

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, March 19, 1987 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 87/03/19

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege. Yesterday the hon. Leader of the Opposition, in asking his first question, misled the House with respect to the position of the Alberta Association of Optometrists . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair will indeed deal with the matter of privilege at the end of question period.

head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, a distinguished visitor who is seated in your gallery, His Excellency Ola Ullsten, who is the Swedish ambassador to Canada and a former Prime Minister of Sweden. He is accompanied by Lars Falhstrom, the consul general. Would they please rise and accept the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, it's my very great pleasure today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, professor Gu Yi Jian, secretary general of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. He's accompanied by Miss Fu Shu Qin from the academy Bureau of International Co-operation. Also with them are Mr. Kevin Taft, the chairman of the Ex Terra Foundation, and Mr. Brian Noble, the executive director of that foundation. These four individuals represent major participants in a very exciting dinosaur project which Alberta is currently involved with and hopes to involve itself further with those participants. They are standing in your gallery, and I'd ask them to receive the very warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. PIQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you and through you, Mr. Stan Plante, president of the Metis Local 1885; Willy Anderson; Len Gauthier; Mr. Bruce Gladue, vice-president of the Metis Youth Council of Alberta; and six other members of the Metis Association. The Metis people are proud Canadians who wish to have their aboriginal rights recognized at the upcoming First Ministers' Conference in Ottawa. Would they please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome from this Assembly.

head: PRESENTING PETITIONS

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition on behalf of approximately 500 graduate students at the University of Calgary. The students protest the present policies of the provincial government as they affect the University of Calgary.

head: PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present the report of the special committee selected to select the standing select committees of the Legislature. I have four copies.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 22

Rural Electrification Revolving Fund
Amendment Act, 1987

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 22, the Rural Electrification Revolving Fund Amendment Act, 1987. This being a money Bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

The principle of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, is to expand the opportunities for rural electrification associations to utilize the present part 2 provisions of the Act to assist with their capital rebuild requirements, and furthermore it will allow for the amortization of rebuild costs over the useful life of the facility rather than requiring an up-front payment.

[Leave granted; Bill 22 read a first time]

Bill 23

Glenbow-Alberta Institute
Amendment Act, 1987

MRS. KOPER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill, being Glenbow-Alberta Institute Amendment Act, 1987.

This amendment would permit the board of governors of the institute to use realized capital gains and other income derived from the investment of both portions of the Glenbow-Alberta endowment to further the general objects of the institute and for operational purposes under specific terms described further in the Bill.

[Leave granted; Bill 23 read a first time]

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 23 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

Bill 243

Government Open Contract Act

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 243, the Government Open Contract Act.

This Bill removes from ministers the ability to circumvent the public tendering system by requiring tenders to be called for all contracts exceeding \$50,000 and requiring that these bids be published. If ministers decide to award contracts apart from

public tendering procedures, this Bill would require full public disclosure of the details and reasons for deviating from published tendering guidelines.

[Leave granted; Bill 243 read a first time]

Bill 261

An Act to Amend the Vencap Equities Alberta Act

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 261, An Act to Amend the Vencap Equities Alberta Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill would put into the original Act a statement of the purposes of Vencap Equities Alberta Ltd. But it will also put into the original Act the investment guidelines and principles by which Vencap is to operate as a vehicle for the economic diversification of Alberta's economy.

[Leave granted; Bill 261 read a first time]

Bill 258

Special Warrant Publication Act

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 258, the Special Warrant Publication Act.

This Bill will require the publication of a detailed statement of the purposes for which the money authorized by a special warrant of \$100,000 or more is to be used. The Bill places a timing limit of seven days upon the ministers concerned to provide details of special warrants and to cause these details to be published in the *Alberta Gazette*.

[Leave granted; Bill 258 read a first time]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, as required by section 83(2) of the Surveys Act, I wish to table copies of two orders in council passed under the authority of the Act.

MS LAING: I rise to table for the information of all the hon. members a copy of the wording of a petition I have today delivered from the members of Lakewood community in Edmonton to the Minister of Education calling for the retention of 100 per cent funding to community schools.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the Alberta Liquor Control Board's 62nd annual report. Also, I'd like to table the 23rd annual report of the Alberta Racing Commission and also the annual report for the Alberta Solicitor General, 1985-86.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of all hon. members I'd like to table some information. While not wanting to create a bad case of province envy among government members, I should point out that this information describes Manitoba as the province in Canada with the lowest rate of unemployment and the highest projected economic growth rate through 1995 ...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. This is a matter of tabling; it's not a matter of debate with respect to the tabling.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce some 14 students from the Girouxville school in my constituency. They are in grade 9. They are here visiting the Legislature and accompanied by their teachers Mr. Owens and Mrs. St. Andre. They are seated in the public gallery. I would ask them to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, 25 grade 12 students from the La Crete school, in the heart of the Peace River constituency and right next to the land of the midnight sun, accompanied by one teacher, Mr. John Bueckert; parents Mrs. Marian Breckert, Mr. Pete Driedger, Mrs. Betty Driedger; and Mr. Andrew Knelsen, the driver. I would ask they stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Legislature, 25 students in a grade 6 class from Our Lady of Victories school in the constituency of Edmonton Meadowlark. They are accompanied today by their teacher, Mrs. Yvette Brown. I would ask that the members of the Legislature join me in welcoming them to this Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Lethbridge West.

MR. GOGO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have today, seated in your gallery, some very special guests. They come from the state of Israel, and they're exchange students here in the province of Alberta. I would like, when I call their names, for them to rise: Vered Salpeter and Roy David, and their teacher here in the province of Alberta, Mrs. Shoshama Pollack. I would ask that all members of the House welcome these very special visitors to the province of Alberta.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, a man who is serving his community with distinction. I would ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming from the heart of the sugar beet country the mayor of Taber, Mr. George Meyer.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, a gentleman from the city of Fort McMurray, Mr. Doug MacRae. Mr. MacRae is the vice-president of Keyano College, a fine facility in the province of Alberta located in the city of Fort McMurray. Mr. MacRae is also seated in the members' gallery. I'd ask that he please rise.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, just to show that there's no discrimination in the Legislature, we let all the gentlemen go first. I'd like to introduce 50 grades 5 and 6 students from Riverview school in Devon. They're accompanied by Mrs. A. Keylor, Mr. Petesky, Mrs. Fritz, and Mrs. Greenwood. It's the first pleasure I've had to welcome students from Devon, and I had some opportunity to meet with these young people earlier. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly. They are in the public gallery.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Red Deer North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the associate minister doesn't think I'm a gentleman, but I'll introduce my guests anyway. I'm very pleased to introduce today 10 students from grades 10 and 11 from the People's Christian school in the fair city of Red Deer. Traveling with them today is Mrs. Cazemier, their social studies teacher, and their drama teacher, Miss Collins. I'd ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of this House.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Health Care Insurance

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask my question of the Hospitals and Medical Care minister. It has become quite clear -- crystal clear, in fact -- in the last several days that the department of medicare plans on implementing cuts to medically required services while allowing other people, those who can afford it, to purchase separate, private insurance for those services, leaving the rest of Albertans with a separate system. When will the minister reveal publicly, through this Assembly or by other public means, what his hit list is?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's attempt to mislead the Legislature is no different than that that was made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition yesterday. I have said quite clearly on many occasions, and our hon. Premier said quite clearly this week on a number of occasions, that no medically required services are going to be removed from the Alberta health care insurance plan, that this province will continue to have the best health care insurance plan in Canada, as it has had for many years. I have also said that we will give people an opportunity, for health services that are not covered by the Alberta health care insurance plan -- those services which are not medically required -- to purchase private insurance, something that doesn't occur in every other province.

There is, in fact, Mr. Speaker, no agenda whatever to deinsure or have a two-tier system for medically required services. I want to make that abundantly clear to the hon. member and hope that she is listening carefully. [some applause]

MS BARRETT: I am listening carefully, Mr. Speaker. I've been listening carefully for the last 10 days. Let me pin the minister down, then. Is the minister stating categorically that absolutely no services which are now covered by the Alberta medical care system, absolutely none, are up for deinsurance? Categorically, yes or no? [some applause]

MR. M. MOORE: If all hon. members will quit pounding their desks and the hon. member will quit yelling and restate the question, I'll try and answer it.

MS BARRETT: This is not my second supplementary. My first supplementary question to the minister was: will he state categorically that no services now covered by Alberta's medicare system will be deinsured?

MR. M. MOORE: The hon. member must recognize that the Alberta health care insurance plan presently covers a great number of services that aren't covered by other health care insurance plans, many of which are not medically required. All that I can

do is restate, Mr. Speaker, my comments of a moment ago, and that is that medically required services will continue to be covered and Alberta will continue to have the best health care insurance plan in Canada.

MS BARRETT: Slightly different from what we heard a few days ago, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister then at least commit himself to ensuring that an independent, impartial review committee comprised of health care professionals, health care consumers, other people from the public, will be charged with the reviewing of any items which could be up for deinsuring, prior to the minister himself authorizing those deinsuring processes?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I take full responsibility for the matter of consulting with the general public, with the professional organizations that represent general practitioners and other medical care specialists under the health care insurance plan. I've been using members of our caucus who have been elected to serve their constituents in a great number of areas to give me advice and assistance in this regard. In addition to that, as I made a commitment to the hon. leader of the Representative Party last week, I will be meeting with all of the associations that might be affected. In fact, I've already met with five of the six different organizations and some of them on many occasions. I think that's as comprehensive a review, Mr. Speaker, as one could possibly make; that is, meeting continually with the people who might be affected as the care-givers and receiving representation from my colleagues in the Legislature.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that I gave an open invitation last week to members of the opposition to provide me with their list of services that they believe are now covered by the health care insurance plan that might be removed so that we would have funds to provide the necessary services and so that we might balance our budget. I might add that in typical NDP fashion all that I received was a hastily written note by the hon. Member for Edmonton Centre suggesting we add more services to the health care insurance plan -- no idea whatever where the money would come from.

MS BARRETT: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Number 3.

MS BARRETT: It seems to me that . . . No, it's the second supplementary actually, Mr. Speaker. The minister asked me earlier to repeat my first supplementary question.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. It's all been taken into account, hon. member. It's been checked by the Table; this is the third supplementary . . .

MS BARRETT: Will the minister then acknowledge that he is in something of a conflict-of-interest situation inasmuch as he's in charge of the budget for his department and at the same time saying that he's entitled to exercise his discretion on those medically required services? Will he commit himself, therefore, to ensuring that the members of this Assembly are given the option to review and perhaps supply approval of any services which he may want to cut from the medicare packages?

MR. M. MOORE: Actually two questions, Mr. Speaker. The answer to the first one, which related to my being in a conflict of interest, is: no, I won't admit to that. I'm simply doing my

job.

The answer to the second question, Mr. Speaker, is that I've extended an invitation to members of the opposition to make suggestions to me. I'll be reviewing in some detail the proposals that I have with the government caucus, and then, finally, if the Legislature is still sitting when we've completed our work, I will make the Legislature aware of what our intentions are.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I am indeed having trouble understanding the minister. Can you not answer yes or no whether or not it is your intention to deinsure any of the present services presently covered by medicare today in Alberta? Plain yes or no.

MR. M. MOORE: I thought for a moment there the hon. member was mad at me.

Mr. Speaker, we presently have under review the whole question of what services presently covered by medicare should continue to be covered. Whether or not there are some that might be the subject of deinsurance, that matter was under review last summer as well, and we deinsured some non medically required services with the end of extra billing. I think it was quite appropriate that we do so, and we had good support for those moves across the province. We're reviewing that again, and I simply don't know what the outcome will be until we've completed the review.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister of health. In looking at trying to balance the budget, what consideration has been given to looking at a small increase in premiums? Because in speaking to many of my constituents and people across the province, they think they're getting a good bargain. Has any look been given by the department at increasing the premiums to the people of Alberta at this time?

MR. M. MOORE: I'd be pleased to further consider that matter on Monday next.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I designate my second question to the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

Aboriginal Rights

MR. PIQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, one week from today Canada's first ministers will be gathering in Ottawa for the fourth and final conference devoted to the constitutional recognition and entrenchment of Canada's aboriginal peoples' rights. It will be an historic and possibly a unique opportunity to rectify, in part, more than three centuries of what can only be called gross injustices. To the Attorney General and Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, can the minister advise whether or not it is the government's position, versus the position of 77 per cent of Canadians recently polled, that aboriginal rights to self-government must not be entrenched in the Constitution, that such entrenchment would tear Canada apart and fling vast areas of Canada into purgatory?

MR. SPEAKER: Very succinct question, hon. member.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is the position of the government of Alberta that entrenchment of constitutional rights for

aboriginal peoples should follow careful definition by discussions between aboriginal peoples and governments at either the federal or provincial level and not before.

MR. PIQUETTE: Can the minister explain what he means by a proper definition of self-government?

MR. HORSMAN: I'd like to be able to do that, but nobody has been able to do so as yet except to say that we are moving in Alberta under Resolution 18, which was passed in 1985, in negotiations with the Metis settlements in order to do just what the hon. member has asked; that is, to define what is meant by a form of aboriginal self-government. That is the appropriate way, and as the hon. member, who was not in the Assembly in 1985, may recall nonetheless, once that has been done, the government will then ask that the subject matter be constitutionalized by having an amendment to the Alberta Act with respect to Metis lands and Metis settlement lands. That was part of the Assembly decision in 1985; that remains the position of the government.

