

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, April 9, 1987 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 87/04/09

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, we give thanks as legislators for the rich diversity of our history.

We welcome the many challenges of the present. We dedicate ourselves to both the present and the future as we join in the service of Alberta and Canada.

Amen.

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, I rise to table for the information of all hon. members a copy of a wording of a petition that today I will deliver to the Minister of Education from St. Catherine community school calling for retention of 100 percent funding for community schools.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and to the members of this Assembly, 18 adult students from the Adult Development Centre located in the constituency of Edmonton Kingsway. These students are accompanied by their two teachers, Mrs. Barb Foxell and Mr. Bob Holmes. They are seated in the public gallery, and I request that they rise to receive the traditional warm welcome of this Legislature.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly, two very dear friends who have contributed in such a significant way both to their community and to their country. They are sitting in the members' gallery, and I would ask Mr. and Mrs. John Devereux to rise to receive the warm applause of this House.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to be able to introduce to all members of the Assembly this afternoon three Calgarians and a gentleman from Airdrie who are seated in the members' gallery. They're here representing the coalition against human services cutbacks. They are Angela Bunting, George Fritz, David Krell, and Mr. Gus Henderson. I'd ask them if they'd rise and receive a warm welcome from the members of the Assembly.

MR. PIQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to introduce to you and through you -- Monsieur le président, je suis fier aujourd'hui de vous introduire -- Mr. George Ares, president of the Alberta French association, le président de l'Association

canadienne-française de l'Alberta; Mme Lydia Roy, Mrs. Lydia Roy, president of the Edmonton French-Canadian association; Mr. Laurent Jubinville, president of the Morinville-Legal French association of Alberta; Mr. Roger Fréchette, who is the federal commissioner of official languages for Canada; and also Mr. Pierre Bergeron, président, Francophonie jeunesse de l'Alberta, president of the Young Francophones of Alberta; accompanied by 35 other members from the young Francophone community of Alberta.

I would like all of these visitors and guests to please rise and receive a warm welcome from this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Banff-Cochrane followed by the Member for Edmonton Centre.

MR. STEVENS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, three guests from the constituency of Banff-Cochrane in the members' gallery. One guest is Mr. Ralph Scurfield, president of Sunshine Village in Banff National Park. Two other guests are Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Stehr of improvement district No. 8. Gordon is a councillor and past chairman of improvement district No. 8. Would they please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, 38 high school students from Victoria composite high school in my constituency, in the northeast part, right under the PWA flight path. They are students whose lives themselves are about to take off. Seated in the members' gallery with their teachers, Mr. Algajer and Ms Bram, I would ask that they please rise and receive the warm welcome of the members.

MR. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, Mrs. Bonnie Ganske, former manager of the Rocky Mountain House Chamber of Commerce and businesswoman. She is seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask her to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Farm Credit Stability Program**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Provincial Treasurer. In the election last year the government made a lot of political mileage out of their description of the farm credit stability program as a \$2 billion program for farmers. My question to the Treasurer: will the Treasurer confirm the statement in the budget that the net cost to the Treasury is not \$2 billion but is forecast at \$35 million this year?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'm sure the hon. member recalls the Legislative Assembly when we sat through 1986, because that session provided an opportunity to understand the farm credit stability program, this remarkable program which is unmatched in any other province in Canada. And in the structure which was agreed to by the Assembly at the time, there was in fact a new fund established, and that new fund, separate from the General Revenue Fund, is the fund which will handle the disbursements for the farm credit stability program.

I don't want to go on at any extra length here except to say

that when the fund was set up, money went into the fund, approximately \$1.7 billion -- if you will allow me some leeway in terms of general amounts -- and \$1.7 billion went out of the fund into the banking system to assist the farmers, to provide them with this 20-year 9 percent long-term funding. Obviously, there are some costs of the fund itself that have to be matched, and those costs are the \$35 million referenced by the Member for Edmonton Norwood, which in fact are transferred from the General Revenue Fund to the fund to cover such things as administration, perhaps some of the interest on the money and, in the unlikely situation, perhaps even some losses, which I don't think have taken place at this point.

So to be absolutely clear, Mr. Speaker, I can't give you details as to the amount of money disbursed, but the budget speech itself did reference 13,000 farmers who have now benefited from this program, bringing stability back into the system, allowing long-term financing to be provided to the farming sector, and in fact maintaining the stability of that sector, an important sector of this economy. And, in fact, the money and the commitment have been met and have been paid.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary question. The answer was yes, I guess, Mr. Speaker. For the grain farmers it will be nice to know there is stability there. But in the period since the program was announced, it is my understanding that the interest rate paid by the government has dropped considerably. In view of that, will the government now reconsider their earlier rejection of a suggestion from my colleague from Vegreville to lower the effective interest rate on the program from 9 percent to 6 percent to have an even more significant impact on farmers?

MR. JOHNSTON: I agree with the Member for Edmonton Norwood on two fundamental areas, Mr. Speaker. One, that in fact this government has been very effective in managing the resources of the province. We've been able to access the money markets of the world at very effective rates, and we're passing that saving on to the taxpayer through a lower tax rate and through interest savings on the debt cost.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, nowhere that I can find right now is long-term money available for 20 years anywhere near the 9 percent level. In fact, the rates are ticking up a touch right now, and obviously on a short-term basis we're taking full advantage of the swings in interest rates to take short-term positions, ready to lock into a long-term position when the interest rates have set. But nowhere can you borrow money at 9 percent for 20 years right across the world system right now, as far as I know.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we are using the good forces of this government, the foresight to stabilize the agricultural sector, unmatched anywhere in the world, and we're doing that for the farming sector because we believe there's a future there, and we know it's going to survive.

MR. MARTIN: Don't worry, Dick; the cameras aren't on you today. You can be less dramatic.

But my question, simply, to the Treasurer, after all the rhetoric: is it not so strange a coincidence that the total cost of the farm stability program, \$35 million, is almost identical to the \$36 million the government plans to take away from farmers by raising farm fuel prices by 23 cents per gallon? Now, I say to the minister: how does the minister justify this swindle -- getting grain farmers to pay the cost of Conservative election promises?

MR. JOHNSTON: Oh, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton Norwood can't get away with that kind of misleading statement. That's absolute nonsense and he knows it. The people of Alberta will benefit from the very significant programs that this government has brought forward. First, the \$2 billion program stabilized that system, prevented the erosion which was taking place in other provinces, and we moved when we had to. We used the force of this government, we followed our commitment during election period, and we came up with the goods.

With respect to the small business program the same thing is clear. We used the credit of this government, the financial strength of this government, to assist the small business sector, providing jobs, providing new investment. I know the member doesn't want to hear that, but that's what in fact is happening. This government has a plan, and this government is prepared to move, and it's doing it.

MR. MARTIN: I think we touched a sore point, Mr. Speaker. But if I may point out to the minister, the average break for farmers under the program is now about 1.5 percent to 2 percent, and the government pays a commission of 2.375 percent to the banks for administering the program. What does the Treasurer have to say to farmers about the effectiveness of a program which rewards banks more than it does farmers?

MR. JOHNSTON: Oh no. No again, Mr. Speaker. The misleading statements continue, but the people of Alberta can see through this phoniness; there's no question about that. They know exactly what he's saying. When it's convenient, he talks from one side of his mouth, but when he's in this Legislative Assembly and he knows he has to account, he has to be careful what he says. Because he knows full well that the people of Alberta have responded, and he's saying to the farming community, essentially, that this program isn't working.

Mr. Speaker, 13,000 farming communities, all the communities in Alberta, have been saved by this program. We're proud of it. It's working, and the effective cost to the farmer is not matched or not comparable in any other program in North America. It's working, and we are very proud of that program. And he should be careful that he always should tell the truth about how the program is operating and not drag these red herrings across the path of honesty.

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps enough red herrings will become sufficient fertilizer. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad you recognized what was coming out from over on that side.

To the Treasurer. In point of view, the scheme has looked after the banks very well; it's looking after the government. Would the Treasurer support the concept that to look after the farmers, he would put together a debt adjustment board with some teeth so that those farmers that can't pay that 9 percent interest won't be foreclosed and forced off their land tomorrow when they don't make their payments?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, my colleague the Minister of Agriculture has responded on at least four or five occasions that I can recount when in fact he talked just about that very part. Let's be clear on this issue. Again, I know that the members opposite and the two socialist parties do not like the kind of responses we're making. We know full well that when we move and there's a positive response, they're losing their base.

They're trying to confuse the people of Alberta, and it's just not working. We have responded, the system is in place, and the farming sector has been saved by this very strong initiative made by this government.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer. There is a 120-day limit of time in which the farmer can make an arrangement with the relative lending institution. Has the government made a decision to extend that time limit because of some of the very critical decisions that have to be made with regards to cash flow for the farmers? It is causing some problems. Is that adjustment being made?

MR. JOHNSTON: Again, Mr. Speaker, we would be very flexible on that decision process. It is true that there's a 120-day limit. If in fact we found that, for a variety of reasons that both the member and I could think about, there was some problem with the 120-day limit, I'm sure it could be waived if there's reasonable explanation.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Yes. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate the second question to the Member for Calgary Mountain View.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Calgary Mountain View.

Provincial Parks Policy

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are to the Minister of Recreation and Parks. Last weekend the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and the Minister of Tourism suggested that Jasper and Waterton national parks be turned into provincial parks in order that the restrictions on commercial development in those national parks could be circumvented. I presume that Banff National Park might also be included in that proposal. As the minister who is responsible for provincial parks, can he inform this Assembly whether he or his department endorses that position?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, in responding to the member's question, if the member were present he would have heard my response at the particular time. I'd indicated -- if the member doesn't want to hear the response, I'll sit down and wait till he does.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Is the minister not prepared to answer the question? I asked, Mr. Speaker, and I'll ask again: does he or his department endorse the proposal put forward last weekend by the Minister of Tourism and the Minister of Economic Development and Trade?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, there was no proposal put forth at all. It was a comment made by the hon. member, who suggested, as was indicated, that perhaps that should be considered. This department is not considering it at this time, nor is there any formal request to make such an application for changeover.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the minister's department is just completing a three-year process of consultation to prepare a policy statement for his department. Is the

minister, in light of his last statement, now saying that this proposal, which was never part of that discussion or part of that policy statement, is no longer operative for his department and that he was taken off guard by the comments of the ministers last weekend, like everybody else in this province?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the question should be addressed to the hon. member who raised it initially. I've not made any remark to either support or denounce the initial statement. But I should point out that parks are for people and that there was some 2 percent of the overall area that would have been affected if there were to be any change. This department supports the fact that there can be development, should be development, and if any application was to come forth or any consideration, we would review it at that time.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Can he unequivocally assure us that the idea of taking over national parks, turning them into provincial parks in order to circumvent the restrictions on development in those national parks, is not the policy of this government or of his department?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, there is no intent to circumvent any regulations, but I would indicate that that decision of course would have to be made by the other jurisdiction which the federal parks are under, and at such time that would be coming to us for consideration it would be reviewed.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary, the Minister of Tourism.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: I think it's unfortunate that the connotation is left that in some way our government seeks to destroy national parks or open them up for irresponsible development, and I find that's completely unfounded. It's not something new, Mr. Speaker, and our position and policy statement put out in June of 1985 made the statement very clear. It said:

The mountain . . . Parks are the focal point of the Alberta Tourism industry and are a major attraction for Canada. [And] it is essential that new National Parks' policies complement the needs of Tourism and permit modernization and expansion where required.

