suggestions. One is grammatical, I believe. The House has been prorogued down there, so you don't "reconvene" something; you "call" it or you "convene"

it. In other words, the House can only be reconvened or recalled if it's on a holiday or in session. The House has been prorogued, and I understand we would have to call it in. It's not a case of it being on holiday. I would take my reference from the Clerk or the Speaker on that, but I believe the proper word should be "convene" or "call." If indeed the Speaker agrees with that, I'm fairly sure the amender and the mover would too.

The other thing is not so picky. I feel that restricting the commitment of the Legislative Assembly to "affirm to all rural Albertans" at the end is wrong. It should be all Albertans. As a matter of fact, one of the most highly publicized strikes we have in Alberta today in the processing of pork is very closely tied to agriculture. I think it's a commitment this government should be willing to make. Maybe I shouldn't be helping you do your own campaign literature, but I think it would be nicer to say "all Albertans" rather than just "rural Albertans." May I also suggest that to the REP Party. Those are two things. One depends on your ruling, Mr. Speaker, as the grammatical expert. I believe the word is "convene" or "call," not "reconvene" or "recall," and I would ask that the mover and amender allow the word "rural" to be taken out so that all Albertans are assured of our commitment to agriculture.

MR. SPEAKER: There are some procedural issues raised. The Member for Cypress-Redcliff, the Member for Edmonton Strathcona, the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche. The Chair would appreciate anyone else who wants to get in on this sort of signifying as well.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. GOGO: I wonder if it would be possible for all members of the House to have a copy of the proposed amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The point of order is with respect to the two proposals for additional amendments by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. This is the matter that's coming here. The Member for Lethbridge West is referring to the amendment as proposed by the Minister of Agriculture?

MR. GOGO: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair understands the confusion of the House because the Chair has now received two copies of amendments, which is a bit difficult. Perhaps all hon. members could see the copy of the amendment, having done the deletions and the additions, which reads — perhaps to save time we could read it to the Assembly:

The Legislative Assembly endorses the position of the government of Alberta in requesting the government of Canada to take any and all actions necessary, which could include reconvening the House of Commons, as indicated in the ministerial statement today to end the strike/lockout of grain handlers at Thunder Bay, immediately.

The second section is the same as it was in the original motion. That's the version the Chair is working with at the moment. If all hon. members do not have that, please raise your hands and we'll get the pages to try to make copies of this particular amendment and have it carried. The House

will not move any further until all hon. members have that version of it.

Members without copies, please raise your hands so the pages might identify you. Thank you.

All hon. members now have copies of the proper script.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, the Chair would love to call the question. However, notice has been given of a subamendment. The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move the following subamendment to remove the prefix "re" in "reconvening" and the word "rural" in the second-last paragraph.

MR. ELZINGA: On a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Is that the nature of all the subamendments, the two?

MR. TAYLOR: That's all.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member.

With respect to the subamendment, the Minister of Agriculture wishes to speak.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I stand to be corrected. I don't believe Parliament is prorogued. The Speaker has indicated that his resignation is effective the day before Parliament is reconvened. Traditionally, the House prorogues the day before they have a Speech from the Throne. They are technically still in session. I hate to point that out to the hon. member, but that is the fact.

I think you would find unanimous consent in the House if you wish to strike the word "rural" from our amendment to get on with the question.

MR. TAYLOR: The point is that there's more important business. Leave "reconvening" in, but that's not the way I understand it. Leave it in, and I would then amend my subamendment to just delete "rural."

MR. SPEAKER: The question with respect to the subamendment. All those in favour of the subamendment, which would be the deletion of the word "rural"?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[Motion on subamendment carried]

MR. SPEAKER: With respect to the amendment as amended, is there a call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of the amendment as amended, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

[Motion on amendment as amended carried]

MR. SPEAKER: What is the pleasure of the House with respect to the main motion as amended?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: There is a call for the question. All those in favour of the motion as amended, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Let the record show that the motion as amended carried unanimously.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Question 170 and motions for returns 158 and 165 stand.

[Motion as amended carried]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I've had some consultation with the House leaders. I understand that the necessary unanimous consent might be obtained to move to government business.

MR. SPEAKER: On the motion of the Government House Leader. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Unanimous consent is hereby given.

[On motion, the Assembly resolved itself into Committee of the Whole]

head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS**  
(Committee of the Whole)

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

MR. GOGO: Will the Committee of the Whole please come to order.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Chairman, before moving on to new business, somebody has the original copy of the amendment, and the Clerk needs it. Would you please ...

MR. GOGO: Would that somebody then endeavour to see either the Associate Minister of Agriculture or the Clerk.

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

MR. GOGO: Will the Committee of the Whole please come to order to consider Bill 19.

There is an amendment proposed to the Bill. Are there any comments or questions to the amendment?

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I'm prepared to wrap up debate on the amendment if no one else cares to refer to the series that I introduced yesterday afternoon. I'd like to just go through some of the comments that were put forward by some government members, particularly with respect to the intention of the amendments as I have advanced them.

First of all, the Member for Banff-Cochrane wondered aloud how it was that we, the collective or royal we, could support any advisory committee or any council that would be there to promote just one thing or another. Well, Mr. Chairman, it occurs to me that over the last 15 years we've

had a government which didn't shy away from promoting one thing or another when it came to collecting taxes, shall we say, or telling people they no longer had a right to medicare or all kinds of things.

This time I'm urging members to support something that would take a direction, but a positive direction; that is, ask the members to help lead in this society. If there is any doubt in any member's mind that we as leaders, as elected officials, should not promote the equality of women — and that, Mr. Chairman, means promoting equality of access, it means promoting equal opportunity, it means promoting equal participation and all of the things that go with that. If there's a member in this House who doesn't believe that in the 1980s we'd better do what we can to fix the more than \$10,000 a year wage gap, that we'd better do anything we can to eliminate or at least seriously reduce the level of poverty at which women more than men find themselves, that it's time we address the very serious issues with respect to violence against women and promote their right to safety, and if there are members who really don't believe in equality or working toward equality, I'd like to hear them say that clearly, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I note also that the Member for Banff-Cochrane, who now is the chairman of AADAC, said yesterday that he couldn't understand how an organization should somehow have the ability to increase the awareness of Albertans. Isn't he responsible for a government-sanctioned committee that costs us a lot of money that does just that? And isn't it the case that we've had government-sponsored programs like child abuse hot lines, toll-free hot lines to report suspected cases of child abuse? Isn't that promoting awareness? I believe that we as elected officials have the responsibility to promote awareness in our society of people who are not getting their fair deal, their fair shake. I think that is important. That's why I stipulated in the first part of these amendments that we give the council a mandate that is designed to promote action; that is, for education. After all, we have all kinds of budgets in this government which get spent on some things I never did find out about in the estimates. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, we have a budget to send a labour review committee all the way around the world, which nearly equals the amount of money we're allocating for the women's advisory council. Now, if that's not funny and if that doesn't tell you where the priorities of this government are, it tells us where they are.

Mr. Chairman, I have to say that I do not accept as serious those comments put forth by the Member for Banff-Cochrane, knowing full well that he takes his role as chairman of AADAC very seriously and that he understands the importance of trying to fix the social issues of drug and alcohol abuse and addiction. He knows it's worth the money that he comes and asks the Assembly for every year. He's the one, after all, who points out that 5 percent of drivers on the roads on Friday nights are drunk and that approximately 5 percent of Albertans have problems with alcohol or drug abuse. Mr. Chairman, I point out that about 51 percent of the population in Alberta gets a rotten shake in the economy pretty well every day of the year, and we need to address that too.

The Member for Red Deer North made comments about my amendments because he didn't like the fact that I forgot to put in specific reference to homemakers, widows, and single parents. Obviously, the member would know that I would love to see homemakers, single parents, and widows represented on this committee, just as I want to see a real

cross section of members on this committee, just as the minister wants to see a real cross section of people, particularly women, on this committee. I think he made his comments in a very lighthearted way. However, my request is that whether or not he likes the wording — and he's always open to subamending my amendments, Mr. Chairman — the point is that we put in the Act itself what the minister says he's going to do in any case.

My belief is this, Mr. Chairman: we should err on the side of caution when it comes to statutory amendments or introducing new Acts. That means I don't want to err toward giving any one person a lot of authority. I want to give the Legislative Assembly a lot of authority, and I want to give the elected members of the Assembly the authority to determine that a cross section of women is in fact appointed to the council. I think that's really important. I'm again going to say that I suspect the member's comments were made in a lighthearted fashion. Later on he went on to talk about what he felt were apparent contradictions. I'm sure he's had a chance overnight to figure out there's no such thing as a contradiction in the positions I'm advancing, Mr. Chairman.

I urge members of the Assembly to acknowledge that it's not always easy to give a body that will not come under direct authority of cabinet or Executive Council or even have to answer to this Legislative Assembly any area to move in. I know that's a difficult thing to do. But surely to God in the 1980s we can recognize that it is important for women to speak from women's experiences. I'm asking that in one instance 15 women be chosen to talk about women's experiences and to review legislation, society, and political and economic processes from what I believe is the highest authority in this matter, and that is women's experiences. Surely to God you can't be so scared of 15 women that you can't even go for an amendment that calls for exclusively women on this committee. If you are, I can hardly wait until the next election.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Chairman, I rise to discuss the amendments proposed by the NDP, flushed as I am with the victory of having the government accept an amendment to Bill 20 yesterday. In fact, we are so enthused about that event, we can't help but think all of our amendments will now be accepted. We'd like to congratulate the Minister of Culture on his open-minded approach to this debate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the hon. member address the amendment before the committee, please.

MR. MITCHELL: Yes, I will do that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. I just want to savour the moment. Sorry; we'll go on.

We would like to establish our support for the amendments proposed by the New Democratic Party, contingent upon the acceptance of two subamendments. These are subamendments to section 2 of the proposed amendments. I have them, and I can distribute them at this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Let's have them distributed immediately so the Chair can determine whether they are in order.

MR. MITCHELL: They've been checked by the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: "They" are not the Chair.

MR. MITCHELL: Fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark advise which of the subamendments he is speaking to first?

MR. MITCHELL: I am speaking to subamendment A. Unfortunately, they've both been titled "A."

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair has two marked "A."

MR. MITCHELL: The one I'll speak to first is:

The proposed section 2(c) of the amendment is amended by inserting the words "and to the citizens of Alberta" after "Executive Council".

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. members of the committee, have you all received a copy of the subamendment?

MR. MITCHELL: I will proceed with that first subamendment. The intent of this subamendment is to be very specific about the reporting relationship of this advisory council to the public. The Member for Edmonton Highlands has indicated that in her amendment there is reference to the idea that this body will report to the public. However, it is not as explicit as we would desire it to be, and for that reason we are proposing the subamendment, with words to the effect that this council will report to the "citizens of Alberta" as well as to the government. Without that kind of reporting relationship, it is our concern that this body can be too easily stifled and that it will end up having only an impact based upon the selection of the government and its view of what is and what is not correct. That can too easily overwhelm the view of the women on this council, a view which we feel should be given priority, owing to the special nature of the kinds of issues they will be discussing, issues that are of particular relevance to women and that perhaps will be difficult for a government with a largely male caucus to properly understand.

That is not to say that if the government is concerned about control of this body — I would only like to draw an analogy; that is, in fact we will have a free market type of control over this body. That is to say, they will be producing and publishing recommendations, research, and proposals to the public. If this is not in sync with public sentiment or not sufficiently well crafted to lead the public in ways that are acceptable, then in fact this body runs the risk of losing its credibility and that inevitably would alter its approach to issues of concern to women.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I move the subamendment.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, just two brief comments in support of the subamendment. I've spoken before regarding the need to ensure that Albertans understand this is an independent, objective council, and I believe the intent of the minister and the government in introducing the Bill is that it be as objective in its studies as possible. I believe we need this further descriptive phrase in there to help Albertans understand and spell out in words that in fact the concept of independence is reinforced.

The other point, Mr. Chairman, that needs to be made is: I don't believe it's the intent of the government to create the council simply as an extension of government or that it's there simply to advise and assist the government in its work. I believe the intent is that it's there to serve all Albertans in studying and improving the status of women

in all parts and activities of the province. I think the phrase will help us to see that it's there to assist all of the public of Alberta, not just the government of Alberta.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton Meadowlark has distributed two subamendments. We're dealing with the one with the opening words "The proposed section 2(c)." Members may wish to mark their subamendments 1 and 2. We're only dealing with subamendment 1.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, I just rise on behalf of our caucus to say that — Ms Barrett, who is now coming back, has said that she is in favour of this subamendment. We think it strengthens the thrust of the amendment.

MS BARRETT: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. members speak on behalf of themselves and the committee.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, very briefly. While I was pleased to collaborate with the hon. member yesterday in Bill 20 in approving the amendment that was made, I'm afraid I can't find quite as much merit — though I appreciate the sentiment and the attempted improvement that's been expressed in this one — in any of the amendments or subamendments before us today. My concern with adding this phrase is clearly that it's just not precise enough, Mr. Chairman. How does a council answer to the citizens at large? If we were to have that phrase in all aspects of our legislation, I'm not sure where the responsibility would be or how we would initiate change through that kind of process. So with those few words, I'm afraid I'll be opposing the subamendment.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, the minister raises a rather red herring. You can report to the people in any way you choose. It would just mean that their reports were open to the public rather than given to the government first, which they can either release or not release or hide if they want. So, clearly, it's a reasonable amendment.

MR. MITCHELL: I simply want to respond to the minister's point. We're not saying "answer to the public" at all. If I could draw the minister's attention to the subamendment, the subamendment now reads that "the council will advise and report to the government." Our wording would say, "advise and report to the government and to the people of Alberta." So it's strictly a question of the council being able to publish directly, publicly. To the extent that the minister is concerned that the wording may be fuzzy, we have a second subamendment that clarifies the fuzzy wording. If that is the case, we don't believe it to be the case where it says "it has the ability to publish."

[Motion on subamendment lost]

MR. MITCHELL: I would like to move our second subamendment, which is the longer of the two that have been distributed. It reads:

The proposed section 2(2) of the amendment is amended by inserting after clause (d):

- (e) promoting changes in attitude within the Province in order that women may enjoy equality of opportunity,
- (f) publishing,

(g) hearing briefs and petitions and responding to them.

The intent of this subamendment is to support the amendment as it is drafted and to go beyond that amendment by broadening and further clarifying the mandate of the advisory council.

MS BARRETT: I'd like to speak to the subamendment. I recognize the contents of the subamendment as being either verbatim or almost verbatim compared to the Bill that I sponsored just a few months ago, Bill 208, Council on the Status of Women Act.