MR. PIQUETTE: Why is it that seven provinces and the federal government are content to negotiate such matters in good faith following entrenchment as opposed to the British Columbia and Alberta governments, who are saying that they do not wish to negotiate aboriginal rights to self-government?

MR. HORSMAN: The hon. member in his question has made allegations which are not in fact supported by other governments in Canada. All governments, Mr. Speaker, in the course of negotiations have made it clear that definition of what is meant by self-government is essential. Some governments feel that it is appropriate to place in the Constitution a right to self-government without defining it before it is constitutionalized. That is not the position of the government of Alberta. It is our position that one defines carefully first and then constitutionalizes. That is the way governments have come into existence in Canada, and it is the position of the government of Alberta that that is the proper way to continue to see the evolution of aboriginal self-government in this country.

MR. PIQUETTE: I don't believe the answer is acceptable to the aboriginal people of Alberta.

Can the minister advise whether or not the government has already decided to opt out of any constitutional provision for native self-government which may be adopted at next week's conference?

MR. HORSMAN: No, Mr. Speaker, that is not the position of the government of Alberta. It is, of course, an option which is available if any of the proprietary rights and interests of the people of Alberta, as defined in the Constitution at the present time, may be adversely affected or derogated from. That is quite clear. I would point out as well that Alberta is the only province that has provided a land base for Metis people. Alberta is the only province that has entered into negotiations with the Metis people with a view to providing them with a system of self-government which is clearly understood by the government, the people of Alberta, and the Metis people of this province. We are doing something, not just talking about it.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: We've got one more supplementary? Supplementary . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, please.

MR. TAYLOR: He's doing such a good job. Supplementary, then, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier, if I may, with respect to what I understand is a proposal from Nova Scotia on the table which calls for recognition of the right of aboriginal self-government. Can the Premier confirm whether Alberta is one of the only two provinces opposed to the Nova Scotia proposal?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that when you get together in a meeting, that's when the various governments make their positions clear. Other than that, the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs has just given a full answer to the whole matter.

MR. MUSGREAVE: I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the minister could advise if all the native groups of Alberta will be represented at this conference?

MR. HORSMAN: No, Mr. Speaker, and that is a matter of extreme regret to this province. The treaty Indians of Alberta, represented by the Indian Association of Alberta and the Prairie Treaty Nations Alliance, have withdrawn from the Assembly of First Nations. As a result of representations received by the Premier and myself from the Indian Association of Alberta prior to the last meeting of ministers leading up to this constitutional conference, I have sent a telex to the Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn, the federal Minister of Justice, requesting that he seek the consent of the Prime Minister of Canada for appropriate representation for the treaty Indians of Alberta.

MR. TAYLOR: How about the Metis?

MR. HORSMAN: The hon. leader of the Liberal party, Mr. Speaker, has interjected on this question: what about the Metis? I can advise the Assembly that the Metis national association represents the Metis Association of Alberta at the constitutional table, if he was not aware of that fact. But if I could just conclude by saying that we do regard the process as being quite seriously flawed by not having one-third of the treaty Indians of Canada represented at the constitutional table, and we have requested the federal government to correct that serious situation.

MR. SPEAKER: Main question, Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

Agriculture Ministers' Meeting

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Agriculture. Yesterday in the House the minister indicated that he would be reviewing the agenda for the upcoming agricultural ministers' meeting in Ottawa. Under item 4 of that agenda the minister will be discussing deficiency payments, I believe, if he has the agenda in front of him, initial pricing and future assistance to the grain industry. The question, Mr. Speaker, is that on March 10 the minister said he would rather see the federal government provide assistance to farmers through another deficiency payment rather than having the Canadian Wheat Board support initial prices for grain. Is this Alberta's position on initial pricing now?

MR. ELZINGA: If the hon. member would wish, I'd be more than happy, possibly tomorrow if it meets the consent of the House, to table a telegram that I recently sent to the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Charlie Mayer, in which I indicated our strong support for continued support for the agricultural sector, not only in the province of Alberta but all of Canada, and I'm sure it would answer a number of his questions. I'd be more than happy to do so, sir.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm glad, Mr. Speaker, that he supports agriculture, I'm sure motherhood is in there somewhere too. I asked about the support price for wheat; however, let's try something else.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell the House if he will be suggesting to his counterparts the strengthening of federal farm debt review boards when they are discussed under item 6 of that agenda in front of him?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity yesterday to discuss with Bert Hargrave, who is one of the individuals on the council for the province of Alberta on the farm debt review boards, and he indicated to me the success which they have had in dealing with the debt problems of the farming population in the province of Alberta. I'm more than happy to hear whatever representations the hon. member has, and if we find that they do have merit, we will pass them on to our federal counterparts.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, at great hazard with my good relations with you, I've tried to tell him that we wanted to have a moratorium on foreclosures by his department. However, we will go on.

Can the minister tell the House if there are any sectors of Alberta's agriculture industry that he thinks should be on the table in the free trade negotiations when free trade comes up on that agenda?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, firstly, let me respond to the hon. member in a detailed way as it relates to a moratorium. If he's not aware, he should be aware that we've just commissioned -- and it should be reporting very soon as it relates to the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation so that we can make it more responsive to the credit needs of the agricultural sector within this province.

Secondly, as it relates to free trade, I honestly would hope, Mr. Speaker, that both the Liberal and New Democratic parties would recognize the importance of having assured access to the United States market for agricultural products, because if we don't have that access, the farming population is going to be decreased by somewhere in the vicinity of 50 percent, because we rely so heavily on having that assured access to the United States market. I would hope that rather than always being negative -- this is probably the most important area to the agricultural sector within the province of Alberta. Unfortunately, again we find the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party against supporting something that is so worth while for the agricultural sector.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad. I wonder if he's going to worry about those that are going down the tube while he's waiting to decide whether to put in a moratorium.

But let's move on, talk about banking a little. If the minister would look on his agenda, what changes to section 178 of the Bank Act, which deals with the powers of banks to repossess.

will he be suggesting at the meeting, bearing in mind that he is probably the worst forecloser of any financial institution as far as farmers are concerned in this province?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, one only has to look at our record of support as it relates to the credit needs of the agricultural sector, and one would recognize the stupidity of the statement that we just heard from the hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, that doesn't come from *Hansard*. What are you going to do [inaudible]?

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Vegreville, supplementary question. This is not debate. Thank you.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, the minister just made reference to the free trade negotiations. In an effort to get a direct answer, what rights and privileges currently enjoyed by Alberta producers is the minister prepared to negotiate away in order to get this so-called free trade deal with the United States?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we're not prepared to negotiate anything away, I've spoken to the dairy congress; I've spoken to the poultry boards. We've indicated what we want to do is have assured access so that we can have the continued access that we've enjoyed over the last number of years, because if we don't -- and again I underscore that it's too bad that there wasn't stronger representation from all parties in this House to offer our support to the agricultural sector, because this is more important than any other measure as it relates to agriculture in the province of Alberta.

DR. WEST: Supplementary to the minister. Moratoriums could have a detrimental effect on credit in any industry. Could the minister indicate, has there been any indication of a detrimental effect on farm credit, either through the service industries or the lending institutes, as a result of the Farm Debt Review Board?

MR. ELZINGA: To my knowledge, no, Mr. Speaker, because the Farm Debt Review Board has within its mandate the opportunity to come forward with suggestions as to how to resolve some of the credit difficulties that the agricultural sector are facing.

In reading throughout the history of this great province and this great nation, we notice that when moratoriums have been placed on debt, it has caused some difficulties for those individuals that did not have a debt, whereby their credit needs were not as accessible as what they were in the past. And that is why we have treaded so carefully in this area, and that is why we have come forward with support of our own by way of the worthwhile farm credit stability program, the Agricultural Development Corporation's review; again, so that we can be responsive in a direct way in supporting the credit needs of the agricultural sector.

Premiers' Conference on Constitution

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Premier, and this is a follow-up of a question yesterday on the proposed April 30 meeting at Meach Lake as to the discussion of Quebec's proposals for the constitutional proposals. Can the hon. Premier indicate if the Quebec proposals, as he knows now, are going to be the only topics for discussion at that meeting?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker. I know that in the telex from the Prime Minister that's the only matters that he discusses. But I can assure the hon. member that from Alberta's point of view, Senate reform will be discussed.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that other provinces have had problems, the cod dispute and the soft lumber dispute, and special meetings were called, is the Premier in a position to indicate if any meetings will be held with the other Premiers prior to the April 30 meeting to discuss if there will be any provincial issues brought up in addition to the agenda that was proposed by the Prime Minister?

MR. GETTY: I think I indicated yesterday -- if not, I should have -- that we will be discussing with other Premiers in advance of the April 30 meeting a variety of matters having to do with the Constitution.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. This is to the Premier. Although the Premier has informed the House or shares with the House that they will be bringing up Senate reform, would not it be more logical and better policy to announce or telex the Prime Minister that you want that on the agenda?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious when you're talking about the Constitution that Senate reform is inherent, from Alberta's point of view, in that discussion.

MR. SPEAKER: Further supplementaries? Member for Calgary Forest Lawn followed by the Member for Edmonton Gold Bar.

Oil and Gas Industry Incentives

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to go back to some remarks made by the Premier yesterday regarding figures indicating oil field activity. The Premier said:

Members may not know, because they just grab figures [from] the air, that in fact we are up 15 percent to 20 percent this year in drilling over last year.

Does the Premier stand by this statement, or will he take this opportunity to withdraw it?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, yesterday or during this month there are 15 to 20 percent more rigs drilling than there were last year.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, I would like to file information, not grabbed from the air but compiled from the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board and *Oilweek* magazine, that shows in two key indicators, rigs drilling and cumulative metres drilled, the drilling activity since January 1 has declined over the same period in 1986, rigs drilling by more than 30 percent and cumulative metres drilled by . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, now the supplementary question, please.

MR. PASHAK: Well, I'd like to file these, not table them.

How is it the Premier was not misleading the Assembly yesterday with his statements on oil field activity?

MR. GETTY: If the hon. gentleman would wish to care to discuss the matter with the president of the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors that his facts -- he's in charge of the drilling rigs for all of Alberta, as the president of their association; it's his facts.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, I'd remind the Premier that the authorities in this field are the Energy Resources Conservation Board and *Oilweek*. But in any event, the Premier also misrepresented well licence approval rates on March 10, 1987, when in this Assembly he said that licence approval rates were running at 75-80 approvals a week without saying that this is off the pace for January and February of last year by 73 percent. Question: is it the Premier's policy to cover up the failure of his government's initiatives by misrepresenting their benefit to the oil patch?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would like to follow up on his position that I misled the House, I invite him to do so, because what I said was a fact of the number of wells that were licensed in the weeks I referred to. And would the hon. member either prove that I was misleading the House or withdraw his comment.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, the proof is here in this package that I'm submitting and putting on file.

For the Minister of Energy then, Mr. Speaker. When will the minister present this Assembly with a strategy for sustained activity in the conventional sector that will ensure that when scarce revenues totaling hundreds of millions of dollars are spent, the result will be more than a monthlong flurry of activity?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we still have the issue I raised with the hon. member. He has said that I misled the House. I ask him to either back up that with facts or withdraw the comment.

MS BARRETT: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the member said that -- the suggestion was that there was a misrepresentation of facts, not that the Premier misled the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The point of order will be taken at the end of question period, but careful listening did indeed pick up the word "mislead," and unfortunately, from the Chairs' personal point of view, "mislead" has been deemed parliamentary to use since 1958. But nevertheless, it's a serious difficulty that the House is in.

Carrying on with question period.

MS BARRETT: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry; there will be a point of order after the end of question period. Member for Calgary Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. It's obvious that the conventional oil and gas industry is in depression in this province. Why is the government focusing only on support and stabilization for the megaprojects, which is going to move jobs to the east coast and the Beaufort, and ignoring the needs of the conventional oil industry, particularly those of the small and

medium sized companies and drilling contractors?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked the same question yesterday or the day before. The answer that I gave then, and I'm pleased to respond again, is that the government has put in place several billions of dollars of support for the conventional oil and gas industry in the last year -- several billions of dollars of support -- and that has helped the industry through a very difficult time brought on by international energy price decline. The government will continue to support the Alberta energy industry as we have in the past because we are committed to the health of that industry, as we are to agriculture.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair would like to point out that some questions do seem to be asked more than once. It seems that some hon. members either cannot hear because our new sound system isn't working effectively or because there is so much background noise going on that the message doesn't get heard. So perhaps one might listen a bit more carefully to what the answers are. It would indeed help the member to frame the next supplementary question.

On this particular issue, further supplementaries? Member for Edmonton Gold Bar followed by the Member for Vegreville.