So, Mr. Speaker, through the process of looking at how we can expand the tourism industry in this province, we are looking at the most effective use of our park areas, and any connotation put by the opposition that we would seek to destroy the national parks is totally unfounded.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Tourism. Can the minister advise the Assembly whether or not he has had recent consultations or correspondence with the federal Minister of the Environment with respect to opportunities in the national parks, such as tourism opportunities at Sunshine Village or other developments of that nature?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I have communicated with the federal minister, and I spell out very clearly for the Assembly, too, that 98 percent of the national parks are protected for wilderness area and wildlife habitat. What we're talking about is less than 2 percent of that total area. I communicated with the federal minister with respect to the expansion at Sunshine Village, and I feel that's an expansion that certainly should be considered and can be done in an aesthetically pleasing way. I think at least it deserves discussion by reasonable

people to look at how we can complement our mountain parks and complement our tourist industry in this province.

MR. CHUMIR: To the minister of parks, Mr. Speaker. Instead of following the talk about taking over provincial control of the national parks, will the government follow the advice of a committee of the Department of Tourism some years ago and turn the West Castle area near Waterton into a provincial park in order to protect it against incursions such as the drilling of sour gas wells and other developments which are destructive of the environment rather than protective?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that's an issue at this time.

Gasoline Pricing

MR. TAYLOR: My main question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Energy. Yesterday the public utilities board of Nova Scotia concluded that the retail prices in that province were higher than they should be and ordered a rollback of 2.5 cents a litre at midnight, last night. If we check our prices of gasoline in Canada, Mr. Speaker, in Ontario regular leaded gas with a 7-cents-a-gallon tax on it is 41.3 cents a litre, and here in Edmonton it's 38.2, which admittedly is 3 cents higher. But bearing in mind that there is a 5-cents differential, if you take away the taxes our gasoline in Ontario is selling for 5 cents a litre cheaper than it is here in Alberta. Can the minister explain why the price of gasoline in Alberta is only 3 cents a litre cheaper than in Ontario, taking the tax into consideration, or taking the tax off, why it is 5 cents higher in Alberta?

DR. WEBBER: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand what gasoline prices in Nova Scotia have to do with prices here in Alberta, particularly when in Nova Scotia it's their public utilities board that regulates the prices of gasoline at the pump -- the only province in the country that is involved in doing so. In this province the marketplace determines what the prices are going to be. The hon. member also should recognize that in other provinces such as Ontario and Nova Scotia the tax at the pumps has been 8.5 cents or better in those provinces. I think in Ontario it's 8.3 cents, and in Nova Scotia 8.5 cents. Right now, as a matter of fact, gas prices in this province are the lowest in the country, in spite of what the hon. member is saying, in that we don't have any sales tax at the pump right now, and again, whatever happens in Nova Scotia, I don't see the relevance of that here.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I hate to get too complicated in math but the lowest in the country -- they pay no tax right now. With Ontario's 8-cent tax they should be 5 cents cheaper, but they're not. The fact of the matter is that oil companies are pocketing profit here. Nova Scotia has a good Conservative government that has set up a utilities board and moved them in. They're to look as to why the public's being gouged.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, the question.

MR. TAYLOR: Okay, Mr. Speaker. That was a long sentence I know, and I apologize.

MR. SPEAKER: A long paragraph.

MR. TAYLOR: It's a very hard memory over there, and I was trying to put it in.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when Alberta consumers are getting shafted at the pump and refiners are making record profits, could you not at least -- at least -- launch a public inquiry on why our retail prices of gasoline without tax are some of the highest in Canada?

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member must recognize that the competitive atmosphere in this country was adversely affected by the Liberals' PetroCan organization, and in fact even interfered with the competitive process. In fact, we have less competition in the refinery area now with PetroCan than we had previously, and so the hon. member is way off base.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, when the Liberals left government PetroCan was just a puppy. It's a big Saint Bernard now. You were the people that fed 'em Gulf; you're the people that got rid of their refineries. If there . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, no shaggy-dog stories, but a supplementary, please.

MR. TAYLOR: It takes a shaggy-dog to get to this minister, all right.

Could the minister tell us what discussions you've had with PetroCan, that has swallowed Gulf now by the Tories, and the other refiners in this province, to try to get some sort of competitive atmosphere back here or some sort of regularity that works so the people of Alberta aren't being gouged?

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, with the dog food that the Liberals fed that puppy, no wonder it grew into a Saint Bernard.

Mr. Speaker, the pricing of gasoline, as the hon. member knows, in this province is open to competition, and the prices at the pump are reflected in that way. With respect to discussions that I've had with the major companies in this country, if the hon. member would care to recall last spring, when world prices dropped rather dramatically and there was a concern expressed publicly that prices at the pump were not falling as rapidly as they should behind the drop in world oil prices, I in fact visited personally with a number of major oil companies in this country to discuss with them the practices they were engaged in in determining what the posted prices at the refinery should be. As a result of that, we've been tracking the prices -- the posted prices at the refinery -- ever since that time, and in fact they have tracked very closely the world prices, the prices determined in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member should again remember that prices in this province have been the lowest of any province in the country for many, many years. We've had protection to all our consumers in terms of gasoline prices, also with respect to the farm fuel area. The farm fuel costs are the lowest in the country, the input costs, as a result of competition. The hon. member might want to think about what's happening just in Alberta right today. We're seeing competition at work and farmers lining up to take advantage of the lower prices, which they wouldn't be able to do in Nova Scotia.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the lowest prices in Canada go out the window on June 1; your tax on gasoline then will move it up to be higher than Ontario. On June 1 Albertans will be paying more for their gasoline than anywhere else. Now surely

-- surely -- the minister can assure the House either that an investigation is going to take place where there is real competition or whether or not he is going to bring to this House the legislation to put gasoline under the Public Utilities Board, just as the Tory government has done so in Nova Scotia. Could he consider one or the other?

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, don't you think it would be appropriate that the hon. member would raise that question sometime down the road when we have a chance to examine what actual prices are at that time? It's a hypothetical question. We don't know what prices are going to be in June. And even with the increase in price as the hon. member was expecting, I expect that we will still see among the lowest prices in the country in this province.

MR. SHRAKE: Mr. Speaker, we hear talk of the exorbitant prices for gasoline or exorbitant profits, but have we had some oil companies go bankrupt in this province, go into receivership?

MR. SPEAKER: It is rhetorical. Member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, because of the widening gap between prices paid at the wellhead and prices at the refinery, and the major refiners are having their best profits since 1981, will the minister please tell us what steps the government is taking to make sure that this province will get a fair return for its oil resources?

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, in terms of pricing we in this province have advocated world prices for our oil for many years, as the hon. member knows. And it wasn't until the Liberals and the NDP on their marriage in Ottawa decided they were going to put a ceiling on prices in this country -- so talk about looking for fair prices for our producers in this province, it's unbelievable that it comes from the hon. member across the way.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. The marketplace has finally given some benefits to the rural community of Alberta in the last few days. Could the minister make a commitment to keep his hands out of the marketplace so that the price stays down where it's supposed to be?

DR. WEBBER: Agreed, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Main question, Member for Little Bow, followed by the Member for Wainwright.

Regional Economic Development Assistance

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, as an aside, I think I'll quit right there for the day to get that agreement.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister of economic development. A couple of days ago the minister stated that he was looking favourably upon providing financial aid to a possible \$270 million octane-enhancer petrochemical plant in Clover Bar, the constituency of my colleague. My question to the minister is: has any federal aid been requested or offered to ensure that the plant locates in Alberta? In other words, is the federal govern-

ment being asked to participate in the financing, or has the avenue not been explored because of the DRIE ineligibility?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, prior to the announcement the day before yesterday, I had a discussion with the Deputy Prime Minister, and also had an enjoyable discussion with him during that exciting event last weekend in Calgary. We discussed a number of matters. I advised him of the plans of the group to proceed with the final consideration of establishing an MTBE plant, but made no request of the federal government to assist financially.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, last week a General Motors plant in Quebec received a total of some \$320 million in federal and provincial aid and taxpayer assistance. The federal portion amounted to \$110 million or a 30-year, interest-free loan and some approximately \$100 million in tax benefits. Could the minister of economic development inform the Assembly what the government is doing to help potential Alberta-based industries to receive equal treatment that has been received in those provinces?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, for a number of years the Alberta government has disagreed very strongly with the tiered system of financial support. Our approach has always been one where provinces should be treated equally and we should build upon the strengths of our regions. That argument has been made by myself with my federal counterpart and also by other ministers of this government, and at our next meeting of federal/provincial ministers responsible for economic development, the matter of tiered funding -- that is, IRDP -- and other federal policies will be the number one item on the agenda.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. In terms of the DRIE program being either expanded or contracted, what would be the position of the provincial government at this point in time? Is it to expand it to all provinces of Canada, or would there be a withdrawal of funds in terms of government subsidy to industries to locate in Canada, which in a sense really creates a false assumption?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, a very useful program in Alberta's view has been one where provinces have been involved with the federal government in entering into specific subagreements in certain areas of the economy; for example, the tourism subagreement that was recently entered into and the nutritive processing agreement that we use and take advantage of in Alberta. This process under the ERDA program we believe would serve all of the regions of the country equitably where the province is involved and the federal government is involved in a joint agreement where there is an understanding of where the focus of that economic activity and support should occur. And we believe that funds presently earmarked for IRDP, which is the tiered program, should be shifted to the ERDA program.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary. The minister has mentioned the MTBE plant -- the methyl-tertiary-butyl-ether plant -- and the indications are that any financial assistance that would go to that plant would come from the provincial government. Could the minister indicate what amount of money or guarantees will be required by the province to compete with possible other locations in Canada that could receive federal aid in supplement to any provincial aid?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, it would be too early to provide the House with any sort of parameters of the numbers that may be involved. We are, however -- and we've indicated -- prepared to work with Neste, Celanese, and Trans Mountain and will consider a partial loan guarantee on the debt to assist in making the project a reality, because it's so vitally important not only to the petrochemical industry but to the engineering capability of this province, to the fabricating industry, and to a whole lot of sectors of the Alberta economy. But in terms of being able to provide the hon. member with a number, it's too soon to be able to do that.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Since the minister has made so much of this still hypothetical project, could he please inform us of the status of the proposed High River magnesium plant which the government made much ado about last year but which still doesn't seem to have materialized?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question, even though it's not really . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister, the Chair doesn't welcome the question because it's not related to the original question.

Member for Vermilion-Viking, followed by the Member for Edmonton . . . [interjection] A supplementary question on this issue, Member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Yes, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Could the minister please justify how this province could provide a loan guarantee to Celanese Corporation, which is a subsidiary of the largest chemical company in the world?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, because we believe it's very important that jobs are created in Alberta.

Voluntary Admission Charge -- Cultural Facilities

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, a question directed to the Minister of Culture. Some of my constituents have noticed recently that there is a voluntary charge program implemented at the Provincial Museum. Could the minister indicate if this direction has been instituted in all like facilities, such as the Tyrrell museum, the Ukrainian village, et cetera? Could you indicate if that's so?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, yes, in fact as of April 1 all historic facilities for which the department is responsible are collecting voluntary contributions in the amount of \$2 for adults at primary facilities, \$1 for those between 12 and 18 years of age. In secondary facilities throughout the province, smaller historic sites, the requested donation is \$1. In all cases, senior citizens and organized school groups are not expected to donate.

DR. WEST: Supplementary to the minister. Many Albertans in the past have asked why a charge was not used in these worthwhile sites, and many now may view a voluntary charge . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Please, hon. member, the Chair is having a little difficulty because of a lot of chitchat on the front bench.
Hon. member.

DR. WEST: There is often quite a bit of that around here lately.

As I was saying, many Albertans in the past have asked why a charge hasn't been implemented, a compulsory charge, at these worthwhile sites, and they may view the voluntary charge as less productive than the actual collected gate fee. Could the minister indicate the basis for a voluntary charge instead of an actual charge and the response so far to this voluntary charge?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the decision to choose asking Albertans for voluntary donations versus a compulsory admission charge to facilities, we investigated what other museums do worldwide in this respect and found that the costs involved in setting up a compulsory service, plus the immediacy of it, was possibly less desirable than the voluntary system. It won't cost us a great deal of money to implement, and it will ask Albertans to participate with us in helping to keep those historic sites at the high level they are. I might indicate that the program which we have initiated is under the theme: give a present to the past. We hope that all Albertans, when they enter our facilities, will participate in helping us to keep those facilities at the high level they are today.