Mr. Chairman, I support these amendments wholeheartedly mainly because I really believe that the Bill I personally worked on for approximately a year reflects my commitment and the New Democratic commitment to promoting equality for women by particularly promoting an independent council on the status of women which would have latitude for promoting changes in public attitude, for promoting awareness in the public at large about discrimination that women suffer, that sort of thing, and latitude for publishing its own briefs. I even specified in my Bill — I can recall it from memory; I don't have it with me — that the council would be a means of communication and that it would have the ability to communicate both ways between government and the public and between public and the public and that that meant, by the way, hearing briefs and petitions and responding to them. I think the words are verbatim from the Bill that I introduced and supported on behalf of the New Democrats in Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to point out that my series of amendments, as proposed yesterday, was meant to try to strike a compromise between the position the government has taken and the position the Official Opposition has taken with respect to the mandate, the direction, and the composition of this council. The reason I did that, Mr. Chairman ...

MR. STEVENS: A point of order, Mr. Chairman. Could you consider whether or not the member speaking is directing her remarks to the subamendment or to the discussion which we have not yet concluded on her amendment?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair will listen closely to the Member for Edmonton Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I think it's patently clear, for those who listen with both ears, that I was talking about the very contents of the subamendment.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, I'm certainly using both ears. I'm still concerned whether or not she is speaking to the subamendment and directing her comments that way or referring back to the amendment upon which she has already spoken today. I know other members and myself might wish to comment on her amendment, but I thought we were now speaking about the subamendment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair would make the observation that the Member for Edmonton Highlands, who is speaking, is speaking to a proposed subamendment to her amendment. The Chair has some difficulty in taking exception to the comments the Member for Edmonton Highlands is making.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, if the Member for Banff-Cocharne will review the Blues or *Hansard* at a later point



when they're printed, he will see that I kept referring to the contents of the subamendment as proposed by the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark. These of course, for the benefit of the Member for Banff-Cochrane, refer to amendments to the Bill that is in front of us. I would remind the member that we are at committee stage and we can rise to our feet as we choose. Therefore, I'd like to continue my comments, Mr. Chairman.

On the matter of promoting these subamendments, I'd like to point out that in advancing the amendments I did yesterday, I was looking for a compromise between what is apparently the government's position on the mandate, the direction, the composition of the council on women's issues and my Bill, the Council on the Status of Women Act, Bill 208. I thought a reasonable way to do that would be to take out what I perceived from comments in this House just a few weeks ago, alerted to me as being sensitive or received in a sensitive fashion from some government members. So I thought it would be reasonable to look for a compromise solution and go for some middle ground. I was obviously under the mistaken impression that we were here for the good of Albertans.

I'd like to point out, Mr. Chairman, that while I support the subamendments — of course I do; they are basically taken from the Bill I presented here a few weeks ago — I would hope that if it's the government members' intention to defeat these particular subamendments, they would at least revert to looking at the compromise position we have been taking with respect to trying to strengthen the mandate, strengthen the arm's length relationship from the government, strengthen the specifics with respect to the people on the council and look favourably at that, knowing that we really are supposed to be here in the best interests of all Albertans. Fifty-one percent of them are women. Women are crying for some kind of recognition for mechanisms which will provide equality.

While I speak to this subamendment, I also urge members to understand that we as opposition members are not trying to over-run the democratic process; we are looking for solutions which will satisfy all parties in the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Speaking to the subamendment by the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark, now known as subamendment 2, the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, I'm glad you can keep us straight on it.

I support this subamendment. I've begged and pleaded in the House that having waited for the Act — and I'm glad it's here — we do everything we can to get it right. By getting it right, I mean that it have clarity and that we provide that the legislation will be read to give maximum understanding to all the citizens of Alberta about how it's intended the council will work. I think these are three very important functions to be added to the mandate, and I'm glad that the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands has presented the amendment, because it includes several other functions, such as research, that I think need to be specified quite clearly in the legislation. Mr. Chairman, I hope that members will agree and support these subamendments.

MS LAING: Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak in support of this amendment. I believe it articulates in a very clear way things that may be less clear and that may be promised or given to us by the present minister, but we need continued

support for these kinds of endeavours and they need to be legislated.

Thank you.

MR. MITCHELL: I would just like to close debate, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No closing debate in committee.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay, final comments.

I want to emphasize the importance of the addition of "promoting changes in attitudes within the province in order that women may enjoy equality of opportunity." Much of the key to women's issues, if we can use that term, in this society is a question of socialization. If this body is not able to address issues of socialization in a manner, for example, that AADAC has done, then we believe that it will be seriously curtailed in its ability to function properly. "Publishing" is simply to qualify and further emphasize the point made in the original subamendment. Finally, "hearing briefs and petitions and responding to them" will allow the council to participate in a process of direct contact with the public, which in turn will assist them in understanding the attitudes of people in Alberta about women's concerns. It will also allow this body, the council, to participate in building consensus in this province and providing a leadership role in altering people's attitudes towards women's concerns at this time.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, just briefly speaking to the subamendment now before us. While again I appreciate the intent the hon. member wants to accomplish, I still have concerns about the subamendment, as I do with the main amendment. I should mention that the sections of the Bill this would amend were accomplished after a great deal of discussion with women's organizations and individuals across the province and, I believe, reflect what is essential in terms of allowing them the kind of operating mandate all of us in the House want them to have. I am quite willing, as we always have to be with all pieces of legislation, once the council is established and has looked at its mandate and how it needs to accomplish that, to look at changes which might be essential should that be the case. But I sincerely believe that those sections now in the Bill will accomplish the aims that we wish.

I also have concerns that those additions which are proposed in the subamendment may in fact accomplish in some cases the opposite of what the hon. member wants to accomplish. For example, I'm not a lawyer, but I'm told that in legislation often a qualifying section like "hearing briefs and petitions and responding to them" may in fact be seen as the total definition of the section which talks about "consulting with and providing information to the public." That may or may not be the case.

"Publishing" is far too vague for me. It doesn't indicate what or to what degree. Whether it implies the establishment of publishing houses or just material, those kinds of issues have been well thought out in terms of the current Bill.

As I say, while the intent may be beneficial and I believe the desire is to be positive, I have concerns about the specifics and would not support the subamendment.

[Motion on subamendment lost]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question on the amendment as proposed by the Member for Edmonton Highlands?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a few remarks. I had some concerns today when I first heard the Member for Edmonton Highlands refer to a capacity that I hold by privilege of the Premier in reporting to the Assembly for the operations of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission. The remarks I have shared with members of the Assembly with respect to the amendments proposed by the member represent the views I hold as the Member for Banff-Cochrane and, as I indicated, the views of the constituents with whom I've spoken, and are not in any way to be considered views of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission.

I would say, Mr. Chairman, that I do have the commission's Act with me, and you yourself, sir, as the Member for Lethbridge West, took through this Assembly last year very special amendments to the Act with the approval of the Legislature. I just quickly read them over, and it's interesting to know and observe that the AADAC agency is a Crown corporation and not an advisory council as we're talking about today. Yet even as a corporate agency, even with a budget of nearly \$29 million and operated by a body of 12 citizens appointed by the cabinet, even with all of those, its mandate is not as proposed by the amendments before us, in the detail before us that we're looking at today. For example, the commission may do certain things. It may operate, it may conduct, it may finance, it may establish, but even its mandate does not include such things as are mentioned today by the Member for Edmonton Highlands in her amendment.

I looked carefully at but did not participate in the subamendments which have just been defeated, because basically those subamendments and all of the amendments we're looking at today are contained within Bill 19. Bill 19 clearly directs the council, working with the minister and with this government, to identify matters, prioritize them, specify them, to make recommendations to the government. The government, on behalf of all the people of Alberta, has a responsibility to expend its funds very wisely and to in fact reassess its priorities based on advice received not just from women's groups or men's groups or any other groups but from this council as well. It says clearly in Bill 19: "consulting with and providing information to the public." Now how that council proposes to do that is something yet for it to determine, working with the minister and within its budget.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to have the opportunity to perhaps clarify for the member that I gave my views as a member and not on behalf of a commission, that I believe the amendments are not at all necessary and go into too much detail. In fact, as I think the Member for Red Deer North before me [said], people in Alberta could not even put their names forward for consideration of a large number of people if we adopted those amendments.

So I remain convinced that the amendments are wrong, and I do not support them.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I want to be brief. My colleagues are calling for the question, as I believe people on the other side of the House are. I believe this Bill has received good debate time. Speaking to the amendment itself regarding comments made by the Member for Edmonton Highlands on my comments yesterday on the area of the amendment which is restricting it to women only, the member alluded to the fact that maybe I was scared or maybe men in

general are scared of having an all-women council. I thought that was an interesting challenge, so I'm rising to it.

I guess I shouldn't have been baited, but there have been times in my life, Mr. Chairman, when I have been scared of women. One time when I was about five, I was wrestling a little roughly with my sister and I gave her a bleeding nose. My mother took the exceptional, sexist view that being so rough with girls was not acceptable and got out the wooden spoon, and I was scared of women at that particular time. About the second year I was married, it was my anniversary, which I had forgotten, and I'd stopped after work with the boys for a cold milk. Going home after that, I'd forgotten that I was to be going out to dinner with my wife. I walked in the door and she was sitting there all ...

AN HON. MEMBER: Gussied up.

MR. DAY: ... gussied up. Thank you for the word. It's a bit of a sexist term; sorry I had to use that one. The moment our eyes met I realized what I had done, totally forgetting the anniversary, making her late. I was scared of that particular glance and of women at that particular time.

A third time I can think of was just recently when I saw this amendment. That a member of this Assembly would dare to claim exclusive rights, barring one-half of the population of this province from taking part on this council — it frightens me that any person in a supposedly democratic society would react and respond in that manner. I repeat: I have no problem whatsoever if, under the wisdom of the Executive Council as they select the persons for this committee, all those selected happened to be women. I have no problem with that. But I do have a bit of fear and trepidation over this type of amendment which would claim exclusivity for a certain part of society in sitting on a certain council.

I might add, but I don't think I will, that we've all had good opportunity for debate. Both sides of the House over the years have requested that this type of council come to be, and we are on the threshold of seeing that happen. I would recommend that we forget the little differences and nuances, that we trust the minister, we trust Margaret Leahey who has been appointed as chairperson of this council, we trust the Executive Council in their deliberations, and let's get on with it.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, the quango is a council, commission, or committee, the expressed aim of which is laudable and important but which is set up to deflect criticism, in fact, not actually to do anything about the subject that is at all important and which does not in fact do anything about the subject that is at all important and amounts to no more than window dressing.

The Bill as it is unamended, Mr. Chairman, is a blueprint for a quango.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Speaking to the amendment, please.

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, I am. The Bill as unamended is a blueprint for a quango. That's the purpose of the amendment, Mr. Chairman.

A quango, by the way, is an acronym. I think it stands for something like quasi-necessary government organization. It's a useful word. I'm not in favour of neologisms normally, but where they fill a need I am, and this does.

Last Thursday at second reading I said that the Bill was wrong in principle because we needed a different kind of body. I said:

Let this body be a pressure group. Let it be radical.

Let it shake up public opinion. Let it not just be

another Conservative piece of window dressing.

Mr. Chairman, it is to that fear, which I think is a well-grounded fear, that this amendment is addressed.

If one studies it carefully, it doesn't go quite as far as we would like, as is set out in the Bill that my hon. friend, who moved the amendment, has introduced. Nonetheless it does go the necessary distance to give teeth to the advisory council and make it the proper instrument for furthering necessary improvements in the status of women. It is purposely the case that we think it is entirely women that should staff this body. It is a sort of affirmative action. Affirmative action, when you really get down to the bottom of it, is a sort of beneficial discrimination, because in the end what you are doing is saying that where other things are equal, the sex or the race or the national origin of the applicant counts. And that's what we say here: that there are certain experiences of women that are important to have very, very strongly represented on this body. There is a certain collectivity that is worthwhile to have represented on this body, and that is why that provision that has brought criticism is in this amendment, Mr. Chairman.

I was amused by the reply of the hon. Member for Red Deer North, who seemed to be saying that in making appointments it was all right for the executive to be discriminatory, but not for the Legislative Assembly. That obviously is illogical, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I submit to the Assembly that they should very seriously consider the effect of the proposed amendment, the purpose of this Act, and that we should take effective steps not to make this into a quango.

An hon. member has been good enough to give me the true wording for the acronym; it's a quasi-autonomous government organization. That is what we, in all seriousness, Mr. Chairman, wish to avoid in this body.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a few brief comments. I'd like to point out to the members of the House that I'm very pleased that Bill 19 is here, and naturally I can't support the amendment. I'd like to mention to members that I was the first MLA to introduce the then revolutionary idea that we should even consider a women's council. I did it not once; I did it twice. I also brought in a resolution on family violence, and it was my constituency that approved unanimously at a policy conference of the Conservative Party that we should be concerned about family violence and move on it.

I would say to those members, particularly the new ones, that when you live in a society such as we do with the kinds of conditions that we as men — and I'm talking now of men particularly — have been brought up with, it's very difficult for some of us to put forward what is in effect a revolutionary idea. I first became conscious of this when I experienced the difficulties women had in securing loans from financial institutions, regardless of their financial ability. I would suggest that it's a good idea to have men on the council if they are capable, for the simple reason that the problems of equality of pay for equal work ... Or let's look at the widows' pension. We were the first province in Canada to bring in a widows' pension. I would suggest that there are problems with that in that it discriminates against men; it discriminates against women that have

never married. I think that men in our society are capable of bringing some of these problems to the council and convincing the other members of the council of the need for this kind of change in our society to be taken.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to mention that many of my colleagues on this side of the House have participated in these debates, and particularly the Minister of Culture was one of the strongest supporters of my motions when they were before this House. I would suggest that the Bill as presented by the minister is an excellent Bill and an excellent start, and I think we should get on with the job without any amendments. Let's proceed as the minister suggests.

MS LAING: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to address the issue of fear that has been raised. I believe the fear of women is much more subtle than the fear of a wooden spoon or an angry wife. It is a fear of women having power and autonomy. It is a fear that is expressed in wife assault, for it is a fear of loss of control of those who are needed to nurture and support one. I believe it is this fear that made it hard for women to achieve the vote, to achieve status of full personhood, and to achieve economic equality. Therefore, I believe we must really recognize what is underlying the opposition to this amendment. I stand in support of it.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman. I'd like to participate briefly in the debate on the amendment and say first to the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands that it is from my point of view a definite improvement over Bill 208 and. I think, a sincere attempt to compromise, as she suggested. Unfortunately, though, I'm not sure that the compromise is an improvement over the current Bill. That's where we come to an impasse on this particular amendment.