Women in the Public Service

MRS. HEWES: Thank you. Well, Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Labour ignored the Liberal leader's questions regarding the number of female deputy ministers. The fact is there are 27 deputy ministers, including Mr. Robin Ford, who was appointed yesterday, and not one of them is a woman. The minister also stated that in most cases the positions are advertised. Yet in the last year seven deputy ministerial positions out of nine have been filled by closed competition with no advertising -- appointments by government. My question is to the Minister of Labour. Will the minister retract his misleading statement to the House yesterday that most of the positions are openly advertised?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, they are advertised within government, and of course if one chooses to pick a particular period of time, one might be able to say that 100 percent are advertised openly across Canada or that none are. It depends on the dates that one picks.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, how can the minister then reconcile these closed competitions with his statements yesterday that his government, and I quote, "believes in equality of opportunity and equality of access, and we hire on that basis"?

DR. REID: I'd like to thank the hon. member for repeating my statement of yesterday.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, will the minister assure the House that from this day forward all deputy ministerial positions will be filled by open and advertised competitions, as they should be?

DR. REID: As I said yesterday, in general that is true. There are specific exceptions, and those exceptions may continue. It will depend upon the circumstances of the particular post that is available at a given time, but the general principle of open availability and certainly the availability to women on a equal

basis to men will continue to be the principle of this government.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, my last question is to the Premier. Would the Premier agree that the noble commitment to women that's in the throne speech is just window dressing, in the light of what we've heard today and the hiring practices of last year and years before that?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. How does he justify that in the civil service women only make 68 cents on the dollar in comparison to male employees?

DR. REID: I think it depends upon the rates of pay. There is absolute equality of pay . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister, if you'd care to sit down till the House quiets down, it might be fairly useful.

MR. TAYLOR: It's the best laugh we've had all day.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Minister of Labour.

DR. REID: As I was saying, it depends upon the rates of pay for the positions that are occupied. We have a policy of absolute equality of pay for the same work within the provincial service. I would like to point out that over a period of several years, and I will repeat the information I gave yesterday, in the positions in the three classes that lead to managerial posts, the numbers of women in those three levels have increased very significantly and are now between one-third and 45 percent of those positions. Those positions are now occupied by women, and it's from those ranks that we draw future managerial people, including deputy ministers.

MRS. KOPER: Supplementary to the minister regarding the applications for assistant deputy ministers and deputy ministers. Could the minister please inform the Assembly as to the proportion of applicants that were female in these applications?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information at hand, but I'll get it for the hon. member.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The hon. Member for Vegreville followed by the Member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Agricultural Assistance

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the hon. Minister of Agriculture. In trying to determine just how serious the cash flow crisis is among Alberta grain producers and in order to gauge the need for additional deficiency payments, what study has the minister done to determine how much money Alberta producers currently owe to fuel, fertilizer, and chemical dealers in the province for last year's crop?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, may I prior to answering the hon. Member for Vegreville indicate to him on behalf of the Chamber our deep condolences on the passing of a loved one; we share with him his grief.

In regard to the question, Mr. Speaker, a good many of these

figures will be forthcoming in the review that is presently taking place as it relates to the Agricultural Development Corporation.

MR. FOX: But, Mr. Speaker, this question doesn't involve the Agricultural Development Corporation. I'm wondering how much farmers' money is tied up in trade accounts owed directly to fuel, fertilizer, and chemical dealers. If the minister doesn't have this information, does he not think it prudent to collect it to determine how serious the problem is right now?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we do have the breakdown as to the farm debt within the province of Alberta. As I indicated to the hon. member earlier too, we have asked the review committee, as it relates to the Agricultural Development Corporation, to not only examine how responsive the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation is to the credit needs but also to have a broader examination as it relates to the difficulties as it relates to credit needs of agriculture. And those figures -- some of them; not all of them -- will be forthcoming within that study itself, which is to be brought forward very shortly.

MR. FOX: I should thank the hon. minister for his kind comments. First, Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering what plans does this government have to offer direct and immediate cash injection to Alberta's grain producers?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in the House earlier, this government, through the Premier, was very involved in promoting the \$1 billion deficiency payment which the federal government was forthcoming with. In addition, we have come forward with our farm credit stability program, which has in excess of 14,000 participants today, whereby individuals do have an opportunity for long-term credit stability. We have our farm fuel allowance, which injects millions of dollars into the farm community. We have our farm fertilizer protection plan, which again injects millions of dollars.

We have examined a number of avenues so that we can best support our agricultural sector in a market-neutral fashion, acknowledging the difficulties that they are going through, and we're going to continue with that commitment and that support.

MR. FOX: We all majored in history, Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about the crisis now, and I'm wondering, at the upcoming ministers' conference on agriculture, is this minister prepared to present a strong Alberta position that advocates a further federal commitment to grain producers, matched dollar-for-dollar by new provincial money?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the one thing that is not new, as I indicated yesterday, is the hypocrisy that continues to come from that side.

It's obvious that courtesy is not in their realm of understanding, because we have announced -- and I'm going to go through a number of new initiatives that we have announced in the last number of months. Number one, an additional commitment to Farming for the Future for an additional \$25 million. We announced the extension of the feed grain market adjustment program to the tune of an additional \$47 million. I know the hon. member doesn't support that program, but we still believe it's very important. We also announced in the Speech from the Throne a continued commitment to the 14-cent differential for farm fuels.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on, but I don't want to beleaguer the

House with the things that we are doing in agriculture. We recognize the difficulties; we're going to do everything we possibly can. We are going to continue to make our strong representation to the federal government as we gave that commitment in the Speech from the Throne, acknowledging, though, the importance that free trade or greater access of trade for our agricultural products does play in this entire debate. It's unfortunate, as I indicated earlier, that they are not willing to have an open mind to this very, very important area, not only for our province, because we ship in excess of \$10 billion worth of goods to the United States, of which in excess of \$1 billion is through the livestock and meat sector alone.

MR. SPEAKER: You've had your four. Table officers count. All four are shot. The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture. It doesn't matter what button we push, we always get the same speech. But will the minister agree that it is time for a comprehensive review of the support system for agriculture here in Alberta? -- say something like the Liberal Party's green paper on negative income tax, and income tax is a provincial item. Would he agree that there's time for a review of the support system, or does he believe that the current system is adequate to handle the emergency we now have in agriculture?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we are constantly reviewing our programs, and I respect very much what the hon. member has suggested, and this is why we conducted the extensive review as it relates to the hail and crop insurance. As the hon. member knows, there are three key criteria to that report itself. In the event that we can have the agreement of the federal government and it is implemented, it would be very supportive in not only insuring disaster and crop insurance on an individual basis, plus it examines the opportunity of cost of production and revenue protection. We've done the same with ADC, and we're doing that on a consistent basis, acknowledging the severe difficulties we do have in the agricultural sector.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture. How prevalent is the problem where the farmer cannot take advantage of the fertilizer and fuel subsidy program because he's not in a position to pay his bills before he can receive that subsidy?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. Member for Clover Bar has some specific examples of that, we're more than happy to take up the individual farmer's cause. We haven't had any to my knowledge. There might have been some related to our department, but we haven't had any. To my knowledge that concern has not been raised, but we're more than happy to examine that, sir, on your behalf or anybody's behalf, in the event that it is brought to our attention.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Highway Patrol

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Solicitor General. It concerns the Highway Patrol. Is the minister pushing on with his plans to disband this patrol, and if so, why and when?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the Highway Patrol serves a very important position in controlling traffic on our highways, but as it relates to the Motor Transport Act, which is in relation to truck transport as against the normal half-ton or car traffic, we have made a decision to transfer responsibility for that portfolio to the minister of transportation effective April 1. At this time there's no intention to disband it, and I don't believe there's any intention after April 1 to disband it either.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, I understand, though, that the transferred officers will be staying at the weigh scales or close to them. And if so, who will effectively police the truckers who unfairly compete with law-abiding truckers, avoid the weigh scales, and do not have proper licences, permits, permissions for overweight loads, et cetera?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the Highway Patrol officers are being rationalized to deliver a more effective and efficient service. The Highway Patrol . . . [interjections] They're far more rationalized than the animals in the middle. The officers are being redeployed to allow for a more effective service. The Highway Patrol has a mobile weigh scale which is being coordinated with the vehicle inspection stations, which are permanent weigh scales. The officers will still be patrolling the highways and accosting perpetrators of the Motor Transport Act.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm sure the Solicitor General will be kind enough to withdraw the unparliamentary term "animals."

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, with respect I withdraw the term. I was just alluding to comments from the leader of the Liberal Party, who always said that there was raw meat being fed.

MR. SPEAKER: Time for question period has expired, which might upset some people. Do we have the unanimous consent of the House to continue this complete set of questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? The Chair hears a no.

There are a number of matters to be dealt with. First of all, the Chair recognizes the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife -- supplemental information to a previous question period -- and if the minister would be kind enough to identify the questioner so that that questioner may indeed respond if that member wishes.

MR. SPARROW: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to respond to the Member for Edmonton Glengarry's questions of March 13 and 16 and the questions to the Attorney General on March 16 with respect to the allegation of an Alberta guide who sold bighorn sheep tags to a Wisconsin businessman and that a Wisconsin businessman had booked hunts. I would like to provide the following information to the House.

The member's allegations, according to the department's investigation, have no basis in fact. The facts are that one, there has been absolutely no transfer of licences to a Wisconsin businessman, and two, it is impossible for these licences to be transferred except to a spouse or child of an existing nonresident sheep outfitter, subject to the minister's consent.

A simple inquiry to the department would have clearly revealed that the alleged transfer did not occur. There is no provision in law to legally transfer the tags under the old Act.

In terms of clarification, I would like to point out that the offer clearly was from Solomon Mountain Trophy Hunts Inc., an Alberta-owned corporation and not a foreign-owned corporation, as was suggested by the member.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that under the new regulations outfitters will be able, subject to a vigorous review and my approval, to transfer their permits to Canadian citizens who are residents of Alberta or corporations wholly owned by Canadian citizens who reside in Alberta, and I have established a review committee to review that.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How then does the minister respond to the information that the tags were originally allotted to a guide named George Ostashek and are now in the possession, by his information, of a guide named Ferlin Koma -- and I presume they are not spouses -- and that in the future I plan to provide for the House a taped telephone conversation in which the American businessman uses the phrase, "I bought this company two years ago"?

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, the department has checked into those allegations. The allotment of sheep permits is still with George Ostashek. He then contracts Solomon to do guiding for him, and the guiding operation is done by an Alberta company and guides within that company.

With reference to your tape: Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer that, the legality of it, to the Attorney General to comment on.

MS BARRETT: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Chair already has a full list of other people before you, but we'll get to the member in due course.

First, on a point of privilege, the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that a point of privilege should be raised at the earliest opportunity, and that is why I rose at the beginning of today's session to make comments on the misleading statements by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday. It would be my preference, however, to deal with those matters when the hon. Leader of the Opposition is present so that he can provide the appropriate response.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister, that is indeed what the procedure would be. Thank you.

Points of order. First, the hon. Premier with respect to the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker. I think that in the back and forth of questions and answers, the hon. member and I were arguing about some statistics, and I don't think it would help the House for me to now pursue it.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Highlands.

MS BARRETT: My point of order has been dealt with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. PIQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I'm requesting the unanimous consent of the Assembly to waive notice, pursuant to Standing Order 40, for immediate consideration of the following motion.

Be it resolved that this Assembly recognize the right of all aboriginal peoples in Alberta to a secure economic base, including a land base, and to self-government within the Canadian Confederation; and

Be it further resolved that this Assembly urge the government to negotiate in good faith agreements with the government of Canada relating to self-government by aboriginal people.

I have copies of this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, certain difficulties arise. Indeed, a member may rise under Standing Order 40 to request the House to give unanimous consent, and then one would have to deal with the matter of urgency. The motion that we have delivered to the Chair indeed reads as the member has just read to the Assembly; however, that's the first two portions of a motion which is now on the Order Paper, No. 238. But the member has only given the Assembly 50 percent of what's on the Order Paper. Is it the member's intention to move the whole motion or only the first half of the motion?

MR. PIQUETTE: Well, I wish to raise the first half of that because I think this is the most important meat of the motion. I wish to state the reason behind it. I feel the motion should be debated now. Because of the historic ...

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me, hon. member. Then the Chair would interpret that if indeed the House gives unanimous consent, it would do it only on the basis of the first half of Motion 238 standing on the Order Paper and that only that one-half of what's on the Order Paper would be what continues on the Order Paper, if indeed debate transpires this afternoon. Most unusual practice. Nevertheless, with respect to the urgency under Standing Order 40 ...

MR. PIQUETTE: Well, I wish to have this motion debated now because of the historic fourth and final conference next week devoted to the constitutional recognition and entrenchment of Canada's aboriginal rights. Due to the fact that there has not been adequate debate in this Assembly on the whole question of aboriginal rights to self-government before this First Ministers' Conference, I feel it is very important that all political parties have an opportunity to fully debate this very important question so that this government can bring to the conference much more awareness of all the various positions advanced by the different positions of aboriginal people in Canada. An open debate would help to underline the importance of our aboriginal people and the respect that this government has for these people and their importance in the Canadian Constitution.

MR. SPEAKER: There is a request for unanimous consent to be given to this urgent debate under Standing Order 40. All of those in favour of giving unanimous consent, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: Unanimous consent fails.

head: **MOTIONS FOR RETURNS**

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the following questions and motions for returns stand and maintain their places on the Order Paper: questions 140, 142, 151, 153, 160, 164, and all motions for returns except 169.