DR. WEST: Final supplementary. If that works, that will be quite remarkable. But if you look at the Tyrrell museum with 600,000 people . . . [interjections] Could the minister indicate if these funds will be used to offset operating costs or otherwise?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, the funds that will be received from the voluntary donation program will be administered by the friends societies in each of the facilities. Depending on the facility, the use of those funds will differ, but they will be for the purchase of artifacts in some cases, in others for educational programs for children or other projects which couldn't be handled under the current budget circumstance for those facilities.

Community Schools

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Education. The minister recognized on March 16, and I quote, "The community school program is an excellent program." Unfortunately, that recognition has not been enough to keep her from shifting the financial burden for these programs out of her department and is effectively enlarging the cracks through which major portions of the program will fall. During this time of fiscal restraint, does it not make good economic sense to support and keep intact an excellent, established program that provides essential services in a very cost-effective manner?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated in this House on many occasions, I think the community school program is doing some very worthwhile things within the community. However, when one looks at the difficulty being faced by all agencies of government with respect to dealing with the deficit, which in the last fiscal year equated to about one-third of our expenditure base, one has to develop priorities in terms of where those education dollars will be flowing. As the hon. member knows, community schools will continue to receive extraordinary funding over and above what every other school gets in this province and, I believe, will be able to develop a program and continue the best parts of the existing program.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, it seems that some of the programs were so valuable, such as the employment experience programs,

that they've been shifted to the Minister of Social Services and the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. For existing programs to continue in community schools, it may very well be that users will have to pay for these programs. Will the minister assure us that she is not moving towards a system where only the rich will be to learn English as a second language and only the rich will be able to afford to join Brownies, Cubs, soccer, Alcoholics Anonymous, and singles' support groups?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, it may well be that some of the very worthwhile programs that are currently in place in community schools, in order to continue the way they are now, may require some amount of user fee. That is not beyond the jurisdiction of the community school, and in fact a lot of community schools are using user fees already. But to classify the use of the programs as a split between those who are able to pay and those who are unable to pay is a complete misrepresentation of what the community school program is about. There is not the division between wealthier communities versus unwealthy communities, because the good part about community schools is that they exist in both communities in this province.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, the split occurs within the community. Those who have money can participate and those who do not are excluded.

To the Minister of Social Services. As the cuts in funding and lack of programming in community schools may result in our young people hanging about in arcades and malls, which we all know are places where youngsters become involved with drug pushers and pimps, will the minister pressure her colleague the Minister of Education to reconsider her decision to cut funding in the best interests of the future of our young people?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I was most interested in the preface to the hon. Member for Edmonton Avonmore's question, because it occurred to me that many of the organizations she was speaking of needing funding through the community school program certainly don't access that type of funding in many areas of my constituency. I do have some places where there are definitely people who are on social services and accessing those various community organizations. I would say to the hon. member that we do have a policy for a recreation allowance for young children in families, and when that request is made, in almost all instances it's granted.

MS LAING: To the Minister of Education. In view of the fact that community schools have received good evaluation reports from department authorities, excellent reports from school board officials, and glowing comments from the community, and in view of the fact that the minister has received numerous protests about her action, will the minister confirm that she recognizes the great importance of keeping community schools intact and that she is in fact reconsidering her cutback proposal?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: No, Mr. Speaker, I will not reconsider the proposal which I make to this Legislature with respect to my budget, and I'm looking forward to presenting my budget to this Legislature when the time comes. I think the primary purpose of education -- in fact, I know the primary purpose of education -- is to ensure that students learn, and although the community school program is doing some very wonderful things in terms of integrating the community and the home and the school in terms of focusing on student learning, although the environment is

perhaps a nicer environment to be part of, it doesn't focus directly on student learning.

I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, to note that when I reviewed my budget proposal, it was very clear that I had to define which areas of my budget were most important and which therefore were most directed at student learning and which areas of the budget could in fact be deemed to be less important in that kind of context. For this reason, the community school program will continue to be funded in an extraordinary way beyond every other school in this program, but when 66 out of 1,500, which are those which are designated as community schools, come out of that process on the budget priority, I keep my decision the way I am recommending it to this Assembly.

Mr. DAY: A supplementary question to the minister, Mr. Speaker, to help me respond to recent questions from some constituents. Is there a mechanism by which users of the community school facilities can actually pay for the use of those, even in a voluntary way, if they so choose, as they've been wanting to but have somehow felt a restriction to do that.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Well, I think that's something that certainly could be discussed with the society which is created when community school is formed, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CHUMIR: The amount of saving is \$2.5 million. Has the minister talked to the minister of manpower about taking the rubber band off the \$110 million of lottery funds which just seem to have popped up recently?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The time for question period has expired. Might we have unanimous consent to finish this series of questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Opposed? Hon. minister, reply please.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, to universalize the community school program would cost about \$110 million, and I am not convinced that that is the best use of those dollars in the interests of the education of our young people.

Mr. SPEAKER: Time for question period has expired.

Statement by the Speaker

Mr. SPEAKER: There are a number of issues that the Chair must address in the course of the afternoon, and before the Chair commences, the Chair orders that the pages please distribute the letter in their possession, which was addressed to the Chair by the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

In the opinion of the Chair, there is not one point of purported privilege to be dealt with; there are four. Yesterday the Chair received a letter from the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche in concurrence with section 15(2) of our *Standing Orders*. This letter was addressed to me in my capacity as Speaker and, as such, must be considered a publication of this House. *Beauchesne*, citation 41, describes the abuse of the House's control over its own papers as a point of privilege. Therefore, the Chair would respectfully request that in due course an apology be offered to the House by the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche and the caucus of the New Democratic Party for releasing

a House document to the press without the knowledge or consent of the House or Speaker or previously releasing the document to this House.

SOMEHON. MEMBERS: Shame, shame.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

By releasing this document to the press without permission of the House, a breach of all members' privileges occurred.

Furthermore, I suggest in this regard that this be taken in conjunction with citation 52 of *Beauchesne*, which goes on to describe that not only are the papers belonging to the House a matter of privilege, but papers reflecting unfavourably on the Speaker is an extremely serious matter. Section 52(1) reads, quote:

The Speaker should be protected against reflections on his actions.

In this regard, paragraph 3 of the letter written by the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche questions the competence of the Chair and asserts that the Chair was in error, which reflects upon the Office of the Speaker. This is another matter which walks a perilous path of being in contempt of the House.

One should also consider *Beauchesne* 52(4), which describes how in 1976 the federal House took notice of an editorial reflecting unfavourably on the Speaker. In that case, the House dealt with the question by passing a motion, without debate, which condemned the editorial as a "gross breach of the privileges of this House." The *Edmonton Journal* on today's date has come dangerously close if not exceeding the privileges of this Assembly by publishing a personal attack on the Speaker in their editorial, and I would refer this matter back to this House for its consideration.

Now to the main issue of the day as brought to us because of an incident which occurred in this Assembly on April 7. This is a rather lengthy text, but it is a very important issue in terms of this Chamber, and copies of this ruling by the Speaker will be distributed to the House following the conclusion of the report being read.

Hon. members, on April 7 several issues were brought to the attention of this House with regard to the use of the French language in the proceedings of the Assembly. The hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche asked the Chair to consider several points involving questions of law and privilege. Yesterday the Chair informed the House that the matter was under consideration, and it is with regard to the *Standing Orders* as well as the customs, practices, and conventions of this House that the Chair will now give its ruling.

Throughout the course of debate on April 7 in this Chamber, the Chair was asked to consider a number of issues. It is rare indeed in Canadian parliamentary history that the Chair has been obliged to consider a matter of such constitutional legal significance. It is also unusual for the Chair to be obliged to consider questions of law rather than questions of procedure, but this situation demands it. It would be difficult to imagine an issue with so many facets and complications.

The Chair has determined that there were, in fact, three separate areas to consider. The first was a question of law, the second a question of privilege, and the third a question of order. If the right to use French in the Chamber is a matter of law, then clearly it is not a matter of privilege and beyond the jurisdiction of the Speaker. If it is a matter of privilege, then it is not a matter over which the law prevails, and the question must be put to the House itself. If it is a matter of order, then neither the rules

of law nor privilege apply and the decision is reserved solely for the Chair itself to make in accordance with the various authorities and the custom of this House.

A Question of Law:

With regard to the matter of a question of law, the Chair would submit to the hon. members of this House that if indeed the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche stands entitled to speak French in this House as a matter of law, there is no question of privilege. If this House is in fact subject to the statutes on which the hon. member relies, then the role of this House is limited. The aggrieved member need merely apply to the courts for recourse. The Chair is of the opinion, however, that the statutes which the hon. member quotes to establish his right to speak French in this House are of limited application in this particular situation.

To support this view, the Chair is obliged to review for the hon. members of this House its position with regard to each statute cited in the debates of April 7. It should be noted here that the Chair is extremely hesitant to deliver an opinion on a subject before the courts. However, the nature of the question and its relationship to the proceedings of this House demand such an exercise. The legal questions referred to the Chair on Tuesday involved the applicability of (a) the Constitution Acts and (b) the North-West Territories Act, 1891.

The Constitution:

With regard to the Charter of Rights, enacted in 1982 as a constitutional document, reference is given to section 17(1), which reads, and I quote:

Everyone has the right to use English or French in any debates and other proceedings of [the federal] Parliament.

and section 17(2) which says, quote:

Everyone has the right to use English or French in any debates and other proceedings of the legislature of New Brunswick.

With regard to other parts of Canada's Constitution, the Constitution Act, formerly the British North America Act, 1867, section 133, reads as follows, quote:

Either the English or the French Language may be used by any person in the debates of the Houses of the Parliament of Canada and of the Houses of the Legislature of Quebec; and both those Languages shall be used in the respective Records and Journals of those Houses; and either of those Languages may be used by any Person or in any Pleading or Process in or issuing from any Court of Canada established under this Act, and in or from all or any of the Courts of Quebec.

The Acts of the Parliament of Canada and of the Legislature of Quebec shall be printed and published in both those Languages.

It would seem to the Chair from these references that the constitutional documents considered, being the Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982, which include the Charter of Rights, clearly establish by law that only the Parliament of Canada and the provincial Legislatures of Quebec and New Brunswick are obliged by that same constitutional law to use both English and French in their proceedings. There is no specific reference to the Legislature of Alberta or of any other province being subject to the same obligations. It is further noted by the Chair that

with regard to these three Legislative Assemblies, the constitutional statutes, as they were written at that time, took the form they did with the request and consent of the specific Legislatures concerned.

The Chair will now refer the hon. members to another section of the Constitution which would apply and, in fact, has been applied by the courts many times in the past. The Constitution Act, 1867, reads in its preamble, and I quote:

WHEREAS the Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have expressed their Desire to be federally united into One Dominion under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, with a Constitution similar in Principle to that of the United Kingdom . . .

The key words here are "with a Constitution similar in Principle to that of the United Kingdom."

Hon. members, the Constitution of Canada is not merely a collection of statutes. The constitution of this country incorporates statute, law, and the conventions, customs, usages, and privileges of Parliament and the assorted Legislatures. The courts have held on numerous occasions that it is several of these unwritten portions of our Constitution which are incorporated and protected by the preamble cited. One only has to refer to the United Kingdom, a country with no real statutory constitution as we know it, to see that this country's Legislatures, by necessity, inherited at Confederation the privileges and conventions of Westminster. Sir Erskine May goes at length to describe the unwritten conventions and privileges of Parliament, but the Chair would refer the hon. members to citations 16 through 92 in *Beauchesne*, dealing with privileges of the House. Section 16 reads, and I quote:

Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively as a constituent part of the High Court of Parliament, and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals. Thus, privilege, though part of the law of the land, is to a certain extent an exemption from the ordinary law.