Members of the government side have outlined some of the concerns. Frankly, I think the concern about every member of the advisory council being a woman in legislation is a serious one. I agree with the contention the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands originally made, that indeed too many of our systems, boards, and agencies are dominated at this point by men. But I think the answer to that is to correct those situations, and no legislation precludes that; whereas, to add this kind of block to future possibilities I don't think is correct. That isn't to say that I plan to recommend or not recommend to cabinet, should the Bill pass, a man for the council. I think first and foremost one must have women from all over the province representing points of view to ensure that those are on the council to give the advice that the council is to give. But I do believe that at some point in the future the council itself may want to have the viewpoint of a man. At least that possibility should never be precluded for men or women by any council or agency we have here.

There are a number of technical difficulties with the amendment, which perhaps I shouldn't go into in detail but just indicate that there are. For example, there's a suggestion that the report from the council be tabled within five days. There are a lot of technical possibilities in stopping five days from being long enough to have a report presented. There's a suggestion that the council should report only every five years. Personally I think that doesn't require the council to give us the advice we may often need much before that five-year period has passed. There are some other technical items as well that I think make the amendments not an improvement over the Bill. While I appreciate

the good intentions that are there in the improvement over Bill 208, I'll be voting against the amendment.

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

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Barrett	Laing	Roberts
Chumir	Martin	Strong
Ewasniuk	McEachern	Taylor
Gibeault	Mitchell	Wright
Hawkesworth	Mjolsness	Younie
Hewes	Pashak	

Against the motion:

Ady	Fjordbotten	Payne
Alger	Heron	Reid
Anderson	Hyland	Rostad
Betkowski	Isley	Russell
Bogle	Johnston	Schumacher
Brassard	Jonson	Shaben
Cassin	Koper	Shrake
Cherry	Kowalski	Sparrow
Crawford	Mirosh	Stevens
Cripps	Moore, M.	Trynchy
Day	Moore, R.	Webber
Dinning	Musgreave	Weiss
Downey	Musgrove	West
Drobot	Nelson	Young
Elliott	Oldring	Zaruskyy
Elzinga	Osterman	

Totals:	Ayes - 17	Noes - 47
---------	-----------	-----------

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question on Bill 19?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Chairman, we have several amendments that I would like to introduce.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. CRAWFORD: Perhaps we could deal with that at 8 o'clock. I move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration Bill 19 and reports progress thereon.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move we call it 5:30.

MR. SPEAKER: A procedural problem, hon. Government House Leader.

Having heard the report, does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

[The House recessed at 5:29 p.m. and resumed at 8 p.m.]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

[On motion, the Assembly resolved itself into Committee of the Whole]

# head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS** (Committee of the Whole)

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The committee will come to order.

## **Bill 19** **Alberta Advisory Council** **on Women's Issues Act** (continued)

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Chairman, I rise to move an amendment to Bill 19.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

AN HON. MEMBER: Come on.

MR. MITCHELL: We're going to get it right yet. Just bear with us a little bit longer.

This is an extremely important amendment and is worthy of our time and attention, even though we are getting tired and the debate has been going on for some time. It would behoove the members across the way to listen to this because it is, I think, a critical amendment.

I will distribute the amendment now, Mr. Chairman, and I will read it.

The Bill is hereby amended as follows:

A. The title is amended to "Alberta Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act".

B. Sections 1(a) and 2 are amended by striking out "on Women's Issues" and substituting "on the Status of Women" wherever it occurs.

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

This is a critical distinction that we are drawing with this amendment. It is designed to point out that the kinds of issues that this advisory council will deal with are not just women's issues. Clearly, these issues go beyond the interests of women. Child care, for example, is clearly an issue that affects both men and women. The fact that we call these women's issues, and that they have become disproportionately women's problems, is a symptom of the problem that we are trying to solve. In fact, the name of this Act begs the question that this Act is designed to answer. If we do not frame the problem properly, we will not be able to solve the problem. If we do not ask the right questions, we will not be able to find the right solutions, the right answers to those questions.

It's for that reason, Mr. Chairman, that we in the Liberal caucus move this amendment to Bill 19.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Before we proceed, are there any other amendments? According to *Standing Orders*, title and preamble must come last in the order of business. The committee cannot entertain an amendment to title and preamble if there are going to be any other amendments. I quote *Beauchesne*, 765, plus section 77 of *Standing Orders*. Are there any other amendments before proceeding with this?

MR. MITCHELL: We have one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark, the Chair would find the amendment out of order at this time. If the hon. member has other amendments, then he is certainly free to proceed.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you. I will distribute this amendment. This is an amendment to section 3(1) of Bill 19. It has been designed to contemplate a more effective way of selecting membership for this committee, and in fact it addresses some of the concerns in the selection of committee membership raised by one of the two members from Red Deer yesterday. It is premised, in much the same way as the NDP's selection criteria were premised, upon the importance of having a broad selection of women in our society. Therefore, we are proposing, by and large, to see that membership on this committee is from broad demographic and social ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hesitate to interrupt. Does the hon. minister have a copy of the amendment? Could we wait until the hon. minister has a copy? He's the sponsoring minister.

MR. MITCHELL: Sure. I'm sorry.

It is designed to ensure that the selection of members for this committee is broadly based and reflects a wide range of social and demographic segments of our society in order that all women's views are reflected and not just those views of women in specifically organized groups, although we do account for that as well.

I move this amendment as distributed, Mr. Chairman.

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to make some very brief comments on the amendments. On behalf of the New Democratic Official Opposition we support the amendments put forth by the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark.

The second amendment he put forth adds additional groups that should, in fact, have the opportunity to be represented on the council. I might add that Bill 208, the Council on the Status of Women Act, presented to this Assembly by my colleague from Edmonton Highlands, was called by exactly the same title that is stated in the amendment. I would say that the Bill also uses the "Status of Women" throughout, which is the intent of part of the amendment.

That Bill states that the council should have representation from women by "special women's groups, including ..." and it goes on to name a number of different groups. I would suggest that this amendment simply reiterates what is already stated in Bill 208. So it is the intention of the Official Opposition to support both amendments.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is only one amendment before the committee, hon. member.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Chairman, I wish to speak in support of this amendment to Bill 19. I believe the government, in creating the council, would make a serious attempt to get good, representative people on the council, but I think we have to write something into the legislation to ensure that. I have come to believe that nominations should be sought from a number of groups so that we're sure of a balanced council that will remove any doubts about the broadest possible demographic and geographic representation. You'll see in this listing, Mr. Chairman, that we in the Liberal Party believe we need to be sure that we will have representation from native and Metis women. They need to know that they're going to be represented. Poor women need to know that their concerns will be heard; older women, farm women, homemakers, business, labour, women in professions, immigrant women, single parents, and women representing physically and mentally disabled women.

Mr. Chairman, I submit to you that these people need the assurance that their hands-on experiences will form a part of the discussions, decisions, and recommendations: not as supplicants and petitioners to the advisory council but that they will have a hands-on opportunity for their experiences to form part of the decisions and recommendations of this advisory council.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to speak against this motion. I wonder if the motion was made in seriousness or whether it's just in jest. I think if I were a woman who felt deprived in our society, I wouldn't mind if there were half a dozen lawyers on this council. Whether they were women or men, I wouldn't really care as long as they were achieving something for me as a woman who was in a deprived situation.

Can you imagine if you're the woman in poverty, you go to the meeting, and you've got a big sign on your head or on your chest that says, "I'm the woman that's in poverty." You're going to sit down beside the professional person, and you could say: "Pardon me, you may not smell as good as I do. I can't afford expensive French perfume like you have on, but I'm the woman in poverty that's on this committee." We talk about women in the professions. What professions? Doctors, lawyers, chartered accountants, optometrists? And then they talk about a woman from the immigrant group. I thought a large number of Canadians would fall into that category. How would the kinds of persons be chosen that would fall into this suggestion?

I'm shocked that the hon. member would make such a motion, because I credit him with a lot of intelligence and ability, and I really feel this is below his [inaudible].

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question on the amendment? The hon. Member for Lacombe.

MR. R. MOORE: I just want to comment on this amendment, Mr. Chairman, because like the Member for Calgary McKnight I find it really incredible. It's discriminatory. I have never seen such a piece of discriminatory information placed before us. I don't see Irish women on here. I really don't. I don't see MLAs' wives, and believe you me, they contribute a lot. If you think they don't fall into any of these categories — they handle everything.

So really, Mr. Chairman, I cannot think that this is in earnest. I don't know whether we could even move on it, because I think this was just put up for whatever.

MR. McEACHERN: I wasn't going to speak on this, because I thought it was evident that somebody had thought a little bit about who should be represented. I'd just like to say to the members who have spoken and to the government: you guys seem to think that you should always have the minister, in secret, handpick every ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Will you please use the normal parliamentary system of addressing the Chair and not "you" and "her."

MR. McEACHERN: Sorry, Mr. Chairman, I shall address it through the Chair.

The Bill as it stands just allows the minister to choose who he wants, in secret. He wouldn't even commit himself to whether he's going to put a man on the committee or not when that issue was raised. This specifies some people that should be represented on the committee. Why is it that the members opposite tend to want to choose the members of all committees in secret and make sure they bypass any organizations that might have something to say as an organization. One person could represent hundreds of people or maybe thousands, if they chose people from organizations who had decided that a certain person would be their spokesman.

Why don't they let some of the groups choose some of the people on some of these committees, instead of always bypassing the organized groups and going through and finding somebody who will speak quietly, not rock any boats, and take care of what the minister wants taken care of instead of setting up an arm's length committee that has some ideas of its own and is prepared to rock a few boats. That's what we need in our society, people who are prepared to stand up and fight for what they believe in, not a bunch of people that have been handpicked to not rock any boats. That's what should be done in this case.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Chairman, I've refrained all afternoon from getting into this debate, but I guess I'm pleased to participate in a debate where 50 percent of the people of this province are going to be represented on an Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues.

I've certainly listened to a lot of hogwash today.

MR. McEACHERN: Some of your own.

MRS. CRIPPS: No, I haven't spoken before, sir.

It seems to me that what we're looking at is an advisory council which is going to represent all women. Surely to heavens, this advisory council isn't going to work in isolation from all of the women's groups and all of the women throughout the province. I just can't anticipate how a selective, designated group of people, as recommended here, would be any better than a broad-based representation from the province. The farm woman might also be a homemaker. Certainly somebody living in poverty may be a homemaker or a single parent.

Mr. Chairman, one thing the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark did say which I agree with is that women's issues are not necessarily isolated; i.e., "women's" issues. If it's a single parent, it's a people's issue. If it's a pension problem, it's a people's issue.

I've heard so many so-called specialists — men — talk about women's issues this afternoon that I'm fed up to here. I think we should get on with this Bill and let the

women's council represent the 50 percent of the population of this province it's designed to represent.

MR. MITCHELL: I would simply like to address the comments of those who think this suggestion, this amendment, was made without seriousness. This is a very serious amendment, and it addresses exactly the kind of issue you're going to have to address when you set out to choose, via the Lieutenant Governor, the 15 people who are going to be appointed to this advisory council. What criteria do you have? What interest are they going to represent? Are they going to represent MLAs' wives? Are they going to represent ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I'd just caution the hon. member. Would you please address the Chair as opposed to "you" and "you." I can assure you that I can appreciate the emotion of the moment.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My point is that there must be criteria, and it's important that we discuss those criteria. While you can ridicule criteria which we have had the presence and strength to develop and debate publicly, we don't see that coming from the other side of the House. It's very easy to be frivolous, to be smart, and to be artists of put-down. But this isn't the way this kind of amendment should be treated, because it is a very, very seriously presented amendment and it addresses a very serious problem that the Minister of Culture is going to have to deal with. We want to help him deal with it publicly; instead, it will be dealt with behind closed doors.

What's more, I can't understand why the government would be concerned about these selection criteria getting out of their control. The minister will ultimately, I guess via the Lieutenant Governor, choose the members of that council. So this will just be a process of public nominations of people. If the government wasn't particularly happy with the people who were nominated, they could for that matter nominate anybody they wanted and ultimately select them. I can't see why the government would be frightened of this set of criteria. Any selection criteria will not be exhaustive. By definition, it will exclude certain groups or certain kinds of people. But that's not to say we can't try and we can't approach a better solution, and that's what this is offering.

Where I am perhaps even more struck by the response to this amendment is in the kind of negative perspective it underlines on the part of this government. Here is a government whose Treasurer was talking yesterday about a bias for action: it may not be perfect, but we're forging ahead; we have to do whatever we can. Those were stirring words. Those words apply now, because no legislation passed by this Legislature will ever be perfect. There will always be weaknesses. But I submit that there are far fewer weaknesses in these selection criteria than there will be in whatever criteria the government will imagine behind closed doors. These selection criteria have been strengthened by its exposure to the public eye. By definition it will be better.

I can't underline enough how many times we've heard ministers — the Minister of Agriculture defending programs of farm aid by saying: "We have to do it. We don't know that the selection criteria are absolutely perfect, but we have to forge ahead." Mr. Chairman, that kind of statement and that kind of principle apply exactly to these selection criteria. It is a very serious matter, and we would urge the House to support it.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, just to participate briefly in discussion on this particular amendment. We've discussed this concept previously, and as I indicated, it is our intention to look at women from across the province and from a variety of backgrounds in Alberta. I have to say, though, that while some of the amendments the hon. member has proposed in the last couple of days have had some merit, frankly I do think this amendment is poorly drafted and ill thought out.

Mr. Chairman, there's no indication of what constitutes a group; whether or not all women who are involved in agriculture, for example, have to meet the constituted group to elect somebody or nominate somebody. There's no indication of whether at least the first six categories could all be embodied in one particular woman, because certainly they could. There are individuals who'd fit most of those criteria. There's no indication of whether or not he's planning to require a means test for the individual living in poverty.

Frankly, it is not one of the member's better amendments and has not been well drafted. I couldn't support this particular amendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

[Motion on amendment lost]

MR. MITCHELL: I have the next amendment, and I guess the last amendment, unless somebody else has another. That's because this amendment affects the preamble. I just want to be clear that we're voting on the amendment to change the title of the Act to the Alberta Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and this amendment would further change references to "Women's Issues" in the title to "Status of Women" wherever they occur.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do members have a copy of the amendment? Are you ready for the question?