[Motion carried]

head: **WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

141. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question:

In respect of every international office operated by the government of Alberta outside Canada, what is the name and salary range classification of each employee and what benefits are provided to each employee by way of automobile or automobile allowance, accommodation or accommodation allowance, and entertainment expense?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker. I'm going to respond to this question by saying that we will not accept the question in the form that it is given and, if I may -- just a very brief word -- indicate that it's not because we don't want to supply the information. But we cannot provide an amendment to a question; we can only provide an amendment to a motion.

And this question is deficient because it does not contain any reference to a period of time and therefore is very inadequate in terms of its composition.

However, I can advise the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon that the information is also sought in Motion for a Return 169, moved by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, and when we get to that, I will provide an appropriate amendment. And that, we hope, will be acceptable to provide the information sought in the question.

If I'm clear, I hope . . . To the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, I would hope that his staff would in the future draft items that have a time frame associated with them.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no opportunity for repartee or debate with respect to this. The government has rejected 141, with some comments. It drops from the Order Paper. Table Clerk, please.

145. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question:

In respect of every contract for a capital project of the government of Alberta that has been let from November 17, 1986, to February 28, 1987, what was the purpose of each contract, the name of the party with whom it was concluded, and the value of the contract; was it tendered publicly; and what was the reason for the contract being let in a period during which the government had announced that all capital projects were to be "frozen"?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, after reviewing Question 145 with the concerned departments, it's our decision not to accept it. That decision is being made for two reasons.

The wording of the question leads to a bit of confusion in that the question refers to a period during which the government

had announced that all capital projects were to be frozen and it also makes reference to the date November 17, 1986. In checking the announcement made by the hon. Premier and the Provincial Treasurer on November 17, 1986, the reference to capital projects is as follows, and I quote:

Capital projects or asset acquisitions: those projects not now committed by the Province are suspended and will be deferred to the 1987/88 budget review.

In short, Mr. Speaker, let the record show that capital projects were never frozen; they were suspended as of November 17, 1986, and subject to a review process.

Secondly, depending on the definition of capital projects, an answer to this question could involve a significant amount of detail; hence, I would suggest that the hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark, if he's truly interested in specific information, reword the question and bring it forward on the Order Paper as a motion for a return.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Question 145 fails.

146. Mr. Pashak asked the government the following question:

With regard to OC 556/85, authorizing a special warrant in the amount of \$1,119,250 to the Public Affairs Bureau for "Funding for Expo '86 (Alberta participation)," of which \$1,019,628 was expended:

- (1) in what categories of expenditure (e.g., wages and salaries, hosting, travel, accommodation, purchase of fixed assets, et cetera) was the money expended, and how much money was expended in each category;
- (2) what were the names of persons paid with money provided by OC 556/85, and out of which category of expenditure were they paid; and
- (3) what special circumstances surrounding Alberta's participation at Expo '86 emerged such that the need for the funds had been unanticipated, and the minister of Public Affairs at the time had to attest at July 12, 1985, that the additional \$1,119,250 was "urgently and immediately required"?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, the government accepts the question with the caveat that, bearing in mind that we can't amend questions, it may not be possible to supply all of the names under subcategory (2). They are all the people that worked for and supplied services and supplies to our pavilion during Expo. But with that caveat we're glad to accept the question.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair understands this as an understanding rather than as an amendment. Correct? The motion is accepted.

147. Mr. Wright asked the government the following question:

With regard to the demerit reduction program operated by the Department of the Solicitor General and operating to the benefit of those drivers who have attended an educational drivers program and thus earned a reduction in their assigned demerit points:

- (1) what qualifications are required of those individuals who instruct in the program, and what checks, reviews, or other mechanisms are in place to ensure instructors in fact enjoy those qualifications;
- (2) what formal training for the position is required of

- program instructors;
- (3) what are the materials used in the program, noting in each instance the source -- where it was developed and by whom -- the date at which it first became available, and the date of any updates or other amendments to it, and a brief description of it; and
 - (4) have there been data kept or collected on the results enjoyed by the program to date -- e.g., evidence of apparent reductions in repeat offences by drivers who have taken the program -- and if so, what do those data show?

MR. ROSTAD: We accept this question.

149. Ms Mjolsness asked the government the following question:

Will the government undertake to table any reports, studies, or other documents in its possession concerned primarily with evaluating the so-called "work for welfare" pilot program implemented in Taber in 1982, before the adjournment of the current spring sitting of the Legislature?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, we will be rejecting Question 149, as what is available to us from 1982 is internal advice to the minister.

150. Ms Mjolsness asked the government the following question:

With regard to the job-finding centres program operated under the Department of Social Services as at July 16, 1986, and on which the Minister of Social Services pledged "information would be available early in 1987," *Alberta Hansard*, August 21, 1986, page 1243:

- (1) how many individuals entered the program;
- (2) how many individuals completed the program;
- (3) how many of those individuals who completed the program found placements;
- (4) of those placements found by individuals who completed the program, how many were placements for which the wage or salary paid the individual was subsidized to some extent by a job-creation program administered or funded by either the government of Canada or the government of Alberta or both;
- (5) of the individuals who completed the program and found placements, how many, at the time of their taking up their placements, were paid
 - (a) less than \$3.80 per hour,
 - (b) \$3.80 per hour,
 - (c) \$3.81 to \$4.25 per hour,
 - (d) \$4.26 to \$5.00 per hour,
 - (e) \$5.01 to \$7.00 per hour,
 - (f) \$7.01 to \$9.00 per hour,
 - (g) \$9.01 or more per hour?

MRS. OSTERMAN: The government accepts that question, Mr. Speaker.

152. Mr. Hawkesworth asked the government the following question:

For the Agents General at the Alberta Houses in London, Hong Kong, and New York, and for the directors of Alberta offices in Ottawa and Tokyo, and for the senior staff person at other Alberta offices maintained outside the province, and

for all management personnel in all such offices, in each case:

- (1) what is the amount of
 - (a) the person's salary,
 - (b) the employer contributions paid on the person's behalf,
 - (c) any and all allowances paid, itemized by specific allowance, as per the foreign service allowance regulation, and
 - (d) any other payments for the purpose of defraying personal costs incurred by the person in the course of traveling, undertaking job-related hospitality, and securing supplies and services, estimated for the 1987-88 fiscal year; and
- (2) itemized as in clause (1), what were the amounts budgeted for the 1986-87 fiscal year?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the government cannot accept the motion in its form because it is deficient. Once again, we cannot provide amendments. There are a number of errors in the question, relating, for example, to the fact that there is an agent general in Tokyo and not a director. Furthermore, it seeks budget details for a budget which has yet to come before the Assembly and therefore is not acceptable at this stage and no doubt will be the subject of discussion during estimates of the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

154. Ms Barrett asked the government the following question:

What is the government's best estimate of when it will be able to table a response, in each case, to:

- (1) Order for a Return 139, made May 14, 1985, for detail of travel by Members of the Legislative Assembly, members of the Executive Council, and others, for the period March 1, 1984, to March 31, 1985;
- (2) Order for a Return 141, made May 28, 1985, for results of monthly ambient water quality monitoring undertaken at 11 river sites in Alberta;
- (3) Written Question 132, accepted June 26, 1986, seeking information about caseloads served by social workers in the Social Services department;
- (4) Written Question 138, accepted June 19, 1986, seeking information about foreclosure actions undertaken by the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation and its successor corporation;
- (5) Order for a Return 140, made June 19, 1986, for information about employees of the government working in offices outside Alberta;
- (6) Order for a Return 141, made June 19, 1986, for information about the travel undertaken by employees of the government working in offices outside Alberta;
- (7) Order for a Return 142, made June 19, 1986, for details of travel by Members of the Legislative Assembly, members of the Executive Council, and others, for the period April 1, 1985, to March 31, 1986;
- (8) Written Question 152, accepted July 31, 1986, seeking information about grants of money, if any, by the government to Gainers Inc. since March 31, 1984;
- (9) Order for a Return 154, made August 14, 1986, for copies of documents, if any, formalizing obligations between the government and Ski Kananaskis Incorporated;
- (10) Order for a Return 158, made September 11, 1986, for

information concerning the assumption of responsibility by the Department of the Environment, through its agent the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation, in May 1985, of the abandoned chemical waste storage site at Nisku previously operated by the D & D Corporation; and

- (11) Order for a Return 165, made September 11, 1986, for information concerning the assumption of responsibility by the Department of the Environment, through its agent the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation, of the abandoned chemical waste storage site at Nisku previously operated by Kinetic Ecological Resources Group (1982) Ltd.?

AN HON. MEMBER: Hold.

157. Mr. Hawkesworth asked the government the following question:

For every government of Alberta office maintained outside Alberta, in the case of every new Agent General, director, senior staff person, or other management level person appointed to a position at the office between the establishment of the office and December 31, 1986, what were the relocation costs associated with the appointment, itemized to show the costs of:

- (1) "house hunting" trips to the office area from the area of residence of the appointee at the time of the appointment;
- (2) transportation of the appointee and dependants to the office area;
- (3) interim accommodation and subsistence at the office area;
- (4) personal furniture storage and moving charges incurred on the appointee's behalf;
- (5) the purchase or leasing of accommodation for the appointee and dependants;
- (6) improvements to and furnishings for accommodation for the appointee and dependants; and
- (7) other relocation expenses?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, this must be rejected. The reason for it is that it's very, very sloppily drawn. The establishment of the first office in Alberta was in 1908, and what is sought by way of the question is information relating to a period from 1908 to 1986. And if the hon. member wishes to obtain some specifics, I would suggest that the information can be made available. But certainly this is an extremely sloppily drawn motion. You really need better researchers than that.

MR. SPEAKER: Question 157 is rejected.

MR. TAYLOR: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no point of order [inaudible].

MR. TAYLOR: I think there's a point of order at the end of a question period, whether it's oral or written, isn't there? My understanding of the rules of the House, Mr. Speaker, is that points of order come up at the end of question period. Whether it's written or oral, it doesn't matter.

MR. SPEAKER: With respect, hon. member, it is indeed the procedure with respect to Oral Question Period. And if indeed

the member does feel that this is a defective procedure in the House, perhaps representation could be made through House leaders with regard to the changing of *Standing Orders*.

head: **MOTIONS FOR RETURNS**

169. Mr. Hawkesworth moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing for each Alberta government office maintained outside the province:

- (1) the position title and position description for each position authorized for that office, whether or not that position is currently filled; and
- (2) the salary range for each position reported pursuant to clause (1).

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment to propose to that motion, and that I will read into the record:

that the words: "during the 1986-87 fiscal year" be added following [the words] "the province"; and add:

- (3) the additional benefits for each such position.

That will get the information sought by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon as well, in this one motion.

[Motion as amended carried]

head: **MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

205. Moved by Mrs. Hewes:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to emphasize, in its budget proposals, health and residential programs for senior citizens that enhance the autonomy of such citizens and maximize their capacity to remain independent and in their homes, apartments, or lodges.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, we need such a motion because there are immense human advantages to be gained here; no question about that. There are certain economic advantages as well that we should not overlook. I am making a plea for a comprehensive approach to the situation of senior citizens in the province, an approach that should be made now, while there is time and while we still have some flexibility.

If we review the present situation in Alberta, in 1981, 7.3 percent of the population of Alberta was over 65 years in age; in 1987 that has climbed to 8.1 percent. And those are good statistics, Mr. Speaker, because they indicate that we're living longer and living healthier lives. But there are some discrepancies there, and I want to quote from the federal health minister, Mr. Epp.

Men and women in the highest income groups can expect to live 6.2 and 2.9 years respectively longer than their counterparts in the lowest income level.

Many of those in the lower income group are the elderly over 65. The health status of all Canadians needs to be freed from income variables.

In Alberta that 8.1 percent amounts to 194,000 persons. Of those, 18,875 in Alberta are in lodges, special accommodation, nursing homes, auxiliary care, and so on. That's approximately 10 percent. Now if you compare those figures to those from across the rest of Canada, Alberta is considerably the highest. The next highest, I believe, is Quebec with 7.8, and they run

down as low as Nova Scotia with 5.2 and Yukon, 4.8.

Now what do the statistics mean? Of course, they can mean anything we want them to mean, but they could mean that we have more institutions in Alberta to fill the needs of seniors, or they could also mean that we don't have enough alternatives to support seniors in noninstitutional care.

The projections and numbers beyond 1987 go like this: in 1991, to 216,300; growing at the turn of the century to 273,400; and in 2011, to 342,000. In the year 2000, Mr. Speaker, seniors will comprise 12 percent of the population of Alberta. Between '81 and 2006 the numbers will have risen by almost 100 percent of those who are over 65 in our province. In Canada, in the country, our elderly form 9.7 percent of the population, and they currently use 35 percent of hospital patient days. That is projected to increase rather dramatically in the future.