As there is no constitutional section dealing with language rights in the Legislature of Alberta, the Chair is obliged to observe that the privilege of the House to determine its own way of functioning remains as paramount as it did in the United Kingdom Parliament in 1867. Except for those rules and regulations specifically governing the procedure and privileges of the House as contained in the Constitution Acts, the Chair is obliged to rule that this Legislative Assembly remains empowered to set its own rules and procedures regarding the running of its proceedings. In short, hon. members, the Chair sees no inconsistency with the Constitution and, indeed, regards the preamble of the Constitution Act, 1867, as upholding this Legislature's privileges to deal with those matters coming within its jurisdiction. In the absence of any constitutional document prohibiting the House from doing otherwise, the House must be considered to retain its powers to operate independently of the law applicable outside this Chamber.

The North-West Territories Act, 1891:

With regard to the second issue of law raised by the hon. the Attorney General, the Chair would refer the House to the status of legal challenges based on section 110 of the North-West Territories Act, 1891. This section states, quote:

Either the English or the French language may be used by any person in debates of the Legislative Assembly of the Territories and in proceedings before the courts; and both those languages shall be used in records and journals of such Assembly; and all ordinances made under this Act shall be printed in both those languages: Provided, however, that after the next general election of the Legislative Assembly, such Assembly may, by ordinance or otherwise, regulate its proceedings and the manner of recording and publishing the same; and the regulations so made shall be embodied in a proclamation which shall be forthwith made and published by the Lieutenant Governor in conformity with the law, and thereafter shall have full force and effect.

Hon. members, while it is section 110 which was relied upon by some members in the House on April 7 to establish the obligation of the Legislature of Alberta to conduct its proceedings in both languages of Canada, the Chair would refer the House to the following considerations:

1. The North-West Territories Act, 1891, was not a constitutional document, but an ordinary Act of the federal Parliament in Ottawa.
2. The North-West Territories Act, 1891, gave the Legislature the power to change the provisions enumerated in section 110. While the Chair concedes that such an amendment was never carried out after the formation of the Alberta Legislative Assembly, the Chair has discovered something of great significance which many hon. members, the media, and indeed, with great respect, some learned members of the bench seem not to have discovered: the effect of section 110 of the North-West Territories Act of 1891, in proceedings of the Legislature, was reversed by a resolution of that House, moved and passed, on the motion of Commissioner Frederick Haultain, on January 19, 1892. This leaves the Chair in the unique position that should it decide to apply the very arguments of the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche, the Chair would then have to rule against the hon. member.

North-West Territories Act Not a Constitutional Document:

The Chair has carefully considered the first point, and without prejudice to any case presently before the courts -- I would underline that -- without prejudice to any case presently before the courts, would remind all hon. members that the constitutional relationship between a territory and Ottawa is substantially different than that between a province and Ottawa. The very nature of a federal system demands equal sovereignty between the Legislatures of the provinces with those of the Parliament of Canada in their respective spheres of authority. Sections 91 and 92 of the Constitution Act 1867, with the support of various other sections and court decisions, enumerate what those spheres of responsibility are.

The Parliament of Canada cannot abolish the Legislature of a province, and the Legislature of a province cannot abolish the Parliament of Canada. That is not so with the Legislative Assembly of a territory. With all due respect to the Legislatures of the Yukon and Northwest Territories, the Chair points out that a very different constitutional relationship with the federal Parliament is established in those instances. The Legislatures of the territories have no sovereignty and any powers enjoyed are only with the consent of the federal government.

When the Alberta and Saskatchewan Acts of 1905 were en-

acted by Ottawa in accordance with the powers afforded the federal government under the Constitution Act 1871, Alberta and Saskatchewan both were given a status in Confederation that they did not previously enjoy, that of constitutional sovereignty. To suggest, as some hon. members have, and indeed some learned judges have, that the Legislature of Alberta is bound by section 110 of the North-West Territories Act carried forward, despite the constitutional implications of the Alberta Act, raises some very interesting and curious constitutional anomalies.

The first is that if the province of Alberta is bound by the terms of the North-West Territories Act, 1891, then the Chair must believe that the province of Alberta is still bound in its internal affairs by a non-constitutional Act of the federal government in Ottawa.

The second anomaly is that if section 110 indeed does apply, Alberta and Saskatchewan have entered Confederation on significantly different terms than did the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.

This is a position the Chair, and indeed, it puts to the members, that every member of this House, regardless of political affiliation, could not accept. If the Chair is to assume that the province of Alberta is on a constitutionally equal basis with every other province in Canada, as surely it must, then the North-West Territories Act of 1891 cannot override the privileges of the Legislative Assembly enjoyed in this province and every provincial Legislative Assembly across Canada.

Section 110 Reversed In Effect:

With respect to the Chair's second point, being that contrary to the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche that no precedent exists for English only being spoken in the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, the Chair quotes the actual resolution passed on January 19, 1892, which was moved by Mr. Haultain:

That it is desirable that the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly shall be recorded and published hereafter in the English Language only.

It would appear that the motion was carried with a vote of 20 to 4. The Assembly, in accordance with its own mandate afforded it, changed the effect and application of section 110 in clear, unequivocal terms.

The Chair can only offer its regret to the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche for questioning his research, but it stands by its ruling that: (a) the North-West Territories Act, 1891 does not apply, and (b) even if it did, the Chair would be obliged to hold to its decision that the language of this Assembly be English.

However, French-speaking members need not entirely despair, because this only deals with points of law, not privilege. In the absence of being bound by constitutional statute, the Chair submits that this is a matter of privilege, and the House, and only the House, is competent to deal with it.

Privilege:

With regard to privilege, the Chair would refer the hon. members to *Beauchesne*, citation 20(4) which reads:

As Parliament has never delimited the extent of privilege, considerable confusion surrounds the area. Recourse must therefore be taken, not only to the practice of the Canadian House, but also to the vast tradition of the United Kingdom House of Commons.

Let us refer also to *Beauchesne* citation 21, which reads:

The most fundamental privilege of the House as a whole is to establish rules of procedure for itself and to enforce them.

Hon. members, the Chair has had to consider the matter of privilege raised in Standing Order 15. Standing Order 15(1) reads:

A breach of the rights of the Assembly or of any Member constitutes a question of privilege.

The Chair has had to consider this question in two possible perspectives. The first is the one raised by the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche which purports that his rights to speak French have been abrogated by the Chair. The second is that the Chair, elected by this House to uphold the practices, usages, and conventions of this House, was concerned on April 7 that the privileges of the House as a whole were being abrogated by a member wishing to bind the House to a procedure which the Chair felt was contrary to the established custom and conventions of the Assembly.

Indeed, hon. members, the Chair submits that this has been one of the few questions of bona fide privilege brought before this House recently. In light of this ruling, the Chair wishes to advise the House of the procedure with which this question must be dealt. While a point of order is a matter to be dealt with by the Chair, a point of privilege must be referred to the House. The Chair wishes to point out that its objections on April 7 were based on points of order and not privilege, through the interpretation of the Chair's understanding of the conventions and practices of this esteemed House.

It bears emphasis in the strongest terms, hon. members, that neither the House nor the Chair regards with any animosity or hostility usage of the French language in this Chamber. The Chair can only uphold such rules of order to permit what it feels in its judgment is in keeping with the tradition of this House.

Order:

Briefly, with respect to order. The Chair, on Tuesday, April 7, ruled the hon. member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche out of order for speaking to this Assembly in French. On the basis of order, the Chair stands firm on this ruling, based on the custom and conventions of this Assembly as interpreted by, and which remain the prerogative of, the Speaker. This is not -- and the Chair repeats not -- a ruling of the Chair on the usage of French in the House. The Chair will not rule here once and for all on the right of any hon. member to address this House in French. It cannot. It can only rule that a matter of privilege has been raised and refer the issue back to the House.

Summary:

In summary, hon. members, the Chair submits the following:

1. that the matter of the usage of the French language in the House is not a matter of law but one of privilege to be dealt with by the House itself,
2. that even if it were a matter of law, the Chair is bound to believe that the use of French would not be an obligation of the House anyway,
3. that as a point of order, the Office of Speaker obliges the Chair to rule the use of the French language in the Chamber as out of order, based on the rules and practices which bind the Chair from making any decision to the contrary until such time as the House itself gives authority to the Chair to

permit the use of French in the Chamber.

Hon. members, the Chair rules that indeed a question of privilege has been raised. The Chair refers back to this House the question of whether the privileges of the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche have been abrogated or whether the privileges of the House itself have been abrogated by the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche. The Chair would comment that a substantive motion must now be put forward by some quarter of the House at an appropriate time to deal with the issue in accord with citation 17 of *Beauchesne*, which reads, and I quote:

A question of privilege ought rarely to come up in Parliament. It should be dealt with by a motion giving the House power to impose a reparation or apply a remedy. A genuine question of privilege is a most serious matter and should be taken seriously by the House.

The Chair respectfully thanks you for your attention and consideration.

MR. TAYLOR: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Would the motion have to be in writing?

MR. SPEAKER: At some appropriate . . . Premier.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, might I say, representing this side of the House and 12 members on the other side, that we appreciate a great deal the dignity and clarity with which you have presented your position and ruling to us today.

Mr. Speaker, it is a considerable amount of information you have provided for the House, but I'd like to say this for the government. We will first be framing a motion, as you suggest, to refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, presenting it to the House. We will review the *Edmonton Journal* editorial, which you mentioned in your earlier comments, and I think all members of the House will wait for the NDP and the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche to respond to your suggestion that an apology is required.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. PIQUETTE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for very well-thought-out research of the question. There are still a few questions unanswered. However, I am pleased with your decision to refer the matter to the House. I guess I am hoping from all members of this House -- this is not a partisan issue -- that this matter will be expedited by this Chamber in terms of a motion allowing my privilege to address this House on occasion, especially when I'm speaking to the Francophone community of Alberta, the ability to question ministers who wish to answer me in French, and to have that right understood by this House.

Thank you very much.

MR. MARTEN: Mr. Speaker, we will, as the Official Opposition, take what you've said under advisement. I will not be listening to what the opposite side says. We'll take our time and sort through it, and come back with appropriate measures.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that questions 180, 183, 192, 193, 194, and 195 . . .

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order! Let's be quiet in the galleries, please, and the press gallery, please. Thank you.

MR. CRAWFORD: . . . and motions for returns 176 and 196 stand.

[Motion carried]

head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

186. Mr. Ewasiuk asked the government the following question:

- (1) For every person who has received a core housing incentive program, CHIP, loan from the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation and its predecessor corporation, what was the total value of all CHIP loans received by that person in the fiscal years 1984-85, 1985-86, and 1986-87, without identifying the person by name; and
- (2) in the instance of persons who have received more than five CHIP loans or who have received CHIP loans of a total value exceeding \$10 million, what was
 - (a) the amount of each loan received,
 - (b) the interest rate borne by the loan,
 - (c) the term of the loan,
 - (d) the effective date of the loan, and
 - (e) the nature of the project for which the loan was advanced?

MR. ROSTAD: We accept Question 186, and I would like to verbally answer it. There were no CHIP, or core housing improvement loans, approved in the '84-85, '85-86, and the '86-87 fiscal years.

At this opportunity, if I might, I would like to table a response to Question 147, Question 138, and Question 185.