MS MJOLSNESS: I'd like to say again — and I'll speak to one amendment this time — that various members of the Assembly have made their objections to using the term "women's issues" known throughout this debate. So I would like to support this amendment, and I'd like point out that it's exactly the same title that is used on Bill 208, which was presented by the Member for Edmonton Highlands.

Thank you.

[Motion on amendment lost]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question on Bill 19?

MR. YOUNIE: Just a very short comment on the Bill in terms of a question. It seems the government and the minister are determined that in fact no selection criteria will be included in the Bill. I wonder then if, in an attempt to convince us that the overall Bill or that detail does deserve some support, the minister will commit that at some point there will be formalized criteria in the form of regulations that will accompany this Bill and that they will, at some future point, be presented to the Legislature before the council itself is formulated.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, in concluding debate — I suppose that's what we're doing on committee reading of Bill 19 — I'd like to observe that it's with regret that we note the resistance from the government side to consider in the most serious elements those proposals which have come forth in amendments.

I note that a number of cabinet ministers take opportunities every time they are on their feet to suggest that opposition members are not doing their part in proposing alternatives, Mr. Chairman. I would contend, in fact, that we have been doing more than our fair share when one looks at both the number and quality of amendments that come forward in consideration of Bills from the opposition benches. [interjection] Yes, at least the Official Opposition side; that's true.

I think at this point this is not — because this is so serious to me individually — a matter of partisan politics. That may be hard for the government members to believe. But believe it or not, if this Bill had never seen the light of day and it was a serious government proposal that basically answered all the queries we've posed, basically addressed the issues we've posed in terms of its constitution, its mandate, and its composition, and then enacted those considerations under regulation, I for one wouldn't have fought it. The reason is that I think this issue goes far beyond partisan politics.

On behalf of our caucus I express our sincere disappointment in the attitude expressed by government members. I sure as heck wonder what goes on when we're not in the Assembly and why there was such incredible resistance to even little bits of amendments that would have done a bit in moving that Bill towards a stronger mandate for the women of Alberta who want an independent council on the status of women to make recommendations to the government, to promote awareness in the public of what forms of discrimination exist in our society; one which would have been comprised of women, so that the issues would be spoken to from the highest authority, that being experience.

Thank you.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to indicate a few comments after hearing the latest remarks tonight from the Member for Edmonton Highlands. She used the words "incredible resistance" on the part of government members to consider the most serious amendments proposed by opposition members. She said that it was hard for her to believe government members would have certain attitudes or that government members have not given these matters their careful attention.

I'm very disappointed, Mr. Chairman. A number of government members spoke in this series of evenings and afternoons on this Bill, and I believe that each member of all parties spoke very carefully and very seriously. None of us in this Assembly takes this matter as some kind of casual situation. Each of us comes here with a background, and the majority of us at this time happen to be male; it's true. Each of us is working towards representing our constituents, and each of us brings here our experience and our backgrounds and our capabilities. The minister was eloquent in his description of what he had hopes to accomplish, and he hopes to see the advisory council accomplish.

Mr. Chairman, I'm not saying that the members of the New Democratic Party or the Liberal Party, or at least the members who have spoken, are not giving careful consideration to what is before them, but I find it very unfair and beneath her to suggest that each of us has not given

this serious consideration. It is not just the Bill that we are debating; it is what each of us has learned in life, what each of us has learned in political life, what each of us has brought to this Assembly since the election.

I look forward to the minister closing this stage of the process of this Bill and the selection by the cabinet of the people who will represent all of Alberta, particularly women of Alberta, in discussing and bringing to our attention the concerns that we all share and helping us as a government and as an Assembly to determine where we're going. I'm very sorry that she concluded as she did.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, would the hon. member refer to hon. members by their constituency.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, I am very sorry the Member for Edmonton Highlands took the position she took, and I am looking forward to the Minister of Culture perhaps explaining how he sees the council now and in the next few months commencing its work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question on Bill 19? Hon. Minister of Culture.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, just briefly to respond to a couple of the questions raised during the discussion in committee stage. With respect to the question from the Member for Edmonton Glengarry, I'd have to say no to formalized criteria which would be presented to this Assembly. In fact, I believe formalized criteria would be counterproductive. In the appointment of any board, commission, agency, or other body, the first criterion should always be the best possible people for the position. I feel that from time to time, in fact, the kind of membership that the council may wish to have could well change, depending on the issues it's dealing with at that specific time.

I have mentioned a general approach which I hope Executive Council will take in making the appointments. That's a point that I should underline. A number of members mentioned the minister making the appointments. If the Bill is read carefully, it's in fact the Executive Council, the cabinet in total, that makes the appointments to this particular council. With respect to that, I've mentioned that in my advice to Executive Council I'll be looking at women from all parts of the province who represent a variety of viewpoints and situations in Alberta. But I think to put down formalized criteria for any board or agency is in fact to exclude some of the people who may be the ones you need the most and to do something for this point in time in our development which may not be what you'd want to have in six months or so because of the changing circumstance.

With respect to the comments from the Member for Edmonton Highlands, this Bill has been developed with complete — consultation is never complete, but with a great deal of consultation with organizations and individuals across the province. In fact, when concerns were expressed at the original introduction of Bill 7, the government, in a spirit of openness and wanting fully to have the benefit of the knowledge of people in the province, particularly women and women's groups who might be affected, sought that information and developed the Bill keeping that in mind.

While the member well made the point that there was a great deal of quantity in terms of amendments proposed to this particular Bill and that all — if not all, most — were sincerely presented, I do believe that they were not improvements to the Bill presented here, which is in fact

the product of discussions with a great number of Albertans on this particular issue.

Mr. Chairman, in terms of the comments from the Member for Banff-Cochrane, I now hope that, should this Bill receive the hopefully unanimous support of the Assembly, as it did on second reading, it will proceed to third reading stage, be passed, and then within a fairly short period of time — my goal would be sometime in October — the appointments to the council would be made. It would meet and begin to determine for itself, with some meetings with myself and others they may wish to meet with, what direction should be taken for the future with respect to the issues that we've all talked of over the number of days this Bill has been debated in the House.

I look forward to the council becoming active in the near future and certainly by the end of the year, under the chairmanship of Margaret Leahey, being active and available for the kind of advice we're looking for from the advisory council.

With that, I'd like to thank all members for their participation and hope that we still have support for Bill 19.

[Mr. Chairman declared the motion carried. Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Ady	Elliott	Musgrove
Alger	Elzinga	Oldring
Anderson	Fjordbotten	Osterman
Bogle	Getty	Payne
Brassard	Heron	Reid
Campbell	Hyland	Russell
Cassin	Isley	Schumacher
Cherry	Jonson	Shaben
Crawford	Koper	Shrake
Cripps	McCoy	Speaker, R.
Day	Mirosh	Stevens
Dinning	Moore, M.	Webber
Downey	Moore, R.	West
Drobot	Musgreave	Zarusky

Against the motion:

Barrett	McEachern	Roberts
Chumir	Mitchell	Strong
Hawkesworth	Mjolsness	Taylor
Hewes	Pashak	Younie
Laing		

Totals: Ayes — 42 Noes — 13

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Bill be reported.

[Motion carried]

#### Bill 1 Natural Gas Pricing Agreement Amendment Act, 1986

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to this Bill?

MR. PASHAK: During second reading, I think we agreed that the Bill provides essentially the legislative framework



to legitimize the regulations that have been introduced since the November 1, 1985, gas pricing agreements which accompanied the Western Accord. A number of these regulations are set out in section 9 of the Bill. I can accept that the Bill is necessary in that respect, but at the time we dealt with it in second reading, I suggested that the Bill really went beyond just giving legitimacy to those regulations.

I'd like to direct some attention to section 8 of the Bill, and I think that also ties back into section 2, as I understand it. Section 8 essentially amends section 15 of the Natural Gas Pricing Agreement Act, which is some 20 pages long, and which actually provided for an Alberta border price, as I understand it. If this Bill goes through, it'll remove the whole concept of a border price from the Natural Gas Pricing Agreement Act.

So I have some basic questions that I'd like to ask of the Premier with respect to this, Mr. Chairman. Why has the government gone ahead with this? Is it just to implement the deregulation scheme? It seems to me that in doing this, the government is also taking some authority away from the Energy Resources Conservation Board and transferring that to the cabinet. They'll now have the power to make a lot of regulations with respect to the pricing of gas through order in council.

I might like to add that I find it rather strange that this government is doing it at this time, when I think it was a Tory government, with the present Premier as the minister of energy, that was so concerned to introduce the Alberta border price in the first place. There were darned good reasons for doing that. Back in 1972, if I recall correctly, the price of gas was something like 16 cents per 1,000 cubic feet. It was really undervalued in terms of — it wasn't undervalued, but consumers in Ontario just weren't willing to pay a fair price for the gas. If I recall correctly, Premier Lougheed put restrictions on the export of natural gas in an attempt to bring the price of gas up. I assume that in doing that, he probably felt that why should he sell a commodity that's potentially as valuable as natural gas at ridiculously low prices? That seems to be the opposite of what the current government is encouraging. It seems to me they are trying to maximize the sale of gas regardless of the price, in an attempt to try to improve the cash flow position for Alberta producers.

A second problem that seems to me to arise in conjunction with this question is that, again, back in the early 1970s, one of the major obstacles to Albertans getting a fair price for their gas was the role TransCanada PipeLines played at that time. It was a monopoly that was perceived not to operate in the interests of Albertans. When we entered into the Western Accord, it wasn't just Alberta that was to introduce new laws that would provide for deregulation. I think it was also understood or implied that maybe the government of Canada would have to do some things to break up monopolies such as TransCanada PipeLines. Today, as I understand it, TransCanada PipeLines is not just a pipeline, a carrier of gas; it also has fully integrated with it a company that markets gas. In addition to that, TransCanada PipeLines has its own source of supply within the province of Alberta. So it seems to me that we're moving ahead with deregulating gas here in the province of Alberta while at the same time you've got a very powerful corporate entity, TransCanada PipeLines, that really is a monopoly operating in a situation around which deregulation could never apply.

Mr. Chairman, I think this Bill and these particular sections require the willingness of other provinces and

companies to take part in the spirit of deregulation, if it is to work. It seems to me only Alberta is going ahead with this. I think the reason Alberta perhaps felt confident about entering into deregulation and making the amendments to the Natural Gas Pricing Agreement Act, as incorporated in Bill 1, is that they felt they had powerful friends in Ottawa. They felt that perhaps a Conservative government in Ottawa would be sympathetic. It seems strange to me that they would rely so thoroughly on this kind of situation to bring the benefits to Alberta that I think, in all faith or in all good will, they anticipated would flow from the Western Accord.

In recent months I think we've seen situations in which the federal government has in several ways turned its back on Alberta. I think everyone in this House would have to recognize that that national government is in trouble, at least in the polls. It might not survive another federal election. We could be back into a situation with a government that might be inimical to the government in this province. Then what protection would we have as a province in terms of selling our gas to eastern interests?

We can recall that back in the early 1970s the big issue the province was engaged in was to try to prevent federal encroachment into jurisdictions that Alberta claimed for itself. By introducing these amendments in Bill 1, I guess my major question to the Premier of the province is: what safeguards can he suggest or provide that we would be able to withstand continued or further assaults on our sovereignty in these questions in terms of ownership of oil and gas, with a different government in power in Ottawa?

MR. CHUMIR: I have a few comments to make as well, Mr. Chairman, and a number of questions I would like to put to the Premier or the hon. Minister of Energy as a result of the perspective that I would like to present in my comments. My main concern is that the province does what it can to see that the collapse of natural gas prices is contained as much as possible. The word I am getting from those in the industry with gas to sell is that we're facing a very serious problem indeed in respect of new gas sales, and I've been told recently of unsuccessful attempts to sell gas at \$1.10 an mcf. So new gas sales are going at perilously low prices, and part of the problem, of course, is that we have a desperate scramble of cash-starved companies to sell gas in the ground at any price. It is a very bad environment in which to make sound business judgments, and it's particularly a problem for the small companies.

Now, there are two separate issues when we consider price deregulation. The first issue is whether or not we should be deregulating prices at all, the global question, and the second is the methodology of regulation. Should we deregulate so rapidly in this environment so as to repeat, or run the risk of repeating, the dramatic collapse in oil prices? It's clear that regardless of how we answer the first question as to the merits of deregulation, ultimately most of those in the oil industry are of the view that we need a parachute to soften the landing as natural gas prices decline.

The industry has been and is being severely damaged by the precipitous price declines, and it's this instability and the rapidity of the change which have caused such great damage. Had it taken place on a more gradual basis, the damage would certainly have been contained. Accordingly, it's clear, to the extent that we are able to provide it, the industry needs a stabilizing period to consolidate and regroup. We're not free agents. We have a history. We

have some agreements in place. We have some undertakings, but consistent with the efforts of our government... I understand that there are limitations, but our legislation should be directed as much as possible to soften the landing and stretch out such price declines as may be required, keeping in mind at all times that some decline is required in order to preserve some of our markets.

So in light of this goal of slowing the decline, I am concerned about the tools that we have available to us to accomplish that goal after this legislation is in place. It is with a view to understanding what those tools are and perhaps the intention of the government in utilizing those tools that I would ask a few questions. These questions relate to the structure of our legislation in providing the tools that this government may need in meeting the problems I've addressed.

I would like to receive confirmation, first of all, of my understanding. This seems to be quite clear that this Act ceases to be applicable once the federal/provincial agreement establishing a border price terminates, and that terminates pursuant to the Western Accord. My understanding is that that would then be effective November 1 of this year, after which time this legislation would become, if I may use the legal term — it's not often I get the joy and pleasure of doing that, notwithstanding potential derision to me — *defunctus officio*. [interjection] Some glee at the use of the term. I spent many years getting a legal education so I could throw those phrases around every so often.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

So that is the first point that I would like confirmed. Secondly, I would appreciate confirmation whether that date is firm and definitive in terms of the effect of this agreement. Thirdly, after that takes place, if price controls are sought, is it correct that the mechanism by which the government would seek to do that legislatively would be the Natural Gas Price Administration Act, subject, of course, to any constitutional questions that might arise with respect to the validity of any pricing constraints absent in the agreement? The fourth question relates to my perception that any additional protection with respect to price would have to be sought by way of the role of the ERCB in approving or disapproving the export of gas and the terms of export.