The elderly are not a homogeneous group. We tend to talk about them in groups; we tend to lump them and say "elderly people, senior citizens," and so on. They are not homogeneous. They are individuals; they have individual needs and desires. As we plan our services for the elderly, we think in terms of institutional care. No longer does the medical model that we have used in years past suffice. Hospital care is not the answer. We have to understand and deal with social as well as medical needs.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

I want to talk about the presently available housing and support systems in our province. I have to say that we have in our province some fine projects and some fine programs for senior citizens, and we know that. These were developed mainly during the '60s, '70s, and '80s. During those years the senior citizens in our province got themselves mobilized and organized and became very vocal in their communities about their needs. And I believe many of the provincial programs and the private, nonprofit programs were in response to those demands.

But too often these health care problems are seen as problems only, and they're viewed in terms of medical care. That's much too narrow a definition and is particularly, but not exclusively, limiting in services to the elderly. In my view, all disciplines must be included in discussion, planning, and programs for seniors' health care and housing. We have in Alberta a number of very fine programs, as I've said. However, they've been developed unilaterally, not comprehensively. Only recently we've combined nursing home and auxiliary hospital care. We've finally seen the light. That seems to most of us like a simple combination, but it's only happened within the last few years that we are now designing our facilities to accommodate both of those requirements.

We need commitment in our province to overall public and private understanding of these needs and services. But what have we got? We've got lodges, and they're spread throughout our province to serve the needs of people in a variety of communities. The vacancy rate is standing at 14 percent in rural lodges, and it's rising. The rate in urban lodges is 8 percent, and it's standard; it's holding its own. But in these lodges there appears to be insufficient medical care available to the residents who live there. In my view and in the view of the Liberal Party, we should be using these lodges, and we should be more creative about the use of these lodges for other purposes. We can use them to expand the potential for day care, for day hospitals, for recreation services.

We have many good ideas that are emerging, but there is no

automatic substitute, Mr. Speaker, in our lodges and in lodge accommodation, for staying at home. I recently visited a very beautiful new lodge. It looked marvelous, and going in I was impressed with it. It had a lovely fireplace, and it had a few seniors sitting around it. It was beautifully decorated, and it was squeaky clean. And I sat and talked with a number of the residents, and they said to me, "Oh yes, we like it here, and they're very good to us here. But it's not like home, and it's all very tidy." And we know, those of us who are used to home life, what that must mean, to leave your own place. So lodges, comfortable, warm, and friendly as they attempt to be, with good matrons and good ideals, simply don't fulfill that need. And they don't have in them the kind of medical services available that the people in the lodges could avail themselves of rather than being admitted to institutions.

We have a good deal of private, nonprofit housing for seniors in our province; these have been developed. They're government supported, government encouraged, have been developed by community groups, by church groups, and they're functioning very well and serve a very real need. We have an emerging number of senior citizens' co-operatives in our province as well, and I think we've been responsive in the province to a few special needs, the needs of the inner-city residents who have particular requirements, some indigent people in our inner cities in the urban centres. And we have a series of institutions, Mr. Speaker. We have nursing homes, auxiliary hospitals, day hospitals, that have immense waiting lists. People waiting to get into day hospital, who could avoid going into further institutions, wait so long they have to become institutionalized. They could serve extraordinarily well as rehabilitation to seniors who would like to come out of acute care hospitals but can't get into the day hospital.

We have a desperate need in our province, Mr. Speaker, to increase the number of spaces available to seniors in day hospitals, and we're beginning to do some work with day care for seniors. There are three centres in Edmonton. I'm not sure how many there are in Calgary. I would hope that we can encourage through public and private co-operation many more of these to be developed in rural centres. I'm not talking about the kind of drop-in recreation service that we've seen that is such a wonder-fill boon in many of our centres to senior citizens. I'm talking about day care for adult seniors, where families who have seniors within their family setting can have some respite, where the senior can have a good, hot meal during the daytime and have the social encounters that all of us need.

We have home care. Home care has been available in our province since 1976, I think it is. The funding has increased very dramatically: over 18 percent. We're grateful for that, Mr. Speaker, but it's way too little. It is deficient in the amount because of both the human and economic advantages that it would provide to Albertans. There were 22,000 Albertans in '85 in home care. If long-term care of our seniors is to be reduced, we must further increase, in rural areas in particular, our home care services dramatically. Hospitals and nursing homes are really a last resort for seniors' care.

We've seen some excellent programs developed, Mr. Speaker, in recreation and support services through our municipalities, mainly through FCSS funding, and we've seen some good moves to get one-stop shopping, a central intake service. It's not an efficient service as it presently works. It's very difficult for seniors and their families to find out what's available to them and within what radius of their hometown. I believe we've got to stop experimenting in this area. We've got

plenty of data to go on; it's time we put those things into action and put them into practice.

Mr. Speaker, there are 4,634 acute treatment beds in Alberta; 273 of those beds are currently being used for long-term care, and shouldn't be. Seniors are kept unnecessarily in acute care because there's no place else for them to be, and that's a most unfortunate circumstance, using up the bed that should be freed for acute and intensive treatment and keeping the senior in an institution that is not suited to their needs.

Mr. Speaker, I was encouraged by some of the minister's statements that were reviewing our health care system, and I'll have more to say about that when I introduce a Bill next week. But I would hope that we can look for some really creative ideas in the kinds of things I've mentioned, where there are deficiencies, and also in such things as the development of respite beds. Although we have a few through our district associations, they really are not serving the need that is out there in the communities.

Mr. Speaker, the frail and infirm elderly people of our province may not always require institutional care. The alternative of care in the home offers many advantages: far less disruption to the client's treatment, the support and presence of family members, familiar surroundings, and flexibility of routine. All of these factors contribute toward a more rapid recovery from illness or a better adjustment to aging or handicap. Some of the strain on hospitals and other extended care facilities is also relieved. Home care is an economical alternative, I submit, to institutional care, but the home care program must meet appropriate health and social needs in the home. It must promote greater personal and family responsibility for health and support families that are caring for an ill or elderly member in the home. It has to promote co-operation and collaboration among community agencies that provide health and social services, prevent delay or reduce institutionalization, and improve, maintain, or retard deterioration of the health status and the level of independence of the individual.

Let me speak for a few moments, Mr. Speaker, about the costs, because I mentioned that there are economic advantages as well as human advantages to my resolution today. If we look at the cost of home care, 83 percent of the 22,000 who receive home care in our province are exempt from paying for it because they make only the old age, the CPP, and the guaranteed income supplement. Home care provides, by definition, less than nursing homes. Homemakers are \$2 a day; meals, roughly \$2.50 a day; and there are additional costs, depending upon the need of the individual. Day care: the charge is \$3 a day plus transportation.

For a shared accommodation in a lodge: \$382 a month. As I say, some of these lodges are very beautiful monuments. Some are not quite so up to date and not quite so comfortable as they might be. In nursing homes we've recently seen an increase in fees to the individual: \$16 a day in a ward, \$16.50 for a semi-private. When the nursing home fees were increased, many people across the province said to me, "I'm glad. Now the quality of care in our nursing homes will increase." Unfortunately, that was not the intention of the government. In increasing the fees, the grant from the government was reduced by a similar amount. So we saw no change in the quality of care offered in our nursing homes. In auxiliary hospitals it's roughly \$100 a day. In acute care, as we know, it's \$300 a day plus.

Mr. Speaker, by keeping elderly in institutions where they do not need to be if we provided support systems, we're losing taxes. Why should people give up their home and give up their

independence and be in an institution if they need not, with some modest support in their community? Why should they give up their ownership of the home? We lose purchasing power when we take people out of commission. There are economic costs to all taxpayers in Alberta by this imbalanced system that we have continued to operate. The human costs, of course, are obvious: the costs of isolation, of loneliness, of loss of motivation, of loss of desire to get well, of loss of desire to contribute to what's going on. The deterioration, mental and physical, is visible of seniors who must be institutionalized.

Seniors have many needs for contact, for a familiar setting, for family and friends, church, things around them that are familiar. They need to be participants. They need to be contributors, just as we all do. And there are tremendous benefits to society by keeping them within our communities. The experience that they bring to us — they are the custodians of the values that most of us adhere to; they are the watchers in our community; they're the people who keep our communities safe; and they operate a pretty efficient buddy system.

What do we need to do? Well, I believe we need for seniors and their requirements a good deal more clout. We need a co-ordinated program with integrated administration to make home care, day care, day hospitals, an early and accessible alternative, to make it available in sufficient amounts so that people aren't required to wait too long for it or aren't required to go into institutions as an alternative. We need to make our lodges more logical places by providing recreation programs and infusing them with other community needs and programs such as day care. We must start working more comprehensively with our community organizations, our private nonprofit organizations -- community groups who provide so much to seniors.

What would it accomplish? Well, I believe if we could have a co-ordinated program of co-ordinated intake service, we would have a healthier, happier populace. We'd be ready for this bulge that is coming that I've described to you, and we'd be prepared to serve it when it's here.

Mr. Speaker, we've watched the Youville over some recent years, and this is an excellent program. It's never seemed to gain the kind of comprehensive support I would have liked. It should, in my view, be enhanced. It should become an important entity within itself; it shouldn't be a part of another service. The Youville provides treatment. It provides assessment, both residential and outpatient. It provides rehabilitation, retraining. It provides discharge planning. It provides socialization, recreation, nutrition training, and good meals to people. It provides a training service to professionals in the field of practice.

I know the minister has indicated that he has some plans for the Youville. Seniors in our communities want to know what they are and want to know if this type of geriatric centre is going to be repeated in other parts of the province so that we may better serve the seniors' needs.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we have to have a new agenda that would contain three social goals. The first is to improve and enhance the quality of life of our seniors; the second is to ensure that elderly citizens who require assistance to remain in their homes can obtain the necessary community services; and the third is to ensure that seniors who require institutional service receive appropriate and high-quality care in a manner which respects their dignity and self-worth. We need a plan, and we need a strategy to improve the health and functional status of seniors. The emphasis should be placed on initiatives such as health promotion and illness prevention, increased education and research in geriatrics, the promotion of a more positive im-

age of the elderly so that we see them as individuals, not as a homogeneous group.

We need to work to maintain the frail elderly at home in their communities. To this end, community support programs should be strengthened and expanded, particularly in rural, remote, and underserved settings.

One thing that is a desperate requirement, in my view, is the creation of a single access, one-stop shopping approach to obtain support. One-stop shopping will provide a single point of entry. Comprehensive functional assessments will monitor and adjust services as needs change. The government must enhance the ability of hospitals to meet the needs of our frail elderly as well. To this end, regional geriatric centres such as Youville should be established with outreach services expanded, and a greater emphasis should be placed on rehabilitation and convalescence programs. For those seniors who simply cannot continue to live independently in their community even with support, we must work to increase the quality of long-term care.

Yes, we've done some good things in our province, but it's time to take a new look. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that unconsciously and really without intent we've allowed a system to develop that makes it difficult for people to stay at home and stay independent. It makes it easy, and it encourages institutionalization. It does allow for some choices, but essentially it's a choice between remaining at home and going it alone and institutional care. Families are hard pressed to make good decisions for their family members. The elderly are made to feel redundant, unnecessary, and a burden.

I've given you a description, Mr. Speaker, of the situation as I perceive it in Alberta today, of the statistics. And my view is that now is the time to move, that we should be pro-active, not reactive, as more and more seniors are having to spend time in acute treatment hospitals instead of being in the proper setting. Now is the time, before that population growth is one that we cannot react to. I've given you a description so that you can see with me that it's time we rationalized our programs for health care and housing for seniors and their families to provide for those that have worked hard to establish this province and to provide for them the option in their lives that will give them independence and self-determination. We have to have a strategy for the future, one that will give us both the human and economic advantages that I've spoken of.

Mr. Speaker, I wait eagerly for tomorrow afternoon and the budget revelations which I expect will burst upon us, in the absence of other initiatives that have not seemed to be mentioned so far. I want to see indicators in this budget of what is intended, and so do the seniors and the families of Alberta.

MR. ALGER: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to state that I'm happy to address this motion today and delighted with the motion of the Member for Edmonton Gold Bar. I think she's brought across some very significant points. I'm happy to address, both because of my involvement with senior citizens' issues through acting as chairman of the Provincial Senior Citizens' Advisory Council and as the Member of the Legislative Assembly managing the Seniors Citizens' Secretariat and because it is possible for me to say with some pride that the Alberta government has shown long-standing support and understanding of the needs of the seniors in this province.

Over 10 years ago this government resolved to pay special attention to the seniors population of Alberta, and at that time the 1975 Speech from the Throne announced some of the very important programs for seniors that have continued to this pre-

sent day. There is a wide-ranging number of programs and resources available to senior citizens. And this is the crux of the matter today: their aim is to promote the ability of seniors to live as independently as possible while still receiving the support needed to allow them to do so, an aim to which I am strongly and personally committed.

The Alberta assured income plan is just one of the programs that presently helps seniors to live independently. All seniors with a lower income and receiving the federal income supplement qualify for this Alberta income supplement, the amount of which is determined on the basis of income. The plan ensures that the income of a senior citizen cannot fall below a certain level, and as regards to this, the plan is definitely considered a generous program.

Financial supplements alone, however, do not assure the ability of seniors to enjoy life as independently as possible for as long as possible. Programs that reduce the cost of living and that provide necessary services are also needed. Along this line, the government has a very generous extended health care benefits program that provides our senior citizens with various kinds of health supplies, aids, and equipment.