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

For every Alberta House and other Alberta office maintained by the government outside the province since the first opening of the Alberta House or other office or since March 31, 1979, whichever is more recent, in the case of each newly appointed Agent General, director, senior staff person, and other management level person, what were the relocation costs arising out of that person's appointment paid for by the government, if any, 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 his dependants to the office area,
- (3) interim accommodation and subsistence for the appointee and his dependants in the office area,
- (4) personal furniture storage and moving charges incurred by the appointee,
- (5) the purchase or leasing of accommodation for the appointee and his dependants,
- (6) improvements to and furnishings for accommodation secured for the appointee and his dependants, and
- (7) other relocation expenses?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the government is rejecting this question. I am doing so because it is asking for such a volume, going back to 1979, that it would be extremely difficult to provide that information. I must say, in doing so, that there's a subsequent motion which has been approved by the Assembly relative to one fiscal year in which we hope to provide some of the information that is requested in the fiscal year. But in the present form, it's just not, in the view of the government, possible or reasonable to go back that number of years to provide this detailed information that has been requested in Question 190.

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

With regard to the Agents General and/or directors and all other senior and management personnel at all Alberta Houses and other Alberta offices maintained by the government outside the province, including those at Hong Kong, Houston, London, Los Angeles, New York, Ottawa, and Tokyo, in the case of each individual,

- (1) what was the person's name, position, and salary at April 1, 1987;
- (2) for the 1986-87 fiscal year, what was the amount of
 - (a) any and all allowances paid to the person, itemized by the specific allowance as per the foreign service allowance regulation, and
 - (b) any other payments made to the person for the purpose of reimbursing the person for personal costs incurred in the course of traveling, undertaking job-related hospitality, and securing supplies and services; and what was the person's name, position, and/or salary if these differed from what they were at April 1, 1987, and between what dates did the differences obtain; and
- (3) at what Alberta House or other Alberta office was the person employed at April 1, 1987?

MR. HORSMAN: Again, Mr. Speaker, the government is rejecting that motion. However, I do want to point out that in having accepted Motion for a Return 169, also moved by the hon. Member for Calgary Mountain View, most if not all of the information which is sought in Question 191 will be supplied relative to the Question 191 for the fiscal year 1986-87. And I do want to point out that we'll also try to provide the information which is sought relative to this Question 191 in providing that answer to the motion for a return for that particular fiscal year, except that the government has made it a practice -- and I think hon. members are aware of this -- to provide not the exact amount of a person's salary but the salary range which the person is entitled to receive and which was correctly, in my view, set forth in Motion for a Return 169, which has already been passed by the Assembly, because we refer to a salary range rather than salary as such.

So I think most of the information sought by the hon. member will in effect be provided, and I will also -- although it is not part of Motion for a Return 169 passed by the Assembly -- give information as to whether or not there had been any change of any person or office from March 31, 1987, and April 1, 1987, which is one day later and the day set out by the hon. member in his question, which we think will be covered by the information in Motion for a Return 169.

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

175. Mr. Sigurdson moved that an order of the Assembly do

issue for a return showing copies of those studies, reports, and other documents on the basis of which the hon. Minister of Career Development and Employment stated on March 6, 1987, *Alberta Hansard*, page 16, "the job creation program that the Premier talked about just a minute ago created 60,000 full-time jobs in this province in 1986."

[Debate adjourned April 2: Mr. Strong speaking]

MR. STRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to object to the rejection of Motion for a Return 175. That motion for a return requested copies of those studies, reports, and other documents on the basis of which the hon. Minister of Career Development and Employment stated on March 6, 1987, that the job creation program the Premier talked about created 60,000 full-time jobs in the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I also object to the reason the minister gave for rejecting Motion for a Return 175, and I've taken the liberty of photocopying a page in *Beauchesne* which he referred to, I believe, in Motion for a Return 161 when he rejected that. And he bases his rejection on internal departmental memoranda. Are we talking about secret information here? Are these secret football plays or secret about how we created these 60,000 full-time jobs?

Mr. Speaker, where are these documents? Where is the evidence supporting this minister's claim to the creation of 60,000 jobs, the 60,000 jobs that this economy in this province needs, requires to put it back on the road to perhaps full employment and prosperity? Well, Mr. Speaker, this minister and this government fumbled the ball again. They got a golden opportunity. It presented itself when the question was asked by the Official Opposition. You fumbled. You got the ball on your own one-yard line, we dropped it, you recovered it on the five, and you dropped it again. It's almost unbelievable that this government didn't seize the opportunity to prove not only to the Official Opposition but to Albertans where these jobs were created.

Now, is the minister afraid to offer to table the evidence in this Assembly that justifies that illusion created by this government in job creation? What did this minister examine, Mr. Speaker, when it came to a statement that 60,000 jobs were created in the province of Alberta? Did he look into a crystal ball? Did he look at the entrails of goats or chickens? Or perhaps did this minister create a job for a tired, old, and worn-out Tory to stand on top of the High Level Bridge, look down into the muddy waters, and surmise that this government created 60,000 jobs in 1986? Or did this minister just wish upon a star that 60,000 jobs were created in this province?

No, by not answering the question, they've left it to the imagination of Albertans and certainly myself where these jobs are. Perhaps the real quarterback to the Tory team, our ex-Premier, maybe he sent this minister a memo dictating that 60,000 jobs were created last year. Another good guess.

Mr. Speaker, it's not just the Official Opposition that's waiting for a response on how all these jobs are created. There are 145,000 unemployed Albertans that are awaiting the proof of job-creation efforts: the ingenuity, tremendous zeal, dedication, and true sympathy of this government in job creation. And those unemployed Albertans are looking for the facts, not the fiction, of job creation.

What about last year's unemployed university graduates? They're all waiting for the facts, not the fiction, of job creation. And I believe even those graduates from two years ago, Mr. Minister, are waiting for you to prove to them that indeed you

have created 60,000 jobs. There are 70,000 welfare recipients in this province that are waiting for this government to prove the fact, not the fiction, of job creation in the province of Alberta. Where's the answer? Why, even the members for Clover Bar and Little Bow have perked up and they're waiting for the answer on how this government created 60,000 jobs in this province -- full-time jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Albertans are aware of this government's limited action in job-creation efforts. They've found jobs for some of the defeated Progressive Conservative MLAs. They've found some jobs for them. They've found a few jobs for some of their cronies here, there, and all over the place: agents general. But you know, even if we subtracted 5,000 full-time jobs off the total of 60,000, we would still be left with 55,000 jobs that we have to imagine were created or are asked by this government to blindly believe were created in the province of Alberta for all those unemployed Albertans.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, this minister and his boss counted all the Albertans, those former Albertans, that left this province to seek jobs in other provinces. And did our Minister of Career Development and Employment -- if he paid for those bus tickets for those former Albertans to leave, maybe if he paid for the gas for them to leave the province of Alberta, did he add those into the equation on how 60,000 jobs were created in the province of Alberta? Specifically when they filled job opportunities in other provinces perhaps. Perhaps the minister could answer that. Yeah, job creation is left to the imagination. But this government's approach to job creation appears to be nothing more than illusion and smoke and mirrors. In the area of job creation, I would suggest that this Tory government didn't score a touchdown. They missed a field goal and didn't even get a single point when it came to job creation in the province of Alberta and their zeal in creating those jobs for unemployed Albertans or Albertans that are on welfare. No, this government's answer to job creation remains their arrogant attitude, lack of caring, lack of sympathy and any well-defined attempt to create jobs in the province of Alberta for Albertans, and this includes not only the unemployed but many of those in the business community that are now bankrupt or in receivership that will be looking for jobs. It includes many of those who lost family farms that are now in the urban centres seeking jobs. It includes all those welfare recipients I mentioned and many, many more. They are all awaiting how this government created all these jobs. The minister might smile, but this is important and a very serious matter for a lot of those Albertans that don't enjoy the opportunity of having a job in this province and were forced to go on welfare because they haven't been able to find a job. It's not that they lack the skills or require retraining; it's a question of finding those that are skilled jobs.

What I would ask, Mr. Speaker, is: does this government intend to make job creation in the province of Alberta a priority? Now certainly they have alluded, in two throne speeches that I've been fortunate enough to hear, to the fact that they are going to get on board and start creating jobs for Albertans. We've heard of all these hundreds of millions of dollars being spent on these job-creation programs, retraining programs. But I really wonder -- and I think Albertans are wondering -- whether these programs and this expenditure of these hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayers' money is really generating job opportunities, full-time job opportunities. Again, Albertans are demanding the facts, not the fiction or the illusion of job creation. Arrogance is definitely a team approach common to this government, and that approach will never satisfy or prove to Albertans

that indeed you do care about job creation.

This government has asked this Assembly and Albertans to blindly believe that "We're looking after your best interests and we're working to create jobs for you." This isn't good enough, Mr. Speaker. It's not good enough. Albertans are demanding the facts, phoning my constituency office on a regular basis saying: "I can't find a job. Where do I get a job? How do I keep my home? How do I feed my family? I don't want to go on welfare. I don't want to collect unemployment insurance. I want a job so that I can support my family in some dignity."

AN HON. MEMBER: Bryan, we're proud of you.

MR. STRONG: I know. I know you're proud of me. You're proud of me for getting up and saying: where's the proof of job creation in the province of Alberta? Where is it?

AN HON. MEMBER: Where's the beef?

MR. STRONG: Where is the beef? Well, I'd like to tell this new wide receiver for the Tory government that job creation is of significant importance to those that are unemployed in the province of Alberta -- very significant. Now why don't we get going on this: utilize those human resources we have in this province, that skilled work force we have here, all those unemployed tradesmen. There are thousands of them that can do the job. Before this government shut off the tap in the construction industry and then turned around and blamed international market forces for our misery here in the province of Alberta -- well, Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that is nothing but a poor excuse for not providing the leadership Albertans have come to expect from their politicians. And leadership is not giving yourself 10 percent pay increases in the last week of the session. Leadership is that long-term economic planning, that sound economic planning that will provide jobs and prosperity for Albertans. Now why don't we ...

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, for half a moment, please. The Chair indeed recognizes the right of the member to speak at some length with respect to a motion for a return. The member, I know, is fully cognizant -- fully cognizant -- of how unusual a procedure this is with respect to motions for returns. Nevertheless, the Chair indeed allows the member to continue but in terms of clock-watching would admonish that there are about 5 minutes left with respect to this particular member.

MR. STRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I hope I'll be able to use every minute of those five to throw the football to this Tory team and ask them to show us the proof of where they created all these jobs. Let's take an Alberta break. Let's give Albertans a break of having some intelligence to figure out that just blind belief isn't good enough. Give them enough support. Give them enough credit for intelligence to please reconsider your rejection. Take the opportunity to show Albertans and to show us on this side of the House that indeed you have done a job on behalf of Albertans. Again, Mr. Speaker ...

AN HON. MEMBER: Snow job.

MR. STRONG: I'm not talking about a snow job. I'm talking about a true job, a true Alberta break with Albertans in mind for job creation, job opportunities.

Now, the party spoke about right to work. I believe in the

right to work but not the concept your party has of it. Albertans should have the right to work. They should have the right to a job. If we had those jobs, we wouldn't have 75 percent of the problems your government has flung onto the backs of working Albertans to support you in the custom you've become accustomed to. They wouldn't have that. You know, they'd all be out there working, buying homes, creating more jobs. They wouldn't have to count on you or your government, your team, to do it together to them; they could do it themselves. That's what they're looking for. They're looking for jobs. But they're also looking for the proof of the jobs that you've created for them.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to this minister, to this government, to this Tory team: hey, let's quit losing the games, let's start scoring some points for Albertans, let's start winning the games. The way you're going to do that is to utilize those human resources we have in this province. Don't give them away. Keep some of it for my kids, for your kids, for our grandchildren so they can enjoy life in Alberta the same as we have, and the same as those that are unfortunate enough to be without jobs, so that they can enjoy it again too.