I'd very much appreciate it if the Premier and/or the Minister of Energy could confirm my understanding of the technical aspects of how the government intends to approach this question of control. Would they be so kind as to provide a glimpse into the darkness of their intentions as to what their philosophy is with respect to where we should go, what our goals should be in this respect, what the potential is for keeping the prices up to some extent in light of the realities, of which they would presumably be well-informed through the experts to which they have access?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Premier?

MR. TAYLOR: Is he closing off the debate?

MR. GETTY: No, I don't do it in committee. I did want to respond to some thoughtful comments about the legislation.

Mr. Chairman, speaking first to the first speaker on the legislation, the hon. Member for Calgary Forest Lawn, it is true that the border price will not exist after October 31, 1986. He was concerned also that we were taking away from the conservation board certain price setting capabilities

that they have. They have not any price setting capabilities now, and we are not assuming any in this legislation.

He mentioned why we regulated gas in the first place and why those comments aren't here now. I guess there were lots of reasons. As I recall, being part of the negotiations at the time, one of the main reasons was because it was necessary for us to establish our right to regulate the price over the right of the federal government to regulate the price. They were going to, and it was important that we moved with as strong legislation as we possibly could to establish our right to set prices. Having come to an agreement or stalemate or whatever people might have wanted to call it in those days, we agreed that we each had pretty powerful legislation, and we then came to an agreement on price. Of course, from then on we entered into natural gas pricing agreements to not challenge each other's right to set prices.

I think one of the overwhelming considerations that the members would have to think about is how interchangeable oil and natural gas are as energy sources. They both could be used for petrochemicals, for natural gas heating. They can be used for other feedstocks. It's getting to be that they can even be used interchangeably for automobiles. If one of the two is deregulated, as one is, then if you do not allow the other to be deregulated, you absolutely remove its ability to compete, and you would soon find that many markets were no longer available to natural gas. At the beginning you have to bring yourself to the realization that if you're going to deregulate one of these two sources of energy, the other must follow, because you totally throw out the market system with two sources of energy that are almost interchangeable. You would do more damage by trying to keep one regulated and not the other. It would be far better to take them both back to regulation than to insist on allowing one of them to stay regulated while the other is deregulated.

There were some comments about TransCanada Pipelines. They must now carry gas as a common carrier. It is true that they both buy and sell gas, but I believe that portion of their company is becoming a smaller and smaller part of the organization, because they are forced to carry gas for anybody who enters into an agreement with a supplier at the other end of their line. Therefore, TransCanada merely charges their cost of service and delivers the gas. That has been a ruling by the National Energy Board, and I think it's a good one.

I think the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo was really concerned about the strength of the province's ownership legislation for responding in the future. That seems to be his concern. I think that's a very valid concern. It was also raised by the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn. What happens if we have a government that once again sets out to try to establish ownership or control of Alberta's resources? We would then move with all the strength of our constitutional rights of ownership of the resources — legislation as we have now, other legislation. The very legislation we are bringing in, the natural gas resource preservation Act, still is a very powerful piece of legislation. The Energy Resources Conservation Act, which allows us to not sell at a wasteful price, is very powerful legislation. We would of course use whatever other strength of legislation our legal advisers would tell us to. We always have that capacity to do that by the strength of this Legislature and the support of the people of Alberta.

I hope we don't go back to those types of days. They weren't very pleasant. Our new strength in the Constitution,

I would say, makes our ownership even stronger now. But the ownership of these resources is so important to this province that we would be required to move with every bit of legislative strength we had to reverse what we're doing now, to do the very things we did in the early '70s, when we were not regulated in any way. As I was mentioning to my friend from Westlock-Sturgeon the other day, most of our time, his and mine, in this industry has not been in a regulated industry. He made the point that maybe the seven sisters and the cartels were able to do it for a while, but in true regulation as legislation, for most of our lives we have not participated under a regulated industry. We are now going back to the industry that we participated in for so many years prior to the energy wars of the 1970s and '80s. This legislation is a step in that regard. I think it's something that will in the long run be best for our industry. It allows the smaller companies in our industry to participate very aggressively.

The term "collapse" of natural gas prices is overdone. I think we have now experienced the lows in natural gas prices. As a matter of fact, companies are now saying to me, "We are refusing to sell at prices that are unreasonable," and they're able to enter into contracts. I think we're back up. We've now had strength in the oil price, from \$11 to \$16 — and, I believe, going higher — and we'll work our way through the gas bubble in the United States. This is such a valuable resource that it will be commanding a premium price in the future. I'm sure our producers will be able to establish prices to allow them to make good profits and explore in the future.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I think the Premier gave a good explanation of where he's standing now, although I still have some questions. I wasn't clear from his explanation whether he answered the Member for Calgary-Buffalo's question as to whether this is really just an interim.

I find myself in a hard position to really constructively criticize, because although the Premier and I have spent most of our lives in the oil industry, we have opposite philosophies on utilities. I am quite a firm believer that regulation is needed and that we have to have the ownership control of setting the prices. When I see this, I sort of get a bit of a warm feeling that the government isn't going to throw everything to the wolves and let the international marketplace set gas prices, but it does set in motion a couple of thoughts.

The Premier well described that if oil is free — of course, the fuel oil prices that come from it are going to vary if you can get a cheap load of crude from Saudi Arabia and refine it for a few dollars a barrel. However, I think a great deal of our natural gas is not competitive with fuel oil. It really has to be competitive with electricity. It's heating and refrigeration in the home. There's no way that whole areas of cities are suddenly going to switch over to fuel oil overnight. Therefore, natural gas is competitive with electricity at that time, and electricity isn't getting any cheaper, mainly because most electrical manufacturing concerns are either owned by the government and used as a source of revenue or are owned by what you might loosely call private enterprise. I think calling a privately owned utility company private enterprise is really stretching the fact. It's more or less an exploitation licence than it is enterprise.

Nevertheless, the utility companies keep a relatively high price so that natural gas can be sold to homes quite a lot higher than it can to industry. In fact, in New York state,

where I am still producing gas, you sell natural gas to homes at as high as \$7 a thousand cubic foot. But you'll sell it out of the same well to industry — for instance, I have a contract with Carnation Milk for 90 cents. This is American money. So what you have is the grave danger of a gas pipeline company or a gas company in effect holding up the consumers that can't have an alternative — the homeowner and that — charging a big price, and then substituting and selling gas very, very cheaply to the industrial consumer. This is where I think the government of Alberta and this paper may well be able to stick their nose in and say: "You're not going to get away with expanding gas markets in the U.S. by taking on hundreds of millions of cubic feet of cheap gas to industrial users. We would rather you cut off the industrial user and made sure that you're only supplying the high-price buyers. Let the industrial user use fuel oil or something. Don't let the industrial user use you as a weapon to get your natural gas price down so that you end up selling a good deal of your natural gas to industry at a very, very cheap rate indeed."

That's why I'd like to voice that word of caution. I think the government's being in there and watching gas contracts is very important, because you're in a very tough league when you talk about international gas utility sales. Some of these companies are almost as big as Alberta. They know how to manipulate the market; they know how to move things around.

That does lead to a couple of other questions, though, that bothered me a bit. I think another argument for government's stepping in and watching the pricing is that although the Premier mentions that it's a free and competitive society and that many people say that the low has been reached and that they will not sell their gas any lower, unfortunately there are a lot of small companies that are just one jump ahead of the sheriff — their banker would be a more polite word — and when the banker tells you to sell, you sell even if it's only a dime. You don't have that much choice, in effect, so you might help out a lot of the small companies just by saying — if the small company could come back and say: "Sorry, Mr. Banker, I can't sell my gas for 90 cents an mcf because the government won't let me. They insist that I sell it for \$2 or \$1.50."

I'm not so sure the bottom has been reached yet, because the oil industry, having overborrowed back in times when they thought that indeed the price of oil would go on forever, is in a position now where the bankers, I think, are forcing a great many people into selling or accepting gas contracts they maybe wouldn't accept if they did not have the banker breathing down their necks. Consequently, to say that there's a free market now might be stretching it a bit to a lot of people who are selling. The government would probably do a service to itself by bearing in mind that the higher the price you can get for the gas — it's government gas in the first place anyhow. Most oil and gas companies really just made a contract with the government to develop the gas.

I don't think it would fail to impinge on this government — and I'm fond of reminding them of it — that the Mexicans decided that once gas got down to below \$3.80 an mcf, to heck with the U.S. They could go without them. In effect they told the Americans, "You go work on your own gas bubble, and when you're finished, come back and see us." I think we Canadians have been a little too keen to sell. Government and taxpayers own the gas. The companies are really only contractors to get the gas out of the

ground and sell it. I think we've neglected our duty in trying to hold the gas price up. I see some glimmer of hope in this Bill, and I laud the government for it.

If I may, one negative factor. I'm a little worried about clause 4(b). It says, "in the case of gas intended for consumption in Alberta . . ." In other words, in clauses (4)(a) and (b) there appears to be a philosophical door already opened that has me a bit concerned. Apparently, the government thinks that in many cases natural gas should sell for a different price in Alberta than outside Alberta. I find that very hard to understand when this government has for a long time pushed the idea of deregulation. If you're really deregulated, how can there be an Alberta price and an outside-Alberta price? Something is a little bit wrong here.

I'm a little worried knowing the almost incestuous connection that exists today between the utility companies and the Alberta government. Of course, it's the very nature of utility companies to spend a lot of time and money lobbying, but there is a very close relationship here that has me concerned. When you realize that these utility companies also own a large part of our petrochemical and fertilizer industries, I get very concerned as to whether or not this government would not be susceptible to lobbying by these "friends", if you can call them that, into getting gas a little cheaper than they should if it were on an actual free-market basis. Was this clause put in, in effect, as a bail-out procedure to help out those industries in Alberta like petrochemicals and fertilizer that now use large amounts of natural gas? Down the road are we going to expect a percentage of the taxpayers' or oil companies' natural gas to be sold to Alberta consumers at cheaper than regulated prices in order to try to keep alive a dream and an industry that maybe should not have even started in the first place?

MR. McEACHERN: I rise to make a few points about Bill 1. We did discuss this once before, and at the end of my remarks I was told by the Premier I was some kind of a nut that didn't know anything about the oil industry. Be that as it may, I've been watching the oil industry for a long time, and I've got to say that there are some strange anomalies. I will offer some of the same ideas again and perhaps look at one or two other possibilities that I didn't mention last time.

Whatever the reasons for the regulation that we had in the mid to late '70s, you've got to admit that it was at the wrong time. It was just when the price was going up. We would love to have not had it regulated. Now when the prices are down, we are deregulating — again at the wrong time. So it seems to me that something's gone wrong somewhere in the planning and handling of our oil and gas industry in this province. If I talk about oil and gas in the same breath, you can understand why, after the comments the Premier made a few minutes ago.

The deregulation of the oil industry has already taken place, as you said, and it would not make sense to not deregulate the gas industry also or at least keep one unregulated and the other one regulated. But it would seem to me that in the kind of difficulties we're into, perhaps you should be thinking of reversing the deregulation on the oil rather than deregulating the gas. If the prices stay as low as they have been or go lower, there are some very clear and very obvious results, some of which are already happening. The producing provinces — namely Alberta — as my friend from Calgary Forest Lawn said, are the only ones making the concessions. The consuming provinces are

getting cheaper gas as a result, and we get lower provincial royalties as a result. We get to deplete our reserves faster as a result of the lower prices and trying to sell more to make up the revenues. We are watching the collapse of our small industrial sector, particularly the exploration companies.

I hope the Premier is right that the prices are stabilizing and are going to rise again, at least to some extent. I'm not necessarily suggesting that we need \$80 or \$90 a barrel for oil or \$5 or \$6 for gas, which I guess would make Alberta very rich but would be kind of hard on consumers. But at least if they stabilize at some kind of level that can sustain the industry in the province and sustain the exploration and search for new sources, that would be very encouraging. The Premier knows very well that if the recent OPEC agreements break down and oil prices go back down to around \$8 or \$10 or \$12 a barrel, at some point, obviously, the gas prices are also going to go down because, as the Premier has stated, they are so interchangeable. We could see a situation in which most of the industry in Alberta will be destroyed, particularly if those prices stay down for three or four years. Again, I would say that I hope that doesn't happen, that prices do stabilize, rise to a level where we don't need the \$5.5 billion borrowing that the Treasurer is asking for, that we can get out of a situation of running deficit budgets as we've had to do this year.

I want to comment on the idea of a floor price again, because that was the idea that set the Premier off last time around. I note with interest that both the Premier and the Energy minister lately have been talking about stabilization price — a floor price by any other name. I don't really care what you call it, although the kind of scheme you come up with does, of course, concern those of us on this side of the House.

One of the things I would like to say is that to stabilize the price, you shouldn't necessarily be looking at huge government handouts. What you should be looking at is that the price customers pay is sufficient to maintain that fairly stable price. It seems to me that in a country that has enough gas and oil to be self-sufficient, it's logical that we should not leave ourselves totally at the whim of international markets. Those are not really free markets anyway; they're manipulated markets, at least when OPEC can have its way. So it would seem to me that within Canada we could shelter ourselves, to some extent at least. I'm not suggesting that we get too dogmatic about it or refuse to allow the prices to go up or down at all or anything like that. I'm just saying that if we eased the swings a little bit, the ups and downs, we could work toward self-sufficiency, a long-term stable supply. That would make a lot of sense for the customers, the people of this country, and also the producers of gas and oil in this country.

I will leave the Premier with those thoughts.

MR. CHUMIR: I have a few questions I would like to address either to the Premier or the Minister of Energy. I'd like to talk turkey in fact, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to hear the hon. Premier or the minister talk turkey about what they foresee happening with the price in the consumer market in eastern Canada. I understand that the border price is approximately \$2.80 per mcf at the present time. Rumours are that in current negotiations TransCanada PipeLines has been talking 10 to 15 cents below that. That's hardly a price collapse, and it's encouraging if that line can be held.

There are some factual aspects the government should be aware of which I've heard discussed within the industry that may impact upon the negotiations between TransCanada PipeLines and the eastern distributors. For example, I would like to ask to what extent eastern distributors have the right, pursuant to the National Energy Board rulings, to use TransCanada PipeLines to make direct purchases from producers in order to displace TransCanada contracts in the event that they're unhappy with the price. On one hand, I've heard that the National Energy Board has said that the distributors must honour those contracts with TransCanada and it's merely a matter of nose-to-nose price negotiations. However, I've also heard it suggested there is a view that the distributors feel they may have the option of circumventing the TransCanada contracts and going directly to the producers in Alberta or other parts of Canada. The capacity to do that or not is, of course, of fundamental importance in terms of the negotiating result that is taking place at the present time. I would be very interested in the government's understanding of what the rules are with respect to the use of TransCanada PipeLines and their contracts, whether there is some uncertainty in that regard.