There are other programs that promote independent living for seniors by adding to the buying power of senior citizens. These are benefits such as property tax reductions, seniors' home improvement grants, home heating grants, and renters' assistance grants. As well, there are various housing programs providing subsidized accommodation in both apartments and lodges.

The member mentioned Family and Community Support Services as being another crucial program put forward by the Alberta government to fund programs, services, and centres for seniors. The primary aim of the Family and Community Support Services is to support programs that make prevention their mandate -- not, unfortunately, the prevention of aging but the prevention of unnecessary disability and dependency in later years. The FCSS helps with the operational expenses of many senior citizens' social and recreational centres, some of which provide services.

Another important area of the Family and Community Support Services is their work to provide some short-term emergency homemaking and, to some, longer term services such as meals on wheels, visiting and shopping aid, family and advice, and home help and handyman services, which provide seniors with help to do heavier household duties and home repairs. The co-ordinated home care program is another program designed so that seniors can receive health and support services in their homes, apartments, or lodges and thereby prevent, delay, or reduce institutionalization.

The home care program's goal, -- this program is extremely important as it gives people the means to continue living on their own when they might otherwise have had to leave their homes. It also gives support to people taking care of elderly family members, making it possible for them to stay in a home environment as long as possible. We'll soon be there, Mr. Speaker, so take good heed.

The fact that the budget of the home care program has increased 10 times, indicating what the member has stipulated, since it was begun nine years ago, says a lot about the increasing emphasis the Alberta government has placed on home care. This budget, however, remains small in comparison to the funding for institutional care in this province. There is room for improvement, and it is my belief that this government should continue its work to explore and promote the best ways to make safe and secure independent living more and more available to

senior citizens. Certainly what our senior citizens want is the ability to live at home or with the family, with the necessary help from home care and community services.

It is also what we should want for our seniors. Along with other problems surrounding them, institutions are extremely costly and should be used when absolutely necessary. Even now the province is halfway through an important pilot project: the assessment and placement, single point of entry model, which is operating in two locations, Calgary and the beautiful Foothills health unit area, commonly known as the Highwood, where my own heart is very deeply implanted. This project makes it possible for seniors to be assessed by home care before institutionalization. In other words, all community options must be explored before an institution can be considered. This is most definitely a step in the right direction. The rural project is going particularly smoothly, while in Calgary they are presently ironing out their few difficulties. But in general terms, Mr. Speaker, the pilot is a success. Already some people have been discharged and returned to home situations in the community.

However, it is impossible to provide as many people with home care as would ideally want it and qualify for it. Senior citizens' home care must continue to be a priority with this government. As more and more efforts are made to improve and extend home care, it is more and more clear that this is the way of a new era. Institutions should no longer be our primary way of providing our senior citizens with the support and services they need. Independent but secure living for senior citizens should continue to be our goal. This government has shown an ever increasing awareness of and a real response to the call for home care options.

It is with this in mind that I support this motion, not necessarily the way it was worded, but to emphasize such health and residential programs as are necessary to promote this government's long-standing commitment to our senior citizens. Mr. Speaker, I would therefore wish to propose an amendment to Motion 205 that reads as follows:

by striking out "... to emphasize, in its budget proposals ... " and substituting "... to continue to emphasize ... "

The amended motion would then read:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to continue to emphasize health and residential programs for senior citizens that enhance the autonomy of such citizens and maximize their capacity to remain independent and in their homes, apartments, or lodges.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Perhaps before we proceed, the Chair recognizes the hon. Member for Edmonton Centre. The page will take an amendment immediately to both the Member for Edmonton Centre and to the mover of the motion and then all other members.

The Chair recognizes hon. members do not need to be reminded, but under section 20 of *Standing Orders* the Chair will only entertain debate now on the amendment as moved.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the time remaining, may I certainly roundly denounce such an amendment. It's certainly completely inconsistent with the real experience not only of Albertans but of the budgetary process of the government that has consistently emphasized institutional over the community and home care support.

Mr. Speaker, if you really want to look at home care in Canada, you just have to look at home care as it's practised in the province of -- guess where? -- Manitoba. Everybody in this province I talked to in home care said, "Well, if we could only get to the Manitoba experience ..."

MR. OLDRING: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I'm still waiting to receive a copy of the amendment, so I'm wondering if it's appropriate to continue with the debate at this time.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair appreciates the comment by the hon. Member for Red Deer South, but looking at the clock, I think it would be in the interests of all members if the Member for Edmonton Centre were allowed to proceed.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to conclude not with my own obviously partisan remarks but with the remarks of the Alberta Medical Association, who in their review of the Alberta government and its spending -- contrary to the amendment as proposed, which is continuing to emphasize, the Alberta Medical Association is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to tell Albertans that currently the Alberta government spends 93 percent of its long-term care budget on institutions and only 7 percent on home care and community support.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's not me; it's not the New Democratic Party. It's the Alberta Medical Association. They're spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to tell Albertans that far from, as the member would like to suggest, that we're continuing to emphasize the 7 percent -- my goodness, what sort of emphasis is 7 percent that we're going to continue to emphasize? Au contraire; we have 93 percent that's spent in institutional setting.

As the Member for Edmonton Gold Bar has outlined, there is a very comprehensive way to emphasize in new ways. I was just suggesting looking at -- we haven't had any mention of granny flats. It think in Australia there has been a lot of experience there in terms of ways in which the elderly can live around the home without being in it.

We have no way in which health care costs can be transferred home for various procedures -- bandages, medications, and so on -- for people to get out of hospital and home.

Look at Pat Moore going around the United States for three years as an 80-year-old woman, finding all the architectural -- we have our senses heightened about the handicapped, but for the elderly in our society and in their own homes, architecture isn't conducive often.

As I said, the home care, Mr. Speaker -- the real emphasis in any particular model of a provincial government exists in the province of Manitoba. Now, if the member would like to -- I'm not going to introduce a subamendment, but certainly if he would like to emphasize the approach that the province of Manitoba has taken to home care, in support of the elderly out of the institutional setting, then I might agree with him and support him. Look at the record. Talk to people in home care here in Edmonton and Calgary and wherever. They say, "If we can only get to the Manitoba model for home care, then we will have been doing something, then we will get to something." If you don't believe that, just go to the Alberta Medical Association. They're all very well-educated doctors. They've looked at the budget and they say, "93 percent of long-term care budget is spent on institutions, 7 percent on home care and community services."

The evidence is clear, Mr. Speaker. I don't understand how

this amendment could possibly be brought forth in any good faith, although I know that the member has worked hard with the Senior Citizens' Secretariat and I congratulate him for his work with them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: May the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar close the debate?

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak against the amendment. I don't want to close the debate on the motion, if that's what you're suggesting, sir.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: On the amendment. Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker. I must speak in opposition to the amendment. While I appreciate the comments . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair hesitates to interrupt the hon. member, but under Standing Order 8 the time has now expired. Perhaps within 12 seconds the hon. member could very briefly close before our bell rings.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am inalterably opposed to the amendment. It would in fact destroy the intent of the motion, which is that any measures, the measures that are so desperately and urgently required, should be contained in the Alberta budget, which we hope to see tomorrow, so that all Albertans, seniors and their families, may know what it is the government intends to do now.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Time has expired on this matter.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: I'd like to move to adjourn debate on this particular amendment, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Inasmuch as the hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar did not close debate, the record, I believe, would show that the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View has adjourned the debate.

Next order of business.

head: **PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS**
OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS
(Second Reading)

Bill 203
An Act to Amend the
Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak in support of private member's Bill 203. This is a Bill to require that the annual financial statements of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund set out an estimate of the fair market value of the trust fund as of the end of the preceding fiscal year.

When one thinks of accuracy of information and the providing of complete information, I think back to a story by J. K. Galbraith, which he told in Calgary about 10 years ago, about his experiences during the 1960s when he was involved with the American government. He told about a program of the great society at that point in time to reduce the discrepancy between the highest percentage of income earners and the lowest percentage of income earners in the United States. After some seven or eight years of the program, the statistics showed that rather than having decreased, the disparity in fact increased, and accordingly the government took drastic action to remedy the problem; it stopped publishing the statistics. That unfortunately is all too reminiscent of the attitude of this government with respect to information, as has been exemplified several times in this House today in the refusal to allow permission for continuation of the final series of questions and the attempt, within the last five minutes of debate on the proceeding motion, to stop the hon. member from making what few comments would be available.

The Liberal Party is dedicated to the principle of more open and free government. It believes in better government and better policy for this province, and it's very obvious that the flow of accurate information is absolutely essential to provide us with the greatest potential for making the best decisions with respect to important public policy matters. And that's what we're really here for, to debate and get the information that is absolutely essential for making the decisions that we have to make.

A week ago last Tuesday I sponsored in this House a motion with respect to certain freedom of information and disclosure initiatives, which I think are very important and I would certainly commend to this House. This Bill is a continuation of that theme that we proposed in the motion a week Tuesday. It's a theme which attempts to point out that in fact this government is not dedicated to the principles of open government and is the most closed and secret government in the country and keeps what information it has available. One wonders what information it is actually basing its decisions on, but whatever that may be, it keeps it to itself.

The heritage fund is a spectacular example of the misleading and incomplete information presented to the people of Alberta, and it's also a good example of the mischief and harm that misconception about certain factual matters relating to public policy issues can cause. For example, there is an illusion that the heritage trust fund consists of \$15 billion of asset value. Is that semaphore that I see the hon. member kind of flashing in front of me? There is an illusion that there are \$15 million of assets in the heritage trust fund, and that's not an illusion that's held merely far away from Edmonton. The *Edmonton Journal* in a story on the front page yesterday made that very statement and allegation, and editorials in the *Globe and Mail* every six months speak about the wealth of this province, the largesse of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and the fact that we in Alberta are veritably modern-day nabobs.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

The harm that this causes, of course, is that we have a perception in the east with respect to Alberta that no help is required for this province in times such as these when our oil and gas industry, the agriculture industry, and other elements of our economy are so very badly hurt. The bottom line is that even with a federal government that's supposed to be sympathetic to this province, with 21 Progressive Conservative MPs from Alberta in office, we receive absolutely no help whatsoever for our

oil and gas industry. A large part of that problem is perceptual, and a significant portion of that perceptual problem can be attributed to the misinformation with respect to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

Another problem, of course, with respect to the perception of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund rests right here in the province of Alberta. Albertans are asking, "Why don't we use the heritage trust fund to get us out of our difficulties?" The reality is that the heritage trust fund value is probably no more, at most, than \$10 billion or \$11 billion, enough to fund, at a maximum, three years of the current budget deficit if the trust fund were to be so used. This is certainly something that is not broadly understood in this province.

Now, in terms of the \$15 billion value, one wonders why the government continues to allow that illusion to be spread throughout the country. Let me give several examples, and very clear examples, of why that is not an accurate assessment of the value. First of all, \$2.5 billion of the so-called assets are in the capital assets fund. These are deemed assets; they consist of parks, hospitals, and irrigation canals which cannot be realized on. They can't be sold. The Auditor General has stated in his report for many years that these are not assets in the traditional accounting sense. He has recommended that they be taken out of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I and other members of the standing committee of the Legislature on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund made the same recommendation during our hearings this past session.

AN HON. MEMBER: Read last year's.

MR. CHUMIR: That's right; they were put in last year. They've been ignored by the government. They continue to be ignored by the government, and they were turned down by the government majority on the committee this year. They shouldn't be there; it's misleading.

The remaining assets, after one takes out the \$2.5 billion of deemed assets, leaves a book value of \$12.5 billion. A great deal of those assets are, in fact, real assets. They're liquid assets in the sense that they can readily be converted to cash. There's the Canadian investment division, which constitutes loans to other provinces in the amount of approximately \$1.8 billion. It's sometimes suggested that one can't realize on those loans, that they're not liquid. I don't see why they're any less liquid than any other bond that's quoted on any mercantile exchange; they certainly can be realized, and it turns out that they were a good investment. There's the energy investment division, which is liquid; the commercial investment division; and miscellaneous cash and securities.

Now, these present no particular problems. However, there is an issue of value with respect to the Alberta investment division, which has a book value of \$8.177 billion. That, Mr. Speaker, is set out in the annual report of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and most of that asset value consists of loans to Alberta Crown corporations. The only assets other than those loans are \$658 million which are investments in Syncrude and Prince Rupert. The balance of approximately \$7.5 billion is in loans to these Crown corporations. And approximately \$4.5 billion of those loans are to three Crown corporations which have been having very severe financial difficulties. These Crown corporation can in no possible way pay back more than a miniscule fraction of the amount borrowed from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund to the fund. As of March 31, 1986, these amounts were loans from the fund to the Alberta Mortgage and

Housing Corporation, \$3.387 billion; the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation, a loan from the fund of \$1.041 billion; and the Alberta Opportunity Company, \$162 million. All of these companies have incurred massive losses since the collapse of the boom in the early 1980s. It is estimated that these corporations have lost so much money that of the \$4.5 billion owing to the heritage trust fund, they could only pay from \$2 billion to \$3 billion. This leaves, then, an estimated loss of \$1.5 billion to \$2.5 billion, which would leave a fair market value of \$10 billion to \$11 billion only in the trust fund.