Now, that's a message I'd leave for this government, Mr. Speaker. Don't miss these golden opportunities; seize them. Seize them to show true leadership and compassion for those Albertans that don't have jobs or are underemployed, or perhaps some of those former Albertans that left this province because they couldn't get a job or were forced out by your government in reducing and budget cutting. So let's start spending our dollars wisely, and let's get the biggest bang for the buck for Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair is a bit concerned as to the way the debate went, but the Chair does indeed get the message that the member would really like to have the studies tabled.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I hesitated to interrupt the hon. Member for St. Albert, but I would now like in this intermission to draw to the House's attention the rules of relevance and repetition, which is rule 299, page 98, of the fifth edition of *Beauchesne*. Perhaps that could guide the debate which will follow on this particular motion.

MR. SPEAKER: And narrow focus. Thank you.

Member for Calgary Buffalo, taking due note of comments.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The way I would phrase the question would be "Where's the pork?" The hon. Member for St. Albert spoke very eloquently about the substantive need for this information, and I'm going to focus on the procedural rules which should govern this issue rather than the rules which, as interpreted by the government and the minister, are alleged to govern the matter. I would refer to section 390 of *Beauchesne*, which refers to the general principles relating to the provision of information and papers to the House by the government. Paragraph (1) indicates very clearly that the purpose of the rules governing this area are to enable Members of Parliament in that instance to secure factual information about the operations of government to carry out their parliamentary duties and to make public as much factual information as possible. That is the primary and the governing rule.

Now the minister alleges that in this instance the exemption in paragraph (2)(o) in relation to internal departmental

memoranda governs this situation and justifies a denial of provision of the information. However, when we look at those exemptions from production, there is a rationale and a philosophy behind those exemptions. The rationale behind that philosophy, if the minister will give a little bit of thought to it, is to protect the element of candour and advice that civil servants and other members involved in the administration of the government provide to each other so that confidences can be exchanged freely. That would exempt from the exclusion any factual information which would presumably be based on objective information and not relate to confidences or opinions or attitudes of individuals.

That dichotomy and that distinction and the validity thereof is very clearly supported by subsection (4) of section 390 of *Beauchesne* dealing with the case of consultant studies. A number of categories of consultant studies are dealt with therein, but subparagraph (d) points out that regardless which category of consultant study is in issue, each of those studies should be provided in different volumes separating the facts from the analysis of the study. The rule goes on to state that the purpose of this separation is to facilitate the release of the factual and analytical portions. And the rationale of separation is that the analytical portions are those which relate to the advice which I referred to earlier and which form and fall within the philosophical basis for exempting internal departmental memoranda. I would suggest that in this instance presumably . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. Are we going on . . . Hon. member, the Chair's big concern: is this becoming a point of order, or has it indeed got the focus back with respect to the motion for a return. Just gentle, gentle concern.

MR. CHUMIR: I would have thought that this was right to the heart of the matter. The issue is the basis upon which the minister has refused to produce these documents. The specific reason was given that *Beauchesne* justifies it as internal departmental memoranda, and I'm hitting dead on, right to the heart of that issue.

AN HON. MEMBER: In your opinion.

MR. CHUMIR: In my opinion as learned counsel, one of the few in this House.

In summary with respect to where *Beauchesne* stands, there should very clearly be provided to this House all factual information on the basis of which the minister has reached his conclusion and based his statement that 60,000 full-time jobs were created in the province in 1986. So I would ask of the minister that if the minister has a report, please provide to this House the factual information on the basis of which he has reached his conclusion and made his statement. If he won't provide that information, we can only conclude that he's flouting the clear intent and principles of production as set out in *Beauchesne*, or the alternate conclusion we might reach is that in fact there is no report and the minister is once again making some broad and sweeping statement based on his 15 years of experience as a small businessman, which I believe was the rationale we heard for some of the manpower decisions of his department. So rather than approaching this from the point of view of 15 years of experience as a small businessman, we ask that he look at it from the point of view of a large parliamentarian and provide the information.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister . . . All right. Member for Ed-

monton Gold Bar, followed by the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had hoped, having heard the minister decline to answer another question regarding job creation, that he might have reconsidered that perhaps it was important to share the information he has with the House and the citizens of Alberta. Frankly, I'm tired of this business, I'm sick of it, and I'm sure many others are as well.

Mr. Speaker, hopefully programs are planned using research, using the experience of years past, and once such research is completed, it seems to me there is no logical rationale for that information not to be available to the public, as my colleague from Calgary Buffalo has just stated. But instead of that, we're treated to a constant merry-go-round of talk. We don't know, and we should know, what kinds of jobs they were that were created. Were they permanent jobs? Were they temporary jobs? Were they new jobs? Were they at minimum wage? What were they paying? What kinds of industries were they in? What kind of business were they in? Do they still exist? We don't know any of these things, and we're simply expected to take the whole matter on blind faith.

No doubt, Mr. Speaker, programs are designed with something in mind, but are they designed with monitoring and evaluation set in? And if not, why not? Surely that must be an essential component of the programs, else how do the minister and his colleagues know whether on earth they're working?

Now we're moving quite surely into a new labour market strategy. We're going to have wage subsidies. We're moving away from training -- another glowing piece of hype. How long are we going to be subjected to this, Mr. Speaker? This time next year are we going to know where the \$140 million was spent? Are we going to know where Albertans' hard-earned money went and if it worked? I submit that this is not a responsible or logical approach. It's not an approach that has any accountability, and I think it is not acceptable to Albertans.

MR. SPEAKER: With apologies to the Member for Calgary Forest Lawn, with respect to Standing Order 8(3):

at 4:30 p.m. . . Public Bills and Orders other than Government Bills and Orders shall be called and debate thereon shall be governed by the standing orders.

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

**Bill 211
An Act to Amend the Statistics Bureau Act**

MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to move second reading of Bill 211, An Act to Amend the Statistics Bureau Act.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to present to the House today a Bill that addresses a problem faced by businesses across Alberta. That problem is the enormous burden of paperwork that businesses are forced to contend with. Businesses in this province receive such an overwhelming number of government forms and questionnaires each year that it is very clear there is an incredible waste of time and energy going on. At the moment the Alberta Bureau of Statistics is allowed to survey all business, construction, commercial, and service establishments,

along with all industrial, trading, and professional establishments. They also have the power to survey the resource sectors, including mines, quarries, fisheries, and forests.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Now, I don't have any problem with the idea of surveying the resource sector of the province. A government should know the status of its resource-based industries, especially when the resource is owned by the people of Alberta, but I do question the need for surveys of the business establishments of the province, other than those I've just indicated.

The main statistical survey of business and commercial establishments in Alberta has been the annual survey done for the Alberta Retail and Service Trade Statistics report. This report provided quite an extensive record of the kinds of business being done in Alberta, along with records of the number of people they employed, the total payroll, and the businesses' total receipts. The information this report provided was detailed and accurate. I don't question that, Mr. Speaker. However, whether the most important part of this data could have been found from existing sources of information is what I do question. I'm a great supporter of the idea that government should provide what I can't but government should not provide what I can. The Retail and Service Trade Statistics report provided for the most part information that was already available from a similar statistical survey conducted by Statistics Canada. I am aware that the report conducted by the Alberta bureau was more detailed and with greater emphasis on small areas of the province, but there is no use or sense in providing the most detailed information possible if that information isn't needed in the first place.

In a time when we have to be more committed than ever to budgetary restraint, I simply cannot find the patience to support meaningless bureaucratic exercises in fact-finding. The retail and service trade survey I've been talking about, Mr. Speaker, has already been discontinued, partly because of the need to limit spending but also because the bureau has recognized the senselessness of asking Alberta businesses to shoulder a paperwork burden that is not absolutely necessary. Certainly no other province in Canada has found it necessary to conduct their own extensive survey of business and commercial establishments. For the information they require in those areas, they turn to data they can receive through various sharing agreements with Statistics Canada or to tax records.

Also, Mr. Speaker, asking Alberta businesses to comply with survey taking is one thing; requiring them to answer under threat of penalty is another. If a business does not wish to respond to a survey, they should not be required to do so. Surveys of business and commercial establishments are hardly the same thing as population census, where there is a reason to ensure that people respond -- or for that matter, to a tax response by our good citizens. The fact is that charges for failing to comply with a statistical survey are never actually laid anyway, which makes it very clear to me that this section of the statistics Act is superfluous and expendable.

Alberta businesses work hard, Mr. Speaker. They simply do not have the time to sit around over coffee filling out endless forms. The owners of more and more establishments find the long hours they must work in the malls . . . Whether they can afford to keep on hiring more people to keep up with the load is a question I often ask. How does one expect people, small businesspeople, especially those family operations, to continue to work 16 hours a day, seven days a week, and still respond to

bureaucratic forms that may, realistically, be unnecessary? The result is that the businesses in this province are already working as hard as they possibly can. What they definitely don't need is additional work and more government involvement. Any reduction in government involvement we can provide we should provide. That much we owe them -- and again, especially to those small businesspeople who do not have the resources or the ability to continue to fill out massive forms that are provided to them.

You will notice, Mr. Speaker, that in my amendment to the Statistics Bureau Act I have left in the penalty for willfully providing false information when responding to a government survey. I believe that if a party does not want to reply to a request for information, they should not be obliged to do so but if that party chooses to give that information and does so incorrectly or in fact lies to that survey, they should in fact be prepared to face the penalty provided.

The amendment I am proposing today, Mr. Speaker, is therefore quite straightforward. I am asking the members of this House to support the business and commercial sectors of this province by relieving them of some unnecessary paperwork. I ask that we only conduct statistical surveys in the resource sectors and that we remove any penalty associated with failing to respond to an information survey unless those people who lie on a response -- then I would suggest that they do pay that penalty.

The Alberta Bureau of Statistics has already addressed some of these concerns by discontinuing their two major surveys. I ask today that we make this kind of reduction in paperwork a matter of policy and that the members of this House voice their commitment to decreased government involvement by supporting this Bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Lacombe.

MR. R. MOORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [interjection] I appreciate the support of my good friends to my right, and hopefully they keep moving to my right and not further left.

It's a pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 211 and to review the area where government is involved in our life where the business community that it's supposed to assist can see no benefit. In that I refer to the statistics as requested by the Alberta Bureau of Statistics. Now, the general principles and purpose of this Bill is to remove the penalty for failing to respond to statistical surveys and to make all the responses to such surveys completely voluntary. It also seeks to limit the kinds of surveys the Alberta Bureau of Statistics can undertake by removing all business, construction, commercial, and service establishments, as well as all industrial, trading, and professional establishments from the statistics bureau's jurisdiction. And as the hon. Member for Calgary McCall said, while Bill 211 would remove the requirement to respond to surveys as well as the penalty for failing to do so, the penalty for willfully providing false information would remain intact, and that's a very realistic request, that it remain intact.

Now, Mr. Speaker, today we have too much government in our life. It permeates through all levels of society, and I don't think I would get an opposition on that statement from any member in this House. We just have too much government. In economic times that are presently tough like the ones we're experiencing, it is tough on businesses. It's tough for them to meet all the expenses that are out there when their returns are limited and their sales are down. It's a responsibility and an

obligation of government to assist businesses in these times as well as good times, even more so now. And if we feel we are assisting them with these statistics, we're sadly mistaken. We're sadly mistaken because with these statistics we're creating another cost, and it's a double cost to businesses.

First of all, it's the manpower and the time and the effort it takes to fill out these reports and mail them in. That's a cost factor at the business level. But the even worse cost factor is the hidden cost factor. It's the one at the beginning of the statistics and the finish of the statistics; it's the bureaucratic department that we have set up here in Edmonton that devised the statistical forms, that sent it out and sent out the threatening letters that follow in case you didn't send it in within the time limit and then brought it back in and compiled a list of statistics.