I would also be interested in the information the government has with respect to the potential of eastern consumer markets importing significant amounts of natural gas from the United States. Is there some possibility of significant amounts coming in and competing with natural gas? That also is very fundamental in terms of negotiating posture.

Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether the Minister of Energy might care to address with perhaps slightly more particularity the questions I alluded to earlier.

I assume the Premier's answer with respect to the demise of the border price on October 31 was just stating in different language that this Act is in fact *defunctus officio*, is no longer effective as of November 1 this year. I would appreciate confirmation of the perception that the legal tools, the armour and weapons that Alberta has, would be under the Natural Gas Administration Act firstly, and secondly by way of the right of the Energy Resources Conservation Board to set the terms upon which exports would be permitted.

Thank you.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Chairman, there were a couple of questions or comments raised by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. I don't know whether they were really questions. He made comments. I tend to agree with many of them. Utilities, as he said, should be regulated. I agree; they should be. It is true that electricity is a competitor for our natural gas, but the quality of the fuel doesn't really compete. Therefore, I think we will always in Ontario, where our major sales are, or in the United States be able to compete with electricity and do it at a very good profit.

He mentioned that companies might do certain things, and that's true. Individual companies or people may well make short-term corporate decisions, but I think that's always true. No marketplace is perfect. When there are market forces at work in a marketplace, you always have anomalies here and there, but in total I think we will see that the market will work and that companies will not sell a resource below its value. On a general basis they will not. They will insist on and receive true value.

Excessively low prices. The province would not approve excessively low-priced contracts. As the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn said, long before there was regulation and the price was 16 cents an mcf and being kept there by

TransCanada when they were in a monopoly position, the province did not approve any additional sales of gas. Anybody selling gas, like TransCanada, has to constantly be renewing their supply. If you don't increase their supply for the future, then they cannot maintain their sales. What we did was refuse. Since each contract must have an order in council, we just didn't pass the orders in council. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, it was impossible for the company to assure its consumers that it had supplies for the future. Therefore, the consumers started to search elsewhere for other supplies, whether it be electricity, oil, or bunker crude. I think it would always be the case that we would use the strength of our ownership, the right of any owner to ultimately decide whether he wants to sell something at the price offered. It's built into the leases and into our conservation board system.

The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon also mentioned Mexicans. That's a different society and a different philosophy. By merely saying, "We aren't going to sell, and we'll wait until the gas bubble is gone," we would of course do severe damage to many companies in Alberta that we're all trying to help, as he knows.

The Member for Edmonton Kingsway mentioned what will happen if we have three or four years of \$8 a barrel oil. I agree with you. We won't be looking at these solutions; we'll be looking at a whole new set of considerations, which will take all the brains of this Assembly working together to try and pull our economy and our energy industry together. It's an extreme-case scenario that I just don't think is going to happen. I don't have any proof of that. It's just that I don't believe it's possible to happen. The people who would be selling at those prices couldn't sustain it and would in fact be cutting their own throats as well.

I'm not sure if we'll ever satisfy the Member for Calgary Buffalo. He wants to know what might happen to prices in eastern Canada. As I said earlier, we will have a short-term period of weakness, but I think the lowest point for natural gas in eastern Canada has been reached. TransCanada PipeLines does want to keep the price up, but they can't go beyond their ability to negotiate. Somebody will walk into one of the eastern utilities and say, "Listen, we'll sell it to you for less." Sure enough, that can happen. TransCanada is worried about that. That's a possibility. But one of the most important things about natural gas is to not just have it at a price but to have it at a fixed term of supply. That is one of the things that few companies or only companies working together as a consortium can provide. TransCanada happens to be able to provide that. Therefore, it can command very attractive prices, because a utility in eastern Canada must have the assurance of the supply on a long-term basis. It is laying pipelines itself. It is opening new ground. It is tying into homes, residences and, of course, is making a commitment to those people that it can have that supply in the future.

I don't think the United States' gas coming into Canada is a real problem at all. The United States does not have a supply of gas for its own needs in any part of the United States except for a very short-term period, and I think it's just not something that we need be overly concerned with. The United States' biggest problem is that while they can produce on a very short-term basis, they cannot assure their own utilities' supplies over the period of time a utility needs that commitment.

Mr. Chairman, we made the commitment to move toward deregulation in oil, and we have. We are going through a transition period now that may or may not be fully carried

through on November 1, '86. Nevertheless, this Bill is necessary. The Member for Calgary Forest Lawn recognizes that. I think all members in the House recognize it. We should proceed to live up to that commitment.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. GETTY: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Bill be reported.

[Motion carried]

### Bill 2

#### Department of Tourism Act

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 2 be reported.

[Motion carried]

### Bill 3

#### Department of Energy Act

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Chairman, basically we support the recognition by the government of the serious problems facing the energy industry in Alberta by proposing this Bill. We agree that there must be a department that addresses itself exclusively to the best utilizations of the province's most valuable resource. I just have a couple of questions with respect to certain sections of it. Again, we commend the minister and government for their decision to form the Advisory Committee on Heavy Oil and Oil Sands Development. We recognize that by setting up this committee, in a sense it's a recognition that private enterprise cannot develop nonconventional resources such as these by themselves, so there is some need for government support and assistance.

We have some reservations. Perhaps the minister would care to respond. Again, we're in agreement that the community representatives will form the largest single group in the committee, but we think it would be useful to include members representative of labour so that its concerns would also be reflected on that committee. That's the first concern I'd like the minister to address, if he would be so kind.

The second concern has to do with the fact that the single representative business is to be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. As with the community representative, we're concerned about how these people will be chosen by the council. We don't necessarily want representatives that would do nothing but toe the government line. Can the minister elaborate on what sort of nomination process will be put in place?

In conclusion, we generally support this Bill. The government has made energy an even greater priority by limiting the resources of the department solely to that field, but only with a new and progressive approach to the industry and current prices will this Bill have any positive effect, in our view.

MR. CHUMIR: Just one very brief comment, a rather technical matter with respect to the legislation. That relates to section 4, the power of delegation. It's the lawyer in me coming out again. Section 4(1) states that

the Minister may delegate in writing to any person any power or duty conferred or imposed on him by this Act or any other Act or regulation under his administration.

[Mr. Gogo in the Chair]

I refer to emphasize the delegation power to any person. I contrast that with the Department of Tourism Act, which was just considered moments ago, in which the similar section refers as follows:

5(1) The Minister may in writing delegate any power, duty or function conferred or imposed on him by this Act or any other enactment under his administration to any employee of the Department or any member, officer, or employee of an agent of the Crown in right of Alberta.

If you look through the legislation setting up the various government departments, you in fact find a split in the provisions in the legislation, some restricting the power of delegation to employees and other agents of the Crown and others stating that the power of delegation may be to any person. It seems to me that the proper governmental principle should be to restrict the power of delegation to someone who is within the sphere of government. That means that the form utilized by the the Department of Tourism Act is a more appropriate one than that in the Department of Energy Act, where it is carte blanche to any person on earth. Technical as it may be, I think the distinction and difference is meaningful and significant. I would suggest that that is a section that might easily be amended, and perhaps should be amended, to bring it into the form that should pertain in a parliamentary democracy when we are dealing with the power of delegation.

I would note that those other ministers who have departmental Bills may wish to check their legislation and determine whether or not the same defect is there. I call it a defect because I believe it is a defect. I suspect it's a carryover of draftsmanship. Whoever has been using the precedent has probably carried it over. I think the bad precedent has been followed here, and the good precedent is in the Department of Tourism Act.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. TAYLOR: Just a short one. I'm hoping the minister would respond, although you're asking for the question. I'm just wondering what was the purpose of section 7 on grants was in this Act. It seems to be lifted out of Social Services, Culture, and many other things like that. I don't really see where it has any business in a good, hardheaded, free-enterprise development of a natural resource department of a government calling itself Conservative — the Department of Energy Act. I would think the minister would have enough to do with supervising the oil business without having a clause that — apparently, he can set up all sorts of things: hockey teams to represent different oil wells. Culture: I suppose we could have open-air operas around different natural gas plants. With all the different areas in there, it just seems to me that it's a clause that's lifted out

of a bunch of other clauses and has really no purpose in the Department of Energy, where the minister should be preoccupied with trying to get the oil out of the ground or at least lease the oil rights.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Chairman, in response to some of the questions, this Bill, the Department of Energy Act, is essentially a rewrite of the Department of Energy and Natural Resources Act, which should be repealed. The sections that the hon. member is referring to are written very similarly to the sections of the previous piece of legislation.

With respect to the advisory committee, that is no change. There was an advisory committee under the old legislation, and this particular Advisory Committee on Heavy Oil and Oil Sands Development has served a very important and useful function in those regions of the province where we have developments in the areas of heavy oil and oil sands. The hon. Member for Calgary Fish Creek is the chairman of that particular committee. Historically that committee, in communities in the northeastern part of the province particularly, has worked with community associations and groups and has provided a very valuable service.

The makeup of the committee is outlined in the Act, with representation from communities in the area. As I recall, the committee has essentially been intact for some time now. We deal with appointments on an ongoing basis in terms of receiving recommendations from a variety of sources, so we welcome any ideas with respect to appointments to that committee once the terms of the existing members run out.

We see the lawyer coming out in the Member for Calgary Buffalo with respect to the drafting of a particular section, the delegation section. The way this particular Bill is drafted is identical to the way Bill 4 is drafted. Certainly I'm not going to get into debate with him about the innuendos with respect of the draftsmanship of the delegations of the powers of the minister, simply to say that we have very skilled draftsmen in the government. I think they'll not see this as any different from what we've had before, other than some slight variations between Bills.

The section dealing with grants is identical to the grant section of the other piece of legislation that's being repealed. The hon. Liberal leader knows that there are incentive programs that the government has, and we have the powers to provide grants to the industry. That's there as well.

Mr. Chairman, it's essentially a redraft of the Department of Energy and Natural Resources Act, separating some of the functions of Energy from Forestry, Lands and Wildlife.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, I rise just to refer to section 7 again. I know you said that it is drafted the way the previous Act was drafted, but that doesn't really excuse the omnibus nature of it. The government tends to do this on most Bills, as we have seen: sort of give total authority to the minister to make grants and not give any indication of what those grants would be for. I'm suggesting, for instance, that you look at section 7(2)(b), regulations "prescribing the purposes for which grants may be made." Why should the minister have to go away and do that again? Why shouldn't that be in the Bill? There's no real reason why you can't set some fairly specific criteria as to the purposes for which grants are to be made, rather than leaving it totally open.

The same with, for instance, section 7(2)(d), "prescribing the persons or organizations or classes of persons or organizations eligible for grants." I'm not asking you to put all

the regulations into the Bill — nobody's doing that — but just to say that the minister has the right to make grants, and then let it go at that. I know the clause about the supply vote for the purpose for which the grants are made is there, but the purpose and basic outline of what those grants are for could very easily be put into the Bill in such a way that one would feel more comfortable with what the grants were about rather than just some omnibus, whatever the minister wants sort of approach.

I think the government should consider that request in all its drafting of Bills. I don't think it's an unreasonable one. I don't see any reason why we shouldn't have some indication as to the purpose, the reasons for, and who qualified for grants rather than just some blank cheque. I'm really getting a little tired of seeing blank cheque after blank cheque to minister after minister.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Chairman, it's great to have one's eagle eye and suggestions so highly appreciated. Might I just ask of the minister in respect to my previous comment that he undertake to inquire about the merits of the power of delegation to any person on this earth. I think that once the issue is raised to anybody with any legal perception in the concept of the administrative principles that should pertain to delegation, they will recognize that there is a very interesting question there. Not the biggest issue in the world for the Department of Energy, but if the minister would undertake merely to inquire about it, I would sleep far more easily.

DR. WEBBER: If I might quickly respond, Mr. Chairman. I certainly will follow up on the delegation issue that the hon. member raises. However, it's my information that in fact legislative drafting is moving in the direction in which this Bill is drafted, primarily to allow people on contract, other than just departmental people, to be included in terms of delegating authority.

I don't know what in the world the hon. member over there was talking about with his comments on grants. [interjections]

[The Member for Calgary Buffalo rose]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The minister has the floor.

DR. WEBBER: When I say "the hon. member over there," don't get sensitive. I mean the one in the NDP.

The minister may make grants in his regulation-making authority, a standard section in legislation. The hon. member made comments that it should include what the grants are going to be used for. How do you know in advance in many instances? The examples we have are numerous. So standard ways of writing the legislation — if he wants to become a lawyer, maybe he should go to university.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 3, the Department of Energy Act, be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 5**  
**Rural Electrification Revolving Fund**  
**Amendment Act, 1986**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this Bill?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 5, the Rural Electrification Revolving Fund Amendment Act, 1986, be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 7**  
**Department of Social Services Act**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to Bill 7?

MS MJOLSNESS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have some comments to make on Bill 7, specifically on section 9(2). There were a number of comments made in respect of this particular clause in second reading of Bill 7. This particular clause states that

the Minister may charge fees to any person for any service provided, research done or materials provided by the Department.

In second reading of this particular Bill, I anxiously awaited the response by the minister, as I thought that may put to rest some of the concerns I had. But it didn't exactly do that. I had more concern once I heard the minister's response, because none of the concerns we on this side had were denied by the minister in her reply.

We in the Official Opposition object strongly to this particular clause giving the minister the power to charge fees to any person for any services provided by the department. In the previous debate in second reading of this particular Bill, there were many issues raised regarding the charging of fees for various services. I think it's really important to note that under no circumstances should a minister be given the power to arbitrarily charge a fee for any service.

It's quite common knowledge that the majority of people utilizing services from the Department of Social Services oftentimes come from the economically deprived sector of our society. [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please.

MS MJOLSNESS: Therefore, they are not in a position to pay a fee for certain services. They are in need of assistance at that particular time, and many have gone through a lot, have gone through extremely difficult times before they even get to the department to ask for assistance in the first place. I think what we're dealing with here is a fundamental principle that services should be accessible to all people regardless of their economic situation. I think the notion of a fee for services as stated in this Bill is quite unacceptable.

Under the current Department of Social Services and Community Health Act, I think section 5(1)(e) states that the minister may regulate fees for certain services. I don't have the Act here in front of me. At any rate, it specifically outlines what services she can charge for, those being things like nursing homes, day cares, residential

homes, or hostels. It seems to me that this particular clause is very reasonable. Therefore, I would like to introduce an amendment to this particular Bill. I'd like to hand out the amendment while I'm reading this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It may be worth 10 seconds until the hon. minister and the Government House Leader get a copy of the amendment before the member explains it.