Now, I state that this is an estimated loss, because we don't really know what the amount is. I've not heard a government member dispute the proposed amount of the loss, although it's a figure that I and others have used in the hearings of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I'd be grateful if there were some dispute, firstly, to get some sense of information on that issue, but hopefully to hear some refutation of that fact to show that perhaps we're worth more than I think we are.

The government unfortunately provides no information whatsoever in the trust fund report with respect to the amount that is considered to be recoverable by the trust fund on that very significant portion, over a third of the so-called liquid assets or financial assets of the fund, \$4.5 billion of loans to those three Crown corporations. As I said during the deliberations of the heritage trust fund committee, what is the failure of the government to provide this kind of information is forcing MLAs, not only like myself but government MLAs who are sitting on that Heritage Savings Trust Fund, to play the role of Sherlock Holmes, to be sleuths, to be rummaging around in footnotes and accounting policies of the reports of these Crown corporations trying to figure out what's going on instead of paying attention to formulation of policy on the basis of clear and accurate information which should be provided and is not being provided.

If we look at those footnotes and definitions of accounting policy in the annual report, we see a potpourri of changes and ambiguities. For example, look at note 3 to the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation's 1986 annual report. It's a report which was received very late and was not available to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee. Unfortunately, no substitute information or summary was presented to the committee. It was a very unsatisfactory performance, and I must note that finally when the report has come out -- and I'm holding the financial pages up here so that at least the flasher of the semaphore about five minutes ago will be able to see that the colour of it is a 'kaka' colour. It's in a form so that the numbers are almost invisible. It's almost illegible, which is a reflection of shame, and the colour is probably symbolic of the response the average taxpayer would feel when he contemplates the mass of losses that this corporation has incurred over the years.

I'd like to read this note which gives one a reflection; it's note 3 to those financial statements, Change in Accounting Policy:

During the year the Corporation changed its accounting policy from not providing for declines in value of an enduring nature in the investments in land banking and inventory, to providing for such losses. This change in accounting policy, which has been applied prospectively, results in an increase in the deficit of the Corporate Account for 1986 of \$81,000,000 with a corresponding reduction in the value of investments.

Eighty-one million dollars, a mere trifle; no need to have thought of it sooner. They might also have added that as a matter of coincidence the change in accounting policy occurred not

many months after the members of the Alberta Liberal Party had been criticizing the government in the House with respect to the very same accounting policies that it has been following and the failure to come clean with respect to the losses that that corporation has been incurring.

Not only did we complain about that; we also complained about the separation of accounts and particularly the losses in the accounts between the corporate and mortgage insurance funds of the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation annual report. Our complaints and criticisms were that this separation, when looked at in principle and what it was trying to accomplish, was confusing and largely unnecessary. For example, in 1985 we see the same stickhandling and shifting of policies and procedures from year to year with respect to that account. And amounts in issue are not insignificant. In 1985 there was a loss of in excess of \$241 million in the mortgage insurance fund. This was not transferred to the corporate account, understating the corporate loss for that 1985 year. In 1986 we have a loss of a somewhat trifling sum of \$56 million, just slightly over a fifth of the previous year; we're getting better. And of this \$56 million loss, slightly in excess of \$49 million is in this instance -- and I say "is" -- contrary to the previous year's practice, transferred to corporate account, increasing the reported loss by this amount. Two years; two different approaches.

And what happens to this reported loss? Where does it appear in the financial statements of the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation? Well, generally, year after year that reported loss has vanished into thin air. In 1985 the reported loss -- and I refresh that it's an underreported loss, because the loss that was really incurred was hidden in the mortgage insurance fund -- was \$188 million, which was offset by a government contribution of \$186 million. So the accumulated loss disappears from the books.

In 1986 we have a reported loss of \$288 million. There is again an offset. This time the offset -- and who knows what the principle of this offset is; it doesn't appear anywhere in the financial statements -- is \$207 million, leaving a deficit at the end of the year of \$83.5 million. And when we try and find out about this, the explanation, we go to note 11 and it states cryptically, and I'll be interested to hear the explanations of some member on the opposite side of the House:

Pursuant to section 14 of the Act, the operating deficit of the Corporation is paid out of monies voted by the Alberta Legislature. Effective June 5, 1985, as a result of an amendment to the Act, the Provincial Treasurer may exclude from the operating deficit all or any part of an expenditure in respect to a provision for a decline in the value of assets of the Corporation.

Well, this has resulted in the corporation retaining a deficit of the \$83.5 million in the corporate account of March 31, 1986. What's the standard of judgment? Well, they used to say in law in the old Court of Equity, which was supposed to be a court of conscience, that the chancellor's conscience varied with the length of the chancellor's foot. The policy was set by the individual who held office. What are standards or principles by which we are reporting very important public policy matters? Obviously, the Provincial Treasurer picks and chooses his accounting policies.

So what does all this mean? Well, I don't know. I don't know anybody who does know. It turns out that the financial statements of the government are all over the map, and this has been going on for years. But I ask very simply, and I ask those members who have been sitting on the Heritage Savings Trust

Fund committee of the Legislature with me for three months -- and I note that the Chairman is very interested, and I ask him and I ask the rest: can anybody simply tell us how much of the \$3.387 billion that the heritage trust fund has loaned to Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation we are going to get back? How much are they good for? Surely that has to be a fundamental question that we should know.

MRS. CRIPPS: Are you asking me?

MR. CHUMIR: If you can answer, you could . . . Well, one thing is certain. It's much, much, much less than the face value.

The same problem pertains, unfortunately, to the Alberta Opportunity Company and the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation, and accordingly isn't it time that the legislation governing the heritage trust fund financial statements was amended in some sensible way such as that proposed in this Bill, so that we do have a statement at the end of the year telling us what the fair market value of our assets is. One thing we have to remember is that the annual report of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund is not a financial statement for sophisticated investors who are investing in bonds or in stocks; this is a report to the people of Alberta. What can be set out clearly and simply should be set out clearly and simply, and this is what the annual report does not do.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I just might note that it's not always an easy question to estimate the value of all of the assets in a fund such as the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Some assets -- and these assets are in the minority, I submit -- such as the investment of the fund in the Syncrude project, may present some difficulties, but that is a commercial asset and notwithstanding the difficulty, it can be valued, and an estimation is better than no value. Now, I understand that values do change; that's life. But securities can be valued, and the amount recoverable from these Crown corporations can very clearly be estimated.

The issue here is not to prove that there have been losses. In fact, some of the investments of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund have been good investments indeed, and there will be increases in value. But really the purpose of this amendment and our plea to this House is: let's start to approach public issues on the basis of having accurate information so we can get the most accurate thinking possible to focus on those particular issues. It is our submission that our Bill 203 would provide a correct start in this direction.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of personal privilege. Before he gets up, I'd just like to point out that in ADC, he said there's no provision showing for doubtful accounts and losses. On page 18 there indeed is, and in note 9 it lays it out clearly and adequately.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this private member's Bill, which has been so ably defended and presented by my colleague from Calgary Buffalo. He has taken great care and attention in outlining some of the financial and economic details of this fund and their implications for this particular pri-

vate member's Bill, I would like to approach the matter from a broader, more general level and talk to the fact that this piece of legislation addresses three important elements of government fiscal responsibility, including proper government accountability.

The first element that I want to refer to is the question of negotiating strategy. It is fundamentally clear that this government has absolutely no negotiating strategy. In fact, it has a negative negotiating strategy when it comes to dealing with the rest of this country, when it comes to dealing with the federal government in particular. We continue to tell this country, we continue to tell Ottawa that we have \$15 billion in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. It is clear from the comments of my colleague from Calgary Buffalo, it is clear from any rational analysis that we do not have \$15 billion in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund and that if this government was not intent upon sustaining its political credibility, waning as that political credibility in fact is, desperately clutching at whatever straw it can clutch at to sustain its credibility, we would be able to write down the assets of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund to their realistic value. We would be able to convey to the rest of this country that we do not have \$15 billion and that we are not rich as the rest of the country believes we are.

In fact, that has implications for so much of what we must do in social policy, cultural policy, economic development policy. We cannot confront the challenges of the future for this province as adequately as we can without assistance from Ottawa, and if we continue to tell Ottawa that we are rich, they will be unable to create the kind of consensus that they must create in central Canada so that they are in a position to help us, so that they can build the political credit in central Canada that will allow them to help us.

We should consider the example of the province of Quebec. I don't know whether it's general knowledge to the members of this Legislature, but the province of Quebec has a heritage-trust-fund-like fund called the Caisse de depot fund and it has in it in the order of \$25 billion. How many people in Alberta, how many people in this country are aware of that fund? It is not public knowledge. How many people in this country have jumped to the conclusion, despite the fact that that fund is proportionately not all that much smaller than Alberta's fund, proportional to our populations, that Quebec is rich? Nobody. Quebec has sustained the case, sustained the argument that they are in fact in dire financial straits, that they have regional economic development problems, that they have diversification problems, and that they continually need the assistance of the rest of this country.

And you know how they've done that? They have managed to downplay the significance of the Caisse de depot. They have in fact construed the Caisse de depot as being a fund for the combination of all their government/public-sector pension funds, and they have therefore made the case very effectively to the rest of this country that they can have their cake and they can eat it too. They can have a fund which they use even more effectively in terms of economic development than we have ever used the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. They somehow get the political credit as a government for doing that, and they have never revealed to the rest of this country in any kind of effective way that they are rich and that therefore they don't need assistance from Ottawa.

What are the results of that? Let's talk about the CF-18. Ottawa bent over backwards to give Quebec the CF-18. Do you know why? Because Quebec is so effective in negotiating with

the rest of this country and with Ottawa, based on its assumed need for support. Over the last two years, 1984 to 1986, it should be noted that under the DRIE, Department of Regional Industrial Expansion, grants, Quebec, with \$25 billion in its counterpart to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, received \$489 million. Alberta, which has been so effective in communicating to the rest of this country that it has \$15 billion, that we are rich, received \$13.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that it would behoove this government to consider the effectiveness, the success that Quebec has in negotiating with Ottawa and to look at how they do it. It's not magic; it's not mystical. It's intelligent, commonsense negotiating. This government has got to place its short-term, limited political objectives beneath the long-term objectives of this province and of the people of this province.

The second important principle that this piece of legislation addresses is the question of imposing discipline on this government. I think that Albertans were alarmed at recent stances taken over the last six or seven months by this government, and I believe that the stances that were taken -- and I will elaborate upon them in a minute -- were taken because this government didn't understand what it had in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I believe that it is part of the psyche of this government to believe that somehow the Heritage Savings Trust Fund would always be there, would be an infinite amount of money, and could solve every last problem that they had.

Let's consider some of the rhetoric of this government. Mr. Getty, the Premier of this government, has on at least two occasions said: "If you won't help us with the Husky oil upgrader, we'll do it ourselves. If you won't help us with the Syncrude project, don't worry; we'll do it ourselves." I can only imagine that a Premier of a province would say that if he considered that he had unlimited resources. I believe that this government, until at least very, very recently -- and probably many of its members to this point still believe that they have unlimited resources and that in some sense all of this money that's in the heritage trust fund can be scooped up and spent on Syncrude and spent on the Husky oil upgrader regardless of whether or not we should be doing that ourselves. Again, that underlines ineffective negotiation.

We were also concerned in this province when the Treasurer got up last year after being questioned by me about the heritage trust fund. In my question I alluded to the fact that \$8 billion was invested from the heritage trust fund in Crown corporations. The Treasurer got up and said, "I don't know how much is in fact invested in Crown corporations, but I will accept the word of the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark." I am flattered that he would accept my word. I am disturbed in the extreme that he would not have those numbers at his fingertips. He is the one person ultimately responsible in this government for that fund. I believe that if he is not aware of it, it is further indication that they have not considered its value properly, that that's not important to this government.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill would impose discipline upon this government because they would have to deal with the reality of the figures. They would have to understand that there is not \$15 billion there, that there might at best be, depending on how you evaluate it, \$10 billion to \$11 billion, and if you had to sell it tomorrow, there might be \$6 billion. In any event, there is not the liquidity there that the people of Alberta have been led to believe there is by this government. You can't sell the Kananaskis golf course for money so that you could scoop that money up and create jobs. You can't sell the Walter Mackenzie hospi-

tal for money so you can scoop that money up and create jobs. There is no liquidity. And the way that this has been accounted for mystifies people about that.

Mr. Speaker, this government has been spending in this province over the last 15 years like the proverbial drunken sailor. The accounting principles, the inflated value that they ascribed and attributed to this heritage trust fund is further evidence that they have not overcome that particular problem. Fiscal responsibility on the part of this government cannot follow properly until they do overcome that problem.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Thirdly, I would like to discuss the relationship of this Bill to enhanced accountability on the part of this government. Mr. Speaker, you will be aware, as I know the members of this House are, of the extreme importance that this party, the Liberal Party, is putting on proper accountability for good government, that accountability and every initiative that we can take to improve it, improves management. Good management wants to be questioned because it becomes stronger if it's questioned. It wants to admit that it makes mistakes because then it will move to correct those mistakes. It wants to be held accountable because only then will it be stronger.