And let's talk about these statistics. I haven't seen one set of statistics that came out of the Alberta Bureau of Statistics that came out on time, that was relevant to what was going on today. In 1987 you're probably getting 1985 statistics, and I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely no use to anybody in the business sector. The only one it's of use to, the only one that can benefit from that are those that compile the statistics, those that write up the reports. They look at it, and they look at it with pride. I think it's an ego journey they go on, and they say, "Look at my beautiful report." I have one right here. It's a beautiful report, but here it relates -- and I want to say this: this came out a month ago, and it refers to the year ended December 31, 1984. It's a beautiful report -- and I won't go into it -- because it lists figures and goes on about sales and assets and equity and savings and so on. But I say to you, "What are we trying to do?" You would think we all came from Harvard. But us that have been in business know differently. It doesn't mean a thing, but for a Harvard man I'm sure this glossy-covered thing looks real, real good. It's there. But that's what we're inflicting our business community with, and I say to you, "Is it necessary?"

I'm very proud that the Member for Calgary McCall recognized that as a businessman it didn't do his businesses or his neighbouring businesses any good. It was an expense factor. All it did was create some jobs, and I hope the minister that's responsible for the Alberta Bureau of Statistics is listening and says, "Well now, there's a place where we can downsize government." I really say that. And I'm not saying that because of the people that are in it; they're just caught in a system, a bureaucratic system, that is unnecessary.

Now, the businesspeople tell me that they have no idea who is requesting these statistics and they wonder who benefits by these statistics. Now, I think these statistics are out there for somebody, and I would like -- and hopefully the minister reads this and has some of his officials come back and tell me who benefits and who asked for them in the first place, because the business community don't know. I don't know. I've been in business most of my life, and I don't know. So why do we go through this charade? I just wonder. But the Member for Calgary McCall recognized it and has brought a motion before us, and hopefully this House will take note of it and we will remove this unnecessary exercise that we're putting our citizens through.

I feel that the request in this section that says to make all responses to surveys completely voluntary is an excellent one. It is an excellent one, Mr. Speaker, because the true value -- the true value -- of those statistics would come out. If the businesspeople that were filling these out and sending them back thought that there was any value -- if it was voluntary,

they'd send it right in. If they got any benefit when it came back, they'd make sure they sent it in. And I can tell you, I'm going to make a statement of what I believe: that if it was made voluntary, I can guarantee you that not one of those statistical statements would be returned. And I would say to you that the world would go around and around and the business world would be better off. And I can tell you this: we would have happier people out there. They wouldn't be saying, "Why is the government sending all these things out again?" We'd make people happy. We'd put more money in their pockets. Their businesses would be better off.

To the members on my right: I want to tell you that it would certainly be good because the businessmen would have more money to hire more people and create more jobs, and that's what this world's all about. It's a circle. But as long as we keep a little bureaucratic thing draining off on one side the income of the businesspeople -- and you have several of those draining off. The businessman has not got enough to hire the people to fill the jobs that we, you in the opposition and we in government, are both concerned about. We want jobs, and we want people to work, and we want to do it.

So hopefully, Mr. Speaker, all sides of this House will support this Bill, and let's get on with making our people happy out there and have a little more money in their pockets, and you'll see Alberta grow just like we know it's going to grow.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I was intending to get up and speak against this Bill in the first place, but the previous speaker just really confirmed why I should.

MR. R. MOORE: I'm glad you're on my side there, Alex.

MR. McEACHERN: Yeah. The Member for Calgary McCall in bringing in the Bill attacks, of course, the wrong problem. He gets up and talks at some length about the inability of Alberta stats to produce relevant stats, to produce good questionnaires and things that are needed. And so what he's saying is that his government is incompetent, that they don't know how to run a decent statistics bureau. But then instead of using the fact that he's a government member and that he has access to caucus and access to department heads and so on, instead of doing something about it in that way, he brings in a Bill to say, "Let's not make it mandatory to fill in these kinds of statistics when we send them out." So instead of doing a better job of gathering statistics, he says, "Let's just make it voluntary; people can sort of fill them in if they want to."

The member to my left here -- and I've forgotten his riding -- merely says that if it was made voluntary as to whether people filled in these statistics requirements or not, not one of them would be returned. So why don't you bring in a Bill to abolish the Alberta stats then? What kind of nonsense is this?

Look, if you're going to run programs like Vencap, SBEC, Alberta stock savings plans, if you're going to give money out under the Alberta term assistance Act, if you're going to talk about developing some new programs because you're missing some things like these small business incubators, you need to know something about what's going on out there in your community and you need to take some statistics. Now, if we're doing a lousy job of it, then smarten up the department and smarten up the kinds of forms you're putting in, but don't bring me in a silly Bill like this that says that we shouldn't collect it or that we shouldn't ask people to fill them in. Well, we can ask, but if they don't want to do them, well fine, and nobody will do

them because -- I mean, after all, if you're going to threaten to punish them if they happen to make a mistake in filling them in, then who would bother, if it's only voluntary?

AN HON. MEMBER: Exactly.

MR. McEACHERN: Exactly. So what kind of a nonsense Bill is this? It's certainly not well thought through. It is necessary to have a certain amount of statistics. I don't see any reason why we should overburden anybody with a large set and a lot of unnecessary information and that sort of thing, but we do need to know a little bit about the society we live in if we are going to develop programs to govern that society.

AN HON. MEMBER: Big Brother.

MR. McEACHERN: No, it's you people that are saying there's Big Brother. Go ahead. Take StatsCan and whatever they're doing and smarten it up if they're doing a lousy job. It's your government. You're the ones in power; do something with it. Go to Alberta stats and take a look at what they're doing and pare it down to half, to a quarter. I don't know what would be appropriate. You guys seem to know, but you're not getting at it with this Bill, is what I'm saying. Take a look at the forms you're asking people to fill in and revise them, and if you can't get it in in less than two and a half years out of date, like this one the gentleman was talking about, then put a bomb underneath some of the people you've hired to run Alberta stats.

But this Bill certainly will not answer that question, and so, Mr. Speaker, while there may be problems in how this government runs this government or how it collects statistics, that's all very well. But the Member for Calgary McCall has totally missed the mark in terms of trying to do anything about it. What he would do about it is abolish all collection of statistics and make up programs in the dark then, because he wouldn't know what the heck is going on out there in the society that he is trying to in some way govern or help or encourage economic development. But I suppose that's what they've been doing anyway, because their statistics evidently are such a mess that they haven't been able to keep them straight and to figure out what they should do anyway. Maybe that explains an awful lot about what's happened in the last 15 years.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't going to rise to speak on this particular Bill, but I think that during the estimate debates on the Department of Tourism I stood up and I had congratulated the minister for coming out with a brochure called *Alberta Tourism Pulse*. Contained in that brochure were all kinds of statistics, I suppose that the hon. Member for Calgary McCall and the hon. Member for Lacombe would prefer not to see that kind of publication, but I think it's an important publication because I think it's going to help us develop the Tourism department and the kind of jobs that we hope to have in our province. That little pamphlet tells us how many automobiles come across our borders -- statistics. And what does that do? It allows us or the minister responsible for the department of transportation to prepare his budget for five years down the road, knowing full well that at Lloydminster those roads are going to be worn thin because there's an increase in traffic there. Or it allows us to know that in two or four years down the road at Banff National Park, with the number of tourists that go

through there, we're going to have to build another facility to accommodate the traffic that goes through there. Those are some of the statistics.

For those people that are involved in the private sector in the city of Calgary or in the city of Edmonton, contained in that very magazine are the occupancy rates for the hotels. Statistics. We fill them out. Why do we fill them out? Not because we want to fill them out and not because we take pleasure in filling them out and not because we take pleasure in compiling all the statistics, but we fill them out so that we don't saturate the market, so that we can't have a vacancy rate of 95 percent in the city of Calgary so that those small businesses or those medium businesses or those large businesses go bankrupt. We fill them out so that we know what the vacancy rate is, so that we know when we're going to need more rooms or less rooms. Those are some of the reasons we have statistics: so that we can plan, so that we can plan to build, so that we can plan to slow down.

Social planning. My goodness, there's something truly wrong with that. If we didn't have some of those statistics being provided, I'm sure the hon. Member for Calgary McCall might be building stores out in farmland just because maybe he thinks there might be a market out there. He may not know.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's freedom.

MR. SIGURDSON: That's his freedom. It's his right to go broke.

This Bill doesn't address the problem. If there are problems in the compilation, if there are problems in the time element, then let's do something that corrects that problem. But let's make sure, for goodness sakes, that we have the ability, the ability to plan. If you don't want to plan, you've almost abdicated the role of being a government.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Calgary Fish Creek.

MR. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome this opportunity to speak in support of the Bill sponsored by my colleague from Calgary McCall, an Act to Amend the Statistics Bureau Act. I'm sure all the members in the Assembly this afternoon are aware of the old expression that refers to "statistics and damn lies." What with the abuse that statisticians have been taking in the House today, I'll be tempted to change the reference to "statistics and damn statisticians." Mr. Speaker, you'll be reassured to know that I checked with *Beauchesne* to be doubly sure that I could, in fact, use that adjective.

I recall not too long ago a cartoon in a U.S. consumer publication. It featured a couple of hillbillies who are obviously entrepreneurs, and they were leaning against the rail fence outside their establishment speaking, apparently, to some government employee. And the facility behind them -- I need to describe it for the members. It had two sections. The first section was very, very small; just a single story, maybe a thousand square feet. And immediately behind it was this mammoth five-storey building that dwarfed this little shack at the front. They're responding to the question of the government employee, who asked where the accountants were. The question was asking, "Are the accountants in this little place at the front?" And he says, "Aitch no, they're all in the back filling out government forms for you guys."

I listened with great interest to the Member for Edmonton Belmont and his stirring defence of filling out forms and of bureaucratic publications. And I must say to the Member for

Edmonton Kingsway that I disagree with his characterization that this is nonsense legislation. In the Bill today I think there is a very important principle. It brings to us, for our consideration, an amendment to reduce or remove legislative intrusions that bleed off private-sector productivity with negligible benefit to very many inside or outside government.

For six years it was my good fortune to work for a major oil-related corporation in Calgary, and it was my great misfortune to have the job of filling out the forms that are so passionately admired by the Member for Edmonton Belmont. Each questionnaire that came, either from provincial bureaucrats or from federal bureaucrats, the United States and Canada -- they all were funneled to my in basket. I think it's safe to say, Mr. Speaker, that although I had a broad range of responsibilities, fully 10 percent of my time was devoted to simply filling out these forms. I must admit to you that although I will admit that some of those forms, some of those surveys, had potential value, it was hard for me to escape the skepticism that for most of these forms I was asked to fill out, their primary motivation was job perpetuation on behalf of the bureaucrat who invented it and circulated it.

I'd like to focus if I could for a moment, Mr. Speaker, on one narrow point of the Member for Calgary McCall's Bill, and that is his suggestion that responses to statistics bureau surveys be made voluntary. I think I would agree with that legislative proposal. However, I would like to suggest to the member and anyone else that is interested that there is value to industry in some of these bureaucratic publications that are a result of these kinds of surveys -- not many, but I will grudgingly concede that there is value to industry in some of these. And therefore I would suggest to the member that in the implementation of this legislation there should be some kind of regulatory or procedural mechanism whereby recipients in the private sector of these surveys be helped to understand that there is some merit in some of these publications.

But if he would suggest that the entire process be left on a voluntary basis, I suspect there may not be very much participation at all, and therefore I would like the member to consider building in some kind of incentive. Now, I'm not suggesting a tax-related incentive or a cash bonus or an early-bird draw, but I would like to suggest that perhaps those who do take the time and effort, and sometimes it's considerable, to talk to other members within the company and then to complete this data and to submit it -- that those who submit the data, those who have gone to that effort, be given a certain advantage over those in the industry who did not. Because there's no question; in some of this data there is a marketing advantage -- marketing intelligence, if you like. So perhaps those who participate in the survey, maybe they get the first mail out; then the bureaucrats can goof off for 60 days and then mail out the rest to the nonparticipants. And who knows? That might be incentive enough to encourage the kind of participation envisaged by the member.