MS MJOLSNESS: Perhaps I'll just read the amendment while it's being passed out.

The Bill is amended as follows:

A. Section 9(2) is struck out and the following is substituted:

"(2) The minister may make regulations fixing the rates to be charged to persons residing in social care facilities as defined in the Social Care Facilities Licensing Act that are owned and operated by the Government."

This particular clause is currently in the Department of Social Services and Community Health [Act]. It seems very reasonable, and I would like to see this particular clause reinstated in this Bill as opposed to the clause that's in there at the present time.

Replacing section 9(2) with the current clause allows the minister to make regulations fixing the rates that will be charged, and then specifically outlines what services will be affected by these particular fees. Also, I might add that returning the current clause to Bill 7 would not allow the minister to charge for materials or research done within the Department of Social Services, to ensure that individuals and community agencies that are receiving more and more responsibility in the social services area would still have access to that information.

With that, I urge support for this amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do all members have a copy of the amendment?

MS LAING: Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak in support of the amendment and against section 9(2). The principle of section 9(2) destroys the commitment to a safety net made by this government to the voters of this province. It may indeed add to the shame, humiliation, and suffering endured by many recipients of social service programs. Means tests are difficult at best and often add to the stress that is being suffered when people come to social service agencies. Again, we would have to look at what the cutoff points are and how discretionary and arbitrary they are. Anyone who has worked with recipients of social assistance or publicly funded social services knows about the arbitrariness and the discretionary powers that are both enshrined in regulations and guidelines and given to individual social workers.

One can have even further concern as there is an increasing push to man-years, computerization, and hands-off delivery of service. Indeed, I shudder to think of the injustices possible. Who will be denied service? How many will face hardships in order to pay? How many will not receive service? If in fact people do require such service outside the parameters of the safety net, then they may well be able to purchase those services. I have grave concerns when the services that should fall under social delivery, such as assessment as to suitability to become adoptive parents, move to the private sector and costs. Who will be



deprived of the right to adopt a child because they cannot afford the cost of an assessment? Will there be discrimination between those who can afford to pay and those who cannot?

I have raised the concern of conflict of interest. To a private psychologist or social worker who is doing the assessment, who is the client? Is it the prospective parents or the department? Again, who will supervise as to the comprehensiveness and the completeness of the assessment? In view of this section, will nonprofit societies that presently provide free service be pressured to charge, or will they be underfunded so that they have no alternatives but to charge or to cut services? If they are forced to reduce services or are not able to provide the required services, is this an avenue to open up privatization of such service?

This section is markedly different from the amendment, and I would urge support of the amendment that we are proposing. I would suggest that the measure of a society, of a government, is how it treats and cares for its young, its vulnerable, its needy, and its hurt. I say to the minister that this section as it now stands in this Act is a black mark against this society, and I urge support for the amendment.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, I too would like to add my voice to the sense of compassion that I think is being exhibited on this side of the House, particularly in reference to this amendment. It seems to me that there must have just been some bureaucratic slip here. I just can't understand that it would be an intentional move of the minister of the department to institute this user fee, in a sense, particularly at a time when the hospitals minister is revoking such user fees in hospitals. It's ironic that it's now being entrenched in such a wide-open way in this part of the Bill, that it would be wide open to any person for any service.

As I said, to be consistent with what seems to be government policy — when people are sick, for instance, it's not a time to take advantage of them. If someone has to go into hospital, it's not a time to charge them a user fee. Similarly, when people are in a time of need, it's not the time to take advantage of them or to charge a user fee for services by the department. It's profiteering, in one sense. It's obviously just not acceptable. If it's a deterrent fee, it's not proven. It doesn't make any sense, as we've experienced in hospitals.

The amendment, on the other hand, does make good sense, and I would like to add my voice to that of members who have already spoken so eloquently in support of this amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Chairman, I would like to voice my opposition to the amendment and indicate my support for the Bill, particularly section 9(2). First of all, there are a number of Albertans who don't always fit into categories that are decided or are covered in regulations or legislation. There are many people in need in this province who may not fit into the particular categories that are developed for a wide cross section of people. This would be one way of ensuring that those persons who might otherwise be denied access to a service would have it, and they are very prepared to provide a nominal fee or a fee for research and so on.

Secondly, there are many times that the department will be called upon to provide additional copies of information, not to persons receiving a service but to persons who want information about a service. Why should the taxpayers of this province pay all of those costs, a burden to the

department, when people require copies, information, research data, and accessed information, taking not only valuable time of the social worker but the administration system, which surely should be there for the people most in need.

Thirdly, Mr. Chairman, I think there are many times when the department is called upon by out-of-province requests as well as in-province requests for information about this or that particular program. I see nothing wrong with the people of Alberta providing that service through the department, provided the people receive a benefit so that it doesn't take away from the department's ability to expend its money for those persons most in need.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, I have the greatest confidence in this minister, who will carefully consider. It doesn't say that the minister shall charge, but "may" charge fees. I'm quite confident that the minister will develop an approach in this area that will see not one single Albertan denied any service for which that person can produce a need.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, we went through a discussion about this particular specific section when the Bill was up for second reading. Obviously, I did not allay hon. members concerns with respect to that section. I want to assure them now that regardless of who is in place, in most instances in the delivery of programs by either the political people who are involved or the bureaucracy a great deal of the emphasis must be placed on people who have common sense. Regardless of how tight you write regulations or rules, common sense must prevail in the delivery of programs. I want to assure hon. members that no person in this province in need of a service that is provided for the various categories of people who through no fault of their own must access services — those people will not be denied. I have a feeling that I'm almost witnessing a dissertation by Chicken Little in that the sky is falling, the sky is falling!

It's an extraordinary situation when you look at legislation for most departments where services are delivered. Whether you're looking at a parallel in, for instance, the Department of Education, this same type of provision exists. Again I say to hon. members that if you wanted to enumerate pages of detail to try to imagine every circumstance where something might be made available to people outside of a need category and therefore that the department must or should be able to charge a fee, that would be absolutely impossible. Hopefully all hon. members will realize that the needs and the climate for all people living out there in the real world change constantly. We must identify those needs and serve those needs.

The needs may be by people, as the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane mentioned, who do not necessarily come into the category of financial need. Yet there is capacity in the system to respond to them through their desire to come through a government-initiated program instead of going to the private sector for the same kind of expertise. Surely hon. members wouldn't want to preclude that from happening.

I can only assure hon. members that as with the sections that prevail in other departmental Acts that allow for fees to be charged, certainly those fees come under great scrutiny. When being charged fees, if the public felt it to be unfair, they would certainly make that known, which is the democratic process in action. But certainly they would be well scrutinized. There is no desire on the part of government to preclude anybody who is in dire need from accessing services.

MR. YOUNIE: Mr. Chairman, I feel a couple of points just made deserve some response. I think it is all very kind of us to say that this minister would never misuse that power given to bill anyone for any service that comes under her department. Indeed, I hope that that faith is well placed. But again I have to say that because I would put that faith in this minister at this time, hopefully they are not designing this Bill just to suit this minister in this particular year or month. I can envision ministers who may not have her compassion and kindness and, who, out of anger towards a certain person applying for social services, may in fact say, "Well, we're going to charge you so much for that service, because I'm mad at you today." I don't think giving power that can be that obviously misused under the wrong circumstances is a sensible thing to do, and to be told that to give that kind of power to a minister without any redress is democracy in action is most erroneous. So I really think we have to think that over. In terms of saying, "Well, if we try to draw up a list of criteria for those we could charge for a service because we could demonstrate that either they didn't really need it, they just wanted it, or they would have the ability to pay and, therefore, should pay for it if they want it," I think that is an abdication of responsibility; also, when it comes to social services and their importance to people, the obvious necessity for choosing, if necessary, to err on the side of caution rather than to err on the side of stinginess.

So I would say these are the people who obviously could afford to pay, these are the criteria we as sensible people could draw out, and in cases where we may have missed somebody, then we may have to think about revamping that regulation. But for now we as sensible people will sit down and say, "These are the groups we think could obviously pay for this kind of service, and we will charge them if necessary; others we won't charge." I do not want to see that kind of power left up to the discretion of what I can see as a worst-case scenario of the worst possible minister in the worst possible times wielding that power in the worst possible way. I think history and Murphy's law teach us that eventually we're going to end up with the worst possible minister using that power in the worst possible way for the worst possible reasons, even though that wouldn't be this minister. So I don't think it would be wise to put that kind of power in there.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I guess I'd like to add my voice in support of the amendment and to express concern for that section of the Bill which this amendment would replace with a slightly different angle.

The minister, in responding to the concern, did refer to perhaps charging for information to organizations or individuals, and I wonder if in that assumption we're including independent or nongovernmental social service agencies. For example, we have a number of agencies like Humans on Welfare, the Edmonton Social Planning Council, and Catholic Social Services — a whole host of social service agencies that are operated independently, voluntarily, and without government funding — who I'm sure in their role of advocacy find themselves on the phone to either the minister's department or directly to social workers or other divisions within the minister's department. I wonder if in their pursuit of helping people they themselves may find their ability to do that curtailed by virtue of any sorts of fees. I might be surprising the minister with that question, but it's an honest question, if that was what was intended by the section we're proposing to amend.

The other thing is this, and this is not to hang anything on the current minister. It's been my experience, watching the proceedings of the government over the last several years, that when sources of revenue appear to be tight, one of the first targets the government looks at is the Department of Social Services. This amendment would prevent user fees of any sort being agreed to under this Act by the department as things may get worse in the province. We're well aware of the nature of the memo that has been released by the Treasurer, which indicates that departments may be looking at pretty serious cutbacks. Mr. Chairman, the point is that if we are looking at pretty serious levels of cutbacks in government services in what would appear to be a fairly indiscriminate fashion, then it's not out of the question that history would repeat itself and, in fact, the most vulnerable people in our society would find themselves being hit with extraordinary charges. I am aware that the policies within the Social Services department itself require that extraordinary additional needs as provided through the minister's department for those on social allowance can be "charged back", I think the phrase is, or deducted in equal monthly amounts from the monthly cheque that may go out to a particular recipient.

I think that in some instances there is merit in doing that, and in many instances there is not merit in doing that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Let the hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands speak to the committee.

MS BARRETT: However, with the Bill the way it is without the amendment, we have no protection in terms of a broad commitment that we wouldn't see an extension of that policy beyond the range of extraordinary need items or security deposits for rentals. It is not a total vote of nonconfidence in the departmental change or in the minister that we're requesting serious consideration of this amendment but that the intention of that section in the previous Bill, which I believe still governs until this one is passed — that is, stipulating that the fees would pertain to social care facilities — be upheld and new consideration perhaps be brought back with specifics in mind, if indeed it's possible to enumerate those specifics of who it is that would be subject to those charges. A very lengthy treatise, I recognize, but I think that's a slightly different angle on the concern we have in supporting this amendment.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, the members of the government who have spoken to this particular amendment have said two things. They have said that no person in need will be denied if the Act as presently brought forward is approved or passed by this Assembly. It's very nice to hear those words spoken, although the words spoken in the Assembly don't carry the same weight as the words that appear in the Bill itself. As far as the force of law, the words which have been spoken carry with them no guarantee whatsoever, as well intentioned as they may be.

It says two things. No person in need will be denied. How will that be determined? How will the minister know that a person in need will present themselves and receive a service and not be denied because they cannot pay for that? Will there be some kind of needs assessment or means test set up at the point at which someone presents himself to receive a service? If there is not that kind of mechanism, how will we be guaranteed that a person will not be denied a service? Will there be some kind of appeal mechanism established? If a person is charged a fee which is inappro-

prate and they feel is inappropriate, how will they have an opportunity to appeal the fact that this fee is being levied on them? None of that is contained in this Act. Without those provisions being contained in the Act, for the minister or any other member to stand up and say that no person in need will be denied is fine, but it doesn't carry any particular weight.

We are very concerned that what may be established by this apparently small change in wording from the previous Act to the present Act may, in fact, be a two-tier system of social services, such that those who have the resources to pay fees for the services they wish to receive will receive those services, but those who do not have the means to pay for them will be discouraged in many subtle and not so subtle ways. There is no guarantee or provision made to ensure that people in need are not denied. Without those two key provisions being dealt with by the minister — that is, to assure us that there will be a means test or some way of assuring that need can be determined in some way — and in the absence of any kind of appeal mechanism to ensure that fees are not inappropriately charged, we have to assume that this opens the door for some future two-tier system being established in this province.

Mr. Chairman, in view of the fact that these kinds of services over the years have been put in place to ensure that they meet the needs of people in need, the opening of this kind of door gets to the fundamental core or purpose for which these particular programs have been enacted and have been in place for many, many years in this country. They are established for people in need. The moment you start putting up obstacles, you are undercutting the basic purpose for which the programs are established.

There are many ways of denying people services. If you don't really want to provide these programs and services to people, there are many ways of denying them to them. You can set up a prohibitive fee system such that you can always say we provide these services, but in reality they become exclusive. They're limited to a certain group of people who have the financial means to access them. When a provision in a Bill states that a "Minister may charge fees to any person for any service provided", there is no restriction within that particular provision. Anything provided by that department can be subject to a fee.

Mr. Chairman, regardless of the good intentions and assurances provided by the minister and members opposite, that kind of power has got to be restricted, because it provides an opportunity to subvert the entire intention and purpose for which this legislation and these programs have been established. Until the minister can provide to the Legislature amendments to this Act which would assure that no person in need will be denied, we must reach the conclusion that the far-reaching powers contained within this provision carry with it the potential that people in need may in the future be denied access to these sorts of services. Mr. Chairman, unless those kinds of provisions can be provided in this Act, we must conclude that this power should be restricted.

We feel that the previous Act under which this government and this ministry has been operating was sufficient. No significant case has been provided to this Legislature to convince me, at any rate, that this change ought to be made. So we're simply saying to this Legislative Assembly that we should go back to the provision in the existing Act, that this kind of far-reaching provision and power is not warranted. The provision and power that has been requested in the Department of Social Services Act, Bill 7, simply

is not warranted, is not justified, and has not been properly defended. It's far too broad, far too wide-ranging to assure me that people in need will not be denied services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton Kingsway on the amendment.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to put it in a little different context than some of the comments made by my colleagues. Section 9(2) is very similar — actually the minister raised the point, I suppose — in its sweeping power to section 10, only section 10 is talking about giving out grants. A few minutes ago we had from the Minister of Energy a very similar sort of omnibus statement, saying that the minister could make grants with no qualifications except that he could make any regulations he wanted.