In addition to this initiative, you will know that we have proposed legislation in the area of conflict of interest, in the area of shielding for the press, sunshine legislation, information access legislation. This is part and parcel of that initiative. We have seen some very disturbing accounting irregularities and changes in accounting.

Let me talk about the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation for a minute. The Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation has a \$3.5 billion debenture from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund; 20 percent of the assets of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund have been taken and invested in the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation, undoubtedly because this government has assessed that that would be a good investment. Do you know that the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation, by the Auditor General's own observation, does not use generally accepted accounting principles? Think about that. Every corporation that is ever audited and under regulation is required to use generally accepted accounting principles out there in the private sector. There's a reason for that, Mr. Speaker: so that when a member of the public or a person interested in reviewing the financial status of a company picks up its books, its financial statements, it can be certain that those financial statements are consistent and that what they see is what they can believe.

The fact of the matter is that the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation does not use generally accepted accounting principles, and therefore we do not know its financial state. We cannot be certain of its financial state. The people of Alberta can have no confidence in those reports and its financial statements. But at the same time, as though that weren't important, this government has invested \$3.5 billion in that corporation. I ask you if anybody in this House, in this Legislature, would go to the stock market, any stock market in this country, and invest in a corporation when investment analysts told them that this corporation didn't follow generally accepted accounting principles. If they did, they would be out of their minds, Mr. Speaker. You do not make investments without adequate financial information, and this government has done it, and its inherent in our Bill that we want to overcome that.

We look at the Alberta Opportunity Company. You talk

about inflating return to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. My colleague from Calgary Buffalo made the case, and it was a powerful case. Here is a government that has invested over one-half of the assets of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund in five Crown corporations. They produce two-thirds of the total income of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, but they lose 30 to 40 percent of that every year. So what have we done? We have asked taxpayers to supplement the income of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund so the government can go out to taxpayers and say: "Aren't we geniuses; look how well we invest this. Thank you very much for allowing us to do that."

And you know how they sustained the income? To make matters even worse, as if that weren't bad enough by itself, lets quote from the Alberta Opportunity Company report. This company is currently paying on certain series B debentures an interest rate of 15 to 18 percent. Can anybody in this Legislature tell me where you could get an interest rate return of 15 to 18 percent? Can anybody tell me of any company that had the chance to get out of a debenture on which they had to pay 15 to 18 percent in today's interest rate environment that wouldn't do that? Well, the Alberta Opportunity Company would certainly like to do that, and they have the option of doing that, but this government hasn't allowed them to do it. And I read:

The Company has been informed by the Province that the holder of the Series B debentures will not accept early redemption of the debentures. The Company will then maintain the debentures until their maturity at the repayment terms in effect at issue dates and forego any interest rate reductions which may be available through early redemption and concurrent refinancing of the debt.

This is the height of cynical politics. This government has forced the Alberta Opportunity Company to maintain high rate debentures so that they can come out with this report and tell the people of Alberta, "We are geniuses; we're getting 15 percent return on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund." They are not getting 15 percent return on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund; quite the contrary. If they are, it's only with the help of the Alberta taxpayer who has been forced to cover up, as it were, this government's ineffective investment of Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund assets, and we are paying the price today. We are paying the price because we do not have an effective negotiating strategy, which this Bill will get us. We are paying the price because we do not have the imposition of factual, financial discipline on this government, because they do not themselves understand the real figure, the real assets value of that heritage trust fund, and we are suffering because we do not have adequate management accountability, Mr. Speaker, at a time when this government needs to have profound management accountability if it is ever to recover from its spending excesses of the 1970s and early 1980s.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. I believe the hon. Member for Lacombe caught the Chair's eye.

MR. R. MOORE: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I welcome to speak to Bill 203. I don't really think the Bill is necessary, but I appreciate the opportunity to speak to it. I always admire the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo and his forthright, quiet way, and I respect his thoughts, although some of them may be a little misdirected at times.

I'm not aware of Galbraith, that he quoted; I'm not familiar

with this gentleman, if that was the right name. But he referred to how he spoke, something about bringing the rich to the poor and levels together; the poor up to the rich or the rich down to the poor, as the socialists would like to do. But he didn't really hook it up to the heritage trust fund in his motion, so I'd like to help him if I could, I'd like to show him where the heritage trust fund brings the rich and the poor together, I want to look at Kananaskis Country. Beautiful; the rich and the poor can go there and enjoy it. Every Albertan, no matter whether they are a welfare recipient or a rich oilman, can go to Kananaskis Country. And that's brought together with the heritage trust fund. It's right there. No question about it. And when we look at the Mackenzie health centre, Mr. Speaker -- just take a look at it: a state of the art medical centre. Rich and poor Albertans come together there on equal terms and equal treatment through the heritage trust fund. So I thought I'd help the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo out in showing where the heritage trust fund brings the poor and the rich together.

I have to agree; we have to have an information base to base our thinking on. I look at this report, and I think that's a very worthwhile document when you really take the time to read it. Mr. Speaker, it explains it very thoroughly in simple English all the way through, and then it gives the financial statements to back it up. I think it's there. We all got a copy of it here in this House. We had the opportunity to read it. When the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo talks about this government being a closed government, when he's speaking to this Bill on the heritage trust fund that he has in here, I think he just got a little twisted up. I think he's operating with his eyes closed, or he would have read in this document -- and I'd like to go through it for a moment. I'm speaking to the motion; I'm not getting off -- well, I'm just looking for the spot here -- like the hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo did on deemed assets, which comes up in Motion 206. I won't debate Motion 206 under this Bill. But I can understand why he got into deemed assets, because it's clear to me that he doesn't know what his caucus is bringing forward. He didn't know one of his members was bringing Motion 206 forward, so he mixed it up with this. But it's again understandable, because when I look at the Liberal caucus, they're all scrambling for leadership positions and naturally don't know what the other ones are doing.

Now that I've found what I was looking for here, I want to, just for the interest of the members here so assembled ...

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Please continue, hon. member.

MR. R. MOORE: For the interest of the members so assembled, Mr. Speaker, I would like to read what Bill 203 says, because I've listened to two speakers here, and I've lost track of what it says because they never really spoke to what they have here. It says, by adding the following clause to the statements here so assembled. It says, "an estimate of the fair market value of the assets of the Trust Fund at the end of the preceding fiscal year." That's all they want added by this Bill. And I would just go to page 48 -- let's just back up here maybe; we'll go a little further back here. Well, on page 46, if anybody wants to mark that down and, after this debate, look it up. Just to touch on it, on that page it says "Cash and Marketable Securities" about the Alberta heritage trust account. And it goes on: "Bonds: Government of Canada, direct," cost and market value. Just exactly what they want to add on. It's there: market value. You go on

down: "Provincial, direct and guaranteed," bonds of Alberta, cost and market value; "short-term money market ..." -- fine, it's all there. The market value is there as well as the cost.

Let's turn over here to page 50, under "Commercial Investment Division." It's all there. Cost figures listed down: communications and media, consumer goods, financial services -- all the cost and the market value is there. All they had to do, instead of putting this House to this time today, this important time when we could be on to something more important, was read it. It's here, exactly what their motion says: add "the fair market value." And there it is. I see nothing missing there.

Now I want to take a look at where it isn't and see what it would matter if they did put on the fair market value, the guesstimate of the Provincial Treasurer. Now, if the Provincial Treasurer was to put his estimate there -- I've noticed that the Official Opposition and the other opposition parties take exception to everything the Provincial Treasurer says. So if he did put an estimate there, they would come up here -- you can't say a "lie" in this House, Mr. Speaker; I realize that. They would say --

I think the acceptable term is "misleading the people."

So what's the point of it being there. But we have it right in here. We have under the capital projects division: economic development, venture capital financing, in 1985, \$199,999; in 1986 we have \$199,998. We're down one in that. So it shows what the fair market value was, and it's in actual figures, not an estimate. You can compare how it is from one year to the next; it's outlined in there. So I find it hard to follow why we have this motion before us; I really do, Mr. Speaker.

I only have one comment to say to the hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark about his statements about the hon. Premier. He said something about asking Ottawa for help on the Husky upgrader, and Ottawa said, "We won't help you." He said, "Well, that's fine; we'll do it ourselves". And he said the same thing about Syncrude. I just ask that hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark if he ever heard the little nursery rhyme about the little red hen and saw the results of that. The little red hen, you know, she asked for help; she went through the whole process. I remember that when I went to school, I learned that, and it was a good lesson, because it shows that in the end result it's the guys that go out and do it themselves that come out on top and those that [inaudible] out the other end, lose out. I'll just put that before you, and I hope the hon. Member for Edmonton Meadowlark is listening, that we're proud Albertans, that we go ahead and do these things on our own.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think I've taken up enough time here, because I said in the beginning that I didn't think it should have been before us in the first place. I think it's already there very clearly for anyone that wants to read it, and I suggest that those members who haven't taken the time to do so and we get on with defeating this motion and get on to the real business of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Red Deer South.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to first of all thank the Member for Calgary Buffalo for bringing this Bill forward. Although I certainly don't agree with the intent of the Bill, I do welcome the opportunity of being able to discuss the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I welcome that opportunity not only here in the House, but I welcome it in my own constituency as well. I think it's most appropriate at this time, in light of recognizing that it is the 10th anniversary of this trust fund.

I think perhaps it would help to reflect back on the initial goals that were established when the concept was brought forward. They were threefold: one, to save for the future; two, to strengthen and diversify the economy; and three, to improve the quality of life in Alberta, not only today but well into the future. Mr. Speaker, there's no question in my mind that the trust fund has lived up to those commitments; its clearly lived up to those commitments.

I listened to the Member for Calgary Buffalo challenging the accuracy and completeness of the report, suggesting that it was misleading and incomplete and suggesting that it was misinformation. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the only misinformation coming out about the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund these days is coming from that side of the House. And I guess I can understand it, because it's probably difficult, I think, for Liberals and NDPs to be able to appreciate a report like this, because it's written in black ink; they're only used to dealing with deficits. So I can see what a challenge that alone would be for them.

Mr. Speaker, there's 52 pages of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund annual report this year, and it lays out very clearly the position that the trust fund is in. I want to comment first of all on the Auditor's report, and it says very clearly:

I have examined the balance sheet of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund as at March 31, 1986 and the statements of income, retained earnings, transfers and fund equity, changes in financial position and Capital Projects Division amounts expended for the year then ended. My examination was made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, and accordingly included such tests and other procedures as I considered necessary in the circumstances.

In my opinion, these financial statements present fairly the financial position of the Trust Fund as at March 31, 1986...

I don't think that's all that difficult to understand. I think that's pretty clear.

Mr. Speaker, they mentioned deemed assets. I know that's a contentious point for them; they don't seem to feel that deemed assets have any place in this report.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. The Chair brings to the attention of all members of the House Standing Order 13(4)(b):

- (4) When a member is speaking, no person shall . . .
 - (b) interrupt that member, except to raise a point of order.

Carry on.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

They made reference to deemed assets as if they were hidden away in this report, as if they were misleading Albertans. Mr. Speaker, it's very clear in this report. I might mention to the Member for Calgary Buffalo that it's not \$2.5 billion; it's \$2.4 billion. But I want to talk about the deemed assets and how they're working for Albertans today and in the future, because I think perhaps if we've been guilty of anything, we've been guilty of not communicating to Albertans clearly enough just how much this trust fund is working for Albertans today. And I

heard the Member for Calgary Buffalo ask that question. It's interesting for me to note that one of the reasons we don't have a sales tax in this province is because of the income generated from this trust fund. Last year this trust fund generated the equivalent of an 8 percent sales tax in earnings -- 8 percent. That also equates to about twice...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Hon. members, discussions in the lounge. Thank you. Carry on, Member for Red Deer South.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That also equates to about the equivalent of double our personal income tax, working for Albertans today.

Mr. Speaker, during the '80s the trust fund provided interest sheltering for approximately 200,000 Albertans who were threatened with loss of homes. The trust fund was there to help them out. The trust fund was there to bring their interest rates down so they could afford to keep those homes. During the past 10 years the trust fund has invested \$6.1 billion into diversification and strengthening the economy of this province.

I want to get back to deemed assets, Mr. Speaker. We have one of those deemed assets in our city, in my constituency, the Waskasoo Park network, about a \$28 million total project. I look at that project with other people, not only from my constituency, not only from Red Deer, but from throughout this province. As we go through it, we look at it, and I say, "There is a truly legitimate heritage trust fund project." That park is not only there for me to enjoy today, but it's there in perpetuity for my kids to enjoy. Truly sound trust fund dollars, Mr. Speaker. The Walter C. Mackenzie institute: the Member for Lacombe has already touched on this. A deemed asset. Yes, it's a deemed asset, but it's there for all Albertans. It's there for all Albertans to enjoy.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. Bragging about the deemed assets is not talking about the accounting procedures, which is what this Bill is about. He's been off the topic for the last two or three minutes.

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps the hon. member will take due regard of the clock.

MR. OLDRING: In light of the hour, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to advise the House that if there's time after the adjournment of the debate tomorrow, we will have second reading of Bill 2.

[At 5:29 p.m. the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]