And with that I would like to indicate to the Member for Calgary McCall that I think this is a reasonably good Bill, and I'd encourage all the members here to support it today.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, we have a statistical analysis. Member for Edmonton Strathcona, followed by the Member for Red Deer South.

MR. WRIGHT: Yes. Mr. Speaker, the Bureau of Statistics in this province fulfills a necessary role. That role is to provide the figures that are necessary for not merely the planning of a mod-

ern state, which may be considered unduly socialist by government members, but even ordinary estimates of the effect of price rises or falls in any commodity, particularly, of course, important commodities such as oil or the price of grain.

These abilities to function do not exist in a vacuum. They can only exist on a statistical basis which must be gathered by use of all the means that are conveyed in the present section 7 of the Act, which Bill 211 seeks to largely curtail. It would mean, for example, that the Bureau of Statistics would be unable to produce an input/output table, which is the basic tool of estimating the effects of price variations on the one hand and taxation variations on the other throughout the economy. These pieces of information are essential to any statement of the effects of budget changes or of commodity changes in the province today.

The Canadian tables go quite a long way to helping the provincial Bureau of Statistics achieve its object, but only so far. There must be the proper supplement at the provincial level. Furthermore, if the province is keen to see that the taxes that are supposed to be paid by the citizens of Alberta are in fact being paid, it is necessary to have some idea of the total provincial product and its breakdown. Consequently, this is a most regressive step.

[Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

It is true, I suppose, that in medieval times they managed to get along fairly well without statistics, but even Adam Smith was anxious to avail himself of such statistics as there were, even for his simple theories, which no longer apply anyway. So . . . [interjection] Well, they do not in fact apply in their simplicity now, because we have a much more complicated economy. But it makes it all the more necessary to understand what we are doing that we have the information which the Alberta Statistics Bureau Act embodies.

So, Mr. Speaker, I submit that this is a Bill that's basically from those with a philosophy which, in economic terms, is hardly much different from that of a medieval scholar and should be most roundly eschewed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Red Deer South.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A pleasure to rise and join with my colleagues in supporting Bill 211. I particularly appreciated the comments by the Member for Calgary Fish Creek and the short story that he shared with us. I think the business community feel that there is a lot more truth to that story than he emphasized, in suggesting the accountants are all "out back."

Mr. Speaker, the general purpose of this Bill is to remove the penalty for failing to respond to a statistical survey and to make all responses to such surveys completely voluntary. It seems to me that that would be a positive step, contrary to what some of the members from the NDP have been saying. We're not suggesting that the Bureau of Statistics be abolished; we're saying that in some instances the process for gathering this information is inappropriate. I can understand them having a hard time to relate to that, not having much appreciation for running a business or not having any compassion or understanding of what it means to run a small business. The Member for Calgary Fish Creek pointed out that for him, in a large corporation, as one individual, it took up approximately 10 percent of his time responding to government surveys, either at the provincial or federal level, and I can certainly appreciate that.

Again, as a small businessperson I can remember them coming in. The first time I received mine and I unfolded these pages and pages of questions, I looked at it and I thought to myself: this has to be another one of those government make-work projects -- not only make work for me, but as the Member for Lacombe pointed out earlier, make work for somebody up here in Edmonton as well. These surveys were very detailed surveys demanding a tremendous amount of time, and in a small business the time usually has to come from that owner/operator. The kinds of information that they're requesting isn't something that you can just sit down and tick off the squares. It means taking time away from your business and your job, sitting down with your lawyer to get the necessary information they want from him, sitting down with your accountant, making sure that the figures are all accurate and correct. It's a long, lengthy, unnecessary procedure.

I think that the motion itself is very much in line with the directions we're seeing this government take. I quote back to the Speech from the Throne in 1984. It stated:

A governmentwide effort is being made to reduce or eliminate unnecessary or obsolete regulations which frustrate or complicate the lives of our citizens . . .

Well, Mr. Speaker, there's no question these surveys frustrate and complicate the lives of small businesspeople. So I think the Bill is appropriate, and it is in tune with the directions that this government is taking.

I really appreciated the comments from the Member for Lacombe, and I appreciate the efforts that I know he's making towards regulatory reform. This is just one example of unnecessary bureaucratic requirements for small business.

Mr. Speaker, I think, again looking at it from a small business perspective, if you don't respond . . . I know that I took the time of taking my first survey and throwing it in the -- well, I didn't throw it in the garbage right away. I started to look at it, and I saw a lot of redundant questions. I saw what appeared to me to be very unnecessary information; I couldn't imagine what it was being compiled for. I couldn't imagine why they'd expect that of me as a small businessperson, and I have to say, I took it and I filed it in the garbage the first time I got it. Not too long after that I received my letter, a form letter telling me that they hadn't yet received my responses to their survey of such and such and when could they expect it. And if you don't take the time to respond to that, you'll shortly thereafter get a phone call saying that we're still expecting this wonderful survey and all this information to be compiled. And it always has the habit of coming at such an untimely point in your business. It doesn't seem to matter what business you're in; they're always able to pick the wrong time to send the forms out. I was in the travel business, and our busy season is the wintertime. And sure enough, that's when we'd get it, January, right after the year-end, they'd be keen to recruit this information. And we just don't have that kind of time. We don't have that kind of luxury. We don't have the benefits that a large corporation has where they can refer it to one of their employees and afford him the luxury of filling it out.

You have to ask yourself: for what? I look, and again it seems that as a result of all these efforts, we see two major statistical reports annually: Alberta pay and benefits and Alberta retail and service trades statistics reports. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would suspect that these aren't on the top 10 readers' list. I note that they have now been discontinued for budgetary reasons, and I have to confess that I haven't been inundated with telephone calls saying, "Where are these magnificent outdated

reports?" As the Member for Lacombe pointed out, he just received his and it's two years old. Who's that going to help? It certainly isn't going to help small business.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a positive step. I think it would be a step that would be welcomed in the business community. I think there are other means of ascertaining this kind of information, and I would encourage the House to give it full support.

Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Red Deer North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As already has been enunciated, the general purpose of the Bill, if we can focus on it, is to remove the penalty for failing to respond to statistical surveys. I think it's instructive for those in the House today and for those who, lacking something better to do in the future, may find themselves reading *Hansard*. It will be instructive for them to note the different response that we're hearing here.

From the government side we are seeing a request for a reduction in regulation, and from the opposition side we are seeing a plea for continued regulation. And the word "planning," which the liberal socialist mind-set so loves to embrace, is being thrown around quite freely here: a planned, heavily regulated, heavily legislated economy. That's the answer. That's what they tell us. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to suggest that that type of Big Brother, heavy-handed planning mind-set is the very thing that saps the very essence of what makes our economy vibrant and vital, and that's the ability to risk, the ability to be innovative, the ability to create. Maybe part of the . . . [interjections]

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Would the hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway please be quiet while the member is debating.

MR. DAY: I appreciate the Speaker's intervention there, and again refer to Mark Twain's book *Pudd'nhead*. Not assuming any correlation of *Pudd'nhead* to the opposition, but in the book *Pudd'nhead* the author remarks that there's no annoyance quite like the annoyance of a good example. And I suggest possibly that's why we're getting grumblings of annoyance from the other side.

Part of the difficulty with the term "marketplace" is that some people easily fall into seeing a marketplace as something that is static because of the word "place." The marketplace is not really a static place; it's a process. It's something that is always in movement. And any process, actually any breakthrough, any progress that we've seen from medieval times, as the member opposite mentioned, or in modern times has not been the result of somebody poring over piles and reams of commercial and enterprising type of data. Can't you see Thomas Edison getting the idea for the light bulb after poring over piles of research and finally realizing: "Hey, a lot of people are in the dark. I know what we need because of this statistical research -- a light bulb." How did he ever get that breakthrough without it being planned? You know, I'd suggest that maybe from some of the thinking from the side opposite, they still haven't availed themselves of Edison's invention because they're still in the dark. If it hadn't been for Mr. Edison we'd probably all be watching TV by candlelight.

Then there's the Wright brothers. Can't you see their plan and invention for aerodynamic flight? Can't you see that just bursting out of their minds as the result of having surveyed all

the transportation companies in North America and saying: "Are there better ways to get around? Well, we're not sure. Based on all the statistical data, I think we'll try flying." I don't think it happened that way. It was their resourcefulness; it was their creativity. It was their freedom of restraint from the heavy hand of planned government and planned economy, and I would suggest some of the ideas opposite are still a little flighty, notwithstanding that invention.

Can't you see Alexander Graham Bell calling the government and saying, "Please send me all the statistical forms you've got from all the communication companies in the world. There's just got to be a better way." And after hours and hours of poring over these statistical reports, sent in and taxed on the backs of struggling communications companies, old Alexander wakes up one day and says, "I know; based on these reports, we need a telephone." No, that kind of ding-a-ling thinking doesn't come from this side of the House.

Can't you see Banting and Best getting their inspiration and drive and belief that there would be and could be a cure for the physical problem besetting our diabetics? They got that from poring over all of these reports from the sugar companies and other places. No, it was the freedom from restraint and the power and creativity to think freely. Can't you see Mr. Kroc? Now, Mr. Kroc is responsible for McDonald's hamburger chain. Irrespective of how we like that particular type of food, if he had based his desire on coming up with the fastest selling and best selling hamburger in the world on statistical reports based on the hamburger industry -- in other words, how many hamburger joints in your area? -- he would have looked at that and said, "There's no way in the world, with all these hamburger joints, that I can ever be successful, so I will bow down to the heavy hand of planned economical thinking, and there's no way we can come up with a better hamburger or a better way to produce them." That would have been the result of his poring over these statistical surveys.

I could go on and on. We could talk about computer systems and all the tremendous innovations and fantastic inventions that we're looking at. I submit to the House today that that was not the result of people poring for hours over surveys that had been taken from struggling businessmen and businesswomen who had better things to do than fill out these reports. I might also suggest -- one of the members opposite mentioned that hotels would not be able to function if they didn't have these statistics showing vacancy rates. I'd like to pose a question. Since when does the hotel business or any other business have the right to demand that governments sap the time of their competitors to get information from them so that they can launch into their own business? I suggest that is very socialistic thinking, and it certainly gives me a lot of difficulty in considering it.

It is true that the Alberta Bureau of Statistics hasn't been enforcing the requirement to respond to its surveys by laying charges. That's true. But it still makes lawbreakers out of every businessman, out of every businesswoman who refuses to fill out those reports. Whether the charges are passed or not, it still makes lawbreakers out of them. They resent that. Businesspeople resent that.

I'd like to suggest another far reaching offshoot, a beneficial offshoot of disbanding this type of legislation that we're coming against here. The very act of resenting something physiologically has a negative effect on your physical being. If you are building up resentment inside of yourself, then you're building up anger and you're secreting various enzymes and other things that are going into the system. Resentment, which is what

businesspeople feel when they have to deal with these types of statistics, actually leads to ill health. It leads to high blood pressure, it leads to tension, it leads to ulcers, it leads to colitis, and all kinds of other things.

I would suggest that by dealing a death blow to the compulsory nature of these statistics, we would be really boosting our health care system by releasing a lot of the costs that are incumbent upon it following these types of resentment-oriented and -related diseases and sicknesses. If there are people who want this information that badly, may I suggest that they should be able to buy it, that they should be willing to say to the businessman or to the businesswomen, "I need this information; therefore, I will compensate you the time it takes to fill out those forms to give me the information." I would suggest that that would add to our whole area of diversification. It would give the businessperson who is already struggling more revenue in a

way which he had never intended before, and it would also enhance our own position in the information age by allowing companies to know that there was availability in these areas.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of Bill 211. And considering the hour, I would move to adjourn debate.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Red Deer North has moved that we adjourn debate on this motion. Does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? It's carried.

[At 5:22 p.m. the House adjourned to Friday at 10 a.m.]