I say to this government very seriously that for 10 or 15 years you have ruled this province with such big majorities that you believe you can give total sweeping powers to your ministers and that's okay. I think the last election said something about people being concerned about how their tax dollars are being expended and the policies of the government. They're saying that they're not sure everything is quite as good as it should be, and they sent some of us here to talk about that. One of the things really getting to me is that Bill after Bill after Bill comes through this House with total sweeping powers. With no principles laid out, no objectives set, how are you supposed to have any idea years later whether or not the objectives have been met? No guidelines. We're not asking any of the ministers to put all the regulations into the Bill. The Minister of Energy seemed to assume that's what I was asking; I was not.

We do not want all the regulations in the Bill, but we would like some guidelines. There should be some principles laid out, there should be some objectives laid out, and there should be some guidelines as to who qualifies for grants or who can be charged service fees. In the case of the grants, we've ended up letting some Bills go through with that in them because that seems to be the way it is. The numbers are too great and we can't outvote you. But it would not take very much talent on the part of your writers to be just a little more careful how they do those sections.

The reason section 9(2) is important enough to make the kind of fight we're making on it now, rather than just stating it once or twice, is that this does allow whether the minister would do it or not. The minister can be the nicest person in the world and never do it. Okay? But it does allow the minister at her own whim to charge user fees to some of the poorest people in this society if she so chooses. And while I know she wouldn't do it, that's not good enough. There is no reason in the world why that statement about fees cannot be set in a reasonable and limited way even as it was in the previous Bill. That's all we're asking. It seems to me that to sit there and say "Trust the minister" is just not good enough in this case. We seem to have to do it in sections like section 10, where the grants are made, in Bill after Bill, and I request that you start changing that.

These Henry VIII provisions, I think my friend from Strathcona calls them, are not good enough anymore. The people want accountability. We are heading into a tight budget situation in the next few years, and we need to become more accountable. We need to know what the policy is and what the principles are, what the objectives are, and at least some guidelines in the Bill, not in some other document put out for the banking industry, as in the stock savings plan we were looking at the other day. So I say

to the minister that there is no reason section 9(2) shouldn't be taken out and the section from the previous Bill inserted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question on the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Edmonton Calder?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Barrett	McEachern	Roberts
Chumir	Mjolsness	Strong
Hawkesworth	Mitchell	Taylor
Hewes	Pashak	Younie
Laing		

Against the motion:

Adair	Elliott	Musgreave
Ady	Elzinga	Musgrove
Bogle	Fjordbotten	Oldring
Brassard	Heron	Osterman
Campbell	Hyland	Reid
Cassin	Isley	Russell
Cherry	Johnston	Shaben
Crawford	Jonson	Shrake
Cripps	Koper	Stevens
Day	McCoy	Webber
Dinning	Mirosh	West
Downey	Moore, R.	Zarusky
Drobot		

Totals:	Ayes - 13	Noes - 37
---------	-----------	-----------

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, to the minister on this particular item. I would like to ask the minister how need will be determined as it affects fees people in need might be charged for the receipt for any service provided by the department or under this section of the Act. How will that need be determined, and how will the minister guarantee that people will not be denied services because they cannot afford to pay for those services?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, it is obvious that we have a major difference in philosophy in terms of our belief that there are some cases, even in a department like Social Services, where there can be services delivered to people who desire the service and in fact would be pleased to contribute toward that service so that budgets are intact and people who have great need can be served. I want to say to the hon. members of the opposition that, in fairness, you haven't cornered the market on caring. I think every person in this Assembly cares a great deal for all those people they identify in their constituency that are in need and want to do the very best they can. We all bring a different view in terms of how to identify those needs and serve those needs.

It was mentioned that so often when it's viewed that there are budgetary constraints, Social Services becomes a target. I would argue that that is not so. I would argue that the most extensive safety net in this country, as provided for by a province, is in fact the province of Alberta. I

would say to all hon. members that we're proud of that record and we would strive very hard to continue that record.

Society's definition of need has changed over time, so for us to somehow frame, in a tight legislative sense, precisely how we evaluate need restricts our ability in terms of delivering a service. I believe that all hon. members should contribute to discussions as to who in fact is in need of a service . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please.

MRS. OSTERMAN: . . . and whether it should be delivered by government. That's a discussion that can arise from question period, work its way into private members' days, and come out in a legislative discussion such as tonight. Hopefully, all of us who have responsibility for particular pieces of legislation listen very carefully as members on the government side and members of the opposition enumerate what they believe to be appropriate on behalf of their constituents.

One last comment, Mr. Chairman, with regard to a comment made by the hon. Member for Edmonton Glen-garry. I take great exception to the use of the word "power." The last time I looked, every member of this Assembly was elected to be responsible. I am responsible for this piece of legislation, and other ministers following me will be responsible. I would hope that all members will do their jobs in keeping government accountable and responsible.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, perhaps my question wasn't clear enough. It was the minister who said earlier that no person in need will be denied services as a result of the enactment of this particular clause of this Act. She must have had in her mind some idea of how that would be accomplished. She has referred to what our role might be as legislators in terms of raising potential problems in the House. But I'm asking in terms of an administrative sense: how will need be determined such that no person in need will be denied a service as a result of fees that might be charged to them for any service provided under this particular section of the Act? Will there be any kind of appeal mechanism? Will there be any kind of needs test? How will need be determined, and how will it be guaranteed that no service will be denied to people in need? I hope that's stated clearly enough that the minister can answer.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 7 be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 4**  
**Department of**  
**Forestry, Lands and Wildlife Act**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 4, Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife Act, be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 8**  
**Department of**  
**Community and Occupational Health Act**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions, comments, or amendments proposed?

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, some questions, please, about community and occupational health. In the split away from Social Services there are a number of areas of work that the hon. minister and his honourable department do which really have had a historic and, we think, very logical connection with Social Services. We continue to be concerned about how these services are going to be dealt with; for instance, the FCSS funding, which has traditionally been in connection with Social Services and those who are in that area of administration. We talked earlier today about suicide and suicide prevention. Often those who are in and through the Social Services network could be the ones for suicide counselling. In addition, home care has always had a connection with Social Services, but now that the medical entry has been added to it, how does that connect administratively with this department?

It's not a matter of having real problems with the Bill or anything. We're just wanting to have some more "buts." We're just wanting to make sure that administratively, since there has been this historic and logical connection between community health and social services given out — and it's even with the Boyle McCauley Health Centre here in the city of Edmonton that there is a great incarnated connection in those two — what's being done in the department now continues to be in close connection with the Department of Social Services, to continue to make sure that adequate delivery of community health care is at all levels of society, particularly at lower levels? [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, if I may respond directly to the question, so we can get to the vote. The question's a good one, although if you go back historically to the old estimates of the then Department of Social Services and Community Health, we did a very clean split of the various votes under that department to create a series of new votes within the two new departments. I don't have the previous vote numbers with me, Mr. Chairman, but the family and community support services program, the suicide prevention program, and the home care program were always associated with what was then known as the community health division of the Department of Social Services and Community Health. So historically that linkage, that relationship has always been there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please.

MR. DINNING: I don't believe the member is looking for a lengthy explanation of our initiatives under the family and community support services program or under suicide prevention or home care.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Excuse me. There's some difficulty with members who wish to talk. Will they go to a microphone that's not alive, because it's interfering with the hon. minister.

MR. DINNING: We've had that debate in our estimates of the Committee of Supply and at other times, so if that's an explanation, Mr. Chairman, I think that explains that historical split but an ongoing relationship with the Department of Social Services and the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care in all aspects of our departments' program delivery. There's a strong link amongst the various programs we offer.

REV. ROBERTS: In the estimates debate, the hon. minister stated that he was going to compete with his colleagues for dollars. I'm just wondering, as we've seen the memo from the Treasurer, how that competition is going, given any cutbacks. Is he getting more bucks for this great new department than Social Services or Hospitals and Medical Care or others?

MR. TAYLOR: To the minister. I've looked in vain through this for some sort of co-ordinating body or tie-in between his department, the Hospitals and Medical Care department, and Social Services. Out in my constituency — and I've run in a few other areas — there's a problem when it comes to home care, in that the funding for home care, which comes under your department, out to the different health units doesn't compare as well as the funding, say, to either active treatment or nursing homes. So what we have is people with marginal incomes being charged more, because the local board has to make a charge to go on home care. My understanding is that they have to pay a fee for service in home care to the local board which is higher than it would be if they had taken their senior citizen into a nursing home or to an active-treatment hospital. In other words, we're diverting people to the most expensive care, because there is a more complete subsidy at the most expensive care level than at the home care level.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, may I just quickly respond to the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon? On the home care program provided through vote 2 of the Community and Occupational Health department budget — some \$105 million of funding to 27 local boards of health and health units around the province; \$33 million this year for home care — there is no charge levied by any local board of health for the provision of that service or in fact any other service.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, I'd briefly like to place one concern I have on the public record and draw it to the minister's attention, that being the fracturing of mental health services in this province. As I understand the organization of mental health program delivery, community-based programs fall under the auspices of this particular department. Institutional and hospital-based services fall under the auspices of the Department of Hospitals and Medical Care. As programs affect children, I believe to a certain extent those are provided through the Department of Social Services. So we have three departments, all with various expertise, programs, and responsibilities for the provision and delivery of mental health services in Alberta.

Previously, when these programs were under only two departments, the Department of Social Services and the department of health, administrative committees were set up on a regional basis throughout the province in order to attempt to integrate the delivery of those services from the community to the hospital and back and forth. With three departments responsible for the delivery of that whole spectrum of services ... [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Chairman, with three departments providing this whole spectrum of services, I'm wondering what administrative means or mechanisms are in place to ensure the integration and co-ordination of mental health services. Which department is going to provide the lead role? Which minister is going to be primarily responsible for the delivery of mental health services within this province?

I am concerned about that because I'm wondering whether the institutional care model of mental health services is always going to win out in the competition for money to run various programs. Or will one particular department, one particular minister — and hopefully this particular minister — be provided the means and resources to ensure that the broad range of services is going to be provided in a co-ordinated and integrated way? I want to ensure that children's needs in this area are not going somehow to be forgotten, because perhaps they don't have as high a profile as the other kinds of needs in the community and in the province.

Mr. Chairman, fundamentally, I want to place on the public record that as far as I'm concerned, I think we're moving in the wrong direction. Rather than fracturing the responsibility amongst more and more departments, these kinds of programs ought to come under the auspices and responsibility of one department top to bottom, to ensure the co-ordination and integration throughout the province for the broad spectrum of people with mental health needs.

Thank you.

MS LAING: Mr. Minister, I have a question. I'm not sure what is meant by section 11(2). Is this a way of privatizing hospitals and hospital care and making the care for the sick then come into the private sector? I'm unclear as to the meaning of that section.

REV. ROBERTS: A question. Since it has come over from Social Services, I'm wondering whether under section 8, the minister would also in his powers — and let's not kid ourselves; they are powers — include user fees for services rendered by the department. Are they going to be consistent with Social Services and incorporate a clause similar to that? If he has the good sense not to, could he explain why he has withstood that pressure?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, I'll speak quickly. Competing for dollars: the Member for Edmonton Centre spoke of that. This is a brand-new department. We've taken component parts of what were previously under the Social Services and Community Health umbrella, the Workers Health, Safety and Compensation umbrella, and housed them in a brand-new department for which I can quite proudly bring forward a budget to the tune of nearly \$260 million. I think that is an important and responsible initiative in the field of public health, mental health, occupational health, and family and community support services.

On the mental health side, I don't believe the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View might have read or heard my comments when I was defending our estimates in Committee of Supply. At that time I felt I made a very strong commitment in the area of mental health. If I may, Mr. Chairman, just repeat a sentence there, I said:

The delivery of community-based health care is a matter which I take very seriously and, frankly, I'm very concerned about it.

I went on to talk about the discussions I've had with the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care and the Minister of Social Services and, in that regard, have spoken with them. I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, that we have many more discussions on the whole subject of mental health ... [interjections]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order in the committee, please.

MR. DINNING: ... particularly, as I stated earlier today, in the area of children's mental health. The hon. Minister of Social Services has those children who are clients, who are part of the welfare system. Hospitals and Medical Care carries out the institutional side. We carry out the community health side.

Clearly, even when it was housed within Social Services and Community Health, there were two very different divisions of that department relating to one another, working together, and being a part of that same committee, which still exists, and that co-ordination still takes place. But yes, I too am concerned about that co-ordination: that there be no gap, that there be no crevice, no crack through which any Albertan might fall. So I am talking with my colleagues the Minister of Social Services and the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, and we're doing our very best to make sure that doesn't happen and to prevent any occurrences of that kind.

Section 11(2), Mr. Chairman, refers to hospital institutions. Right now within our department there are three care centres: one in Raymond, one in Claresholm, and one in Camrose. This is a provision in the Bill whereby there is a contractual, a legal relationship as between our department and those three facilities and the Hospitals and Medical Care department. So in the event that somewhere down the road the governance of those institutions might be changed to hospital status, those institutions may deliver hospital-like services. That's provided for in this Bill.

Section 8, Mr. Chairman, makes no reference to the collection of fees. As it may be necessary within the Department of Social Services, at this point, looking down the road, it's not expected that the Department of Community and Occupational Health would have to levy such fees. Therefore, the Bill does not empower us to do so.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Chairman, section 11(2) is a rather omnibus power for something that's supposed to cover three hospital boards. It says "a hospital board." We have a lot more than three in this province. So it's the usual thing of giving yourself incredible amounts of power to do something for something very minor, supposedly by what you say. Of course, that's the same with section 9 on the grants thing, but I've been through that three or four times tonight. I'll just remind you that it's there too. When are you going to revise those things?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. DINNING: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Bill be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 9**  
**Department of**  
**Economic Development and Trade Act**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 9, the Department of Economic Development and Trade Act, be reported.

[Motion carried]

**Bill 10**  
**Department of Technology,**  
**Research and Telecommunications Act**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered in respect of this Act?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Chairman, on behalf of my colleague the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications, I move that Bill 10 be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration the following Bills and reports the following: Bills 19, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 4, 8, 9, and 10.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree with the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Assembly will be in second reading of Bills, starting with Bill 27, and if there is time after that, Bills 49 and 50.

[At 11:09 p.m., on motion, the House adjourned to Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]

