

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Monday, April 13, 1987 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 87/04/13

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

### PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, grant us a daily awareness of the precious gift of life which You have given us.

As members of this Legislative Assembly we dedicate our lives anew to the service of our province and our country.

Amen.

### head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour to present to members of the Assembly a distinguished visitor seated in your gallery. This evening in St. Albert at the Musée Heritage Museum, The Ancient Cultures of Peru will be officially opened by His Excellency the Ambassador of Peru to Canada, Dr. Oscar Maurtua. I would ask that members of the Assembly welcome His Excellency to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

### head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file two documents today. One is a new directory of the \$1.2 billion Alberta fashion industry, and the other document is an announcement that lays out the three-pronged Alberta support program to this important industry.

### head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you, 95 grade 10 students from Holy Trinity community high school. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Guglich, Mrs. Colby, Miss Bader, Mr. Kovacs, and Mr. Olephant. They are seated in the members' and public galleries. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our friend and colleague the Hon. Henry Kroeger, the Member for Chinook, it gives me a great deal of pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 13 grade 12 students from the Delia school. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Nelson Houghton, and by three parents: Mrs. Judy Carmichael, Mrs. Sheila Marshall, and Mr. Don Hall. I would ask that they rise in the members' gallery and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 25 terrific grade 6 students from Caernarvon school, which is located in the constituency of

Edmonton Calder. They are accompanied by one teacher, Mrs. Mona Hajar, and they are seated in the members' gallery. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

### head: MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### Department of Agriculture

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to advise my colleagues that today marks the beginning of National Soil Conservation Week.

This special week will provide Canada's agricultural industry the opportunity to deliver a message of critical importance to its members and to all Canadians: the health of our most essential natural resource, our soil, is threatened by erosion and other processes of degradation. If we fail to take action now to halt these processes, we will lose the primary ingredient of our vital agriculture industry.

The theme of this national event, Soil Conservation is Everybody's Business, bears a timely message for all Canadians. The development and implementation of soil conservation practices involve a major investment of time, effort, and money. Our farmers cannot meet the challenges of preventing soil degradation on their own. Every Canadian depends upon the health of our agricultural land, and each of us must share in the costs involved in its protection.

Here in Alberta we understand only too well the dangers of soil degradation. The thin layer of topsoil that supports our agriculture and food industries took centuries to create but can take only decades to destroy.

There are many types of soil degradation, among them wind and water erosion, soil salinity, decline of organic matter, and soil compaction. Each presents a very serious concern to our province's farmers. It is estimated that 10 to 15 percent of Alberta's 30 million acres of agricultural land are affected to some degree by a soil degradation problem. The resulting losses to Alberta's farmers in financial terms are estimated at \$429 million per year. Left unchecked, these processes will eventually destroy our most basic and most precious natural resource: the soil.

Mr. Speaker, the government of Alberta is firmly committed to supporting our agriculture industry in the fight to halt and reverse the process. As part of that commitment we are working closely with federal and local government authorities, farm organizations, and individual producers to increase awareness of soil degradation problems and their control. Through various means such as on-farm demonstrations and the soil conservation area program we are transferring the technology of conservation management systems directly to the farmers of our province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage my colleagues to take advantage of the opportunities presented during National Soil Conservation Week to learn more about the problem of soil degradation and about methods of controlling the problem.

As our soil disappears, so will our farmers, our jobs, and the food we eat. Soil conservation is indeed everybody's business.

Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it's not often I stand in the House to agree with the Minister of Agriculture, but I certainly support the ministerial statement. It seems to me that in discussions with farmers -- and, specifically, I remember talking to a number of farmers in southern Alberta -- I think we have to recog-

nize that many of the government policies in the past at the federal level, and perhaps at the provincial level, have forced farmers into doing things they knew weren't perhaps the best for the land. I remember specifically in an area where they were having a fair amount of drought, around the Pincher Creek area, a farmer making that point: he knew better, but he needed the cash flow at that particular time. But he was very concerned about this matter.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would say to the minister that I certainly agree with almost everything that's said in here, but it seems to me that we have to recognize this as a very serious problem in the future for rural Alberta. Perhaps -- just perhaps -- this might be a good place to spend more money. I think it would be money back to our Treasury in the last path, because as you said: "As our soil disappears, so will our farmers, our jobs, and the food we eat. Soil conservation is indeed everybody's business." So we'll look at the next budget to see a healthy increase in that area.

Thank you.

#### head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

##### Federal/Provincial Relations

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Premier. It has to do with an issue that's of extreme importance to all Albertans, I believe, at this time. It has to do with the Prime Minister of Canada basically firing an Alberta Member of Parliament from his parliamentary secretary role and, of course, he now doesn't sit on the government caucus. I believe this member was speaking for all Albertans, and as a result of that, I want to ask: has the Premier contacted the Prime Minister to protest the treatment afforded this Alberta Member of Parliament?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's a matter of the federal party -- the federal government, the Prime Minister, and those members in his caucus -- and I would not get involved.

MR. MARTIN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I'm surprised. It seems at other times you've interfered in the federal government.

But my question to the Premier is very simple. He was talking about government patronage, which he was upset about, and he was also upset about the treatment of Alberta. Does the Premier not think it's important that the Alberta government give him at least some moral support on the issues that we should be raising right here in this House? [some applause]

MR. GETTY: I gather the clap is for reading the question correctly.

Mr. Speaker, the government of Alberta feels many of those matters are important, and we make sure that we deal directly with the government of Canada on them.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary question. Is the Premier not concerned when one Member of Parliament from Alberta decides that this province is the most important, not the Conservative party, and the various issues that have been discussed in here? Does the Premier not believe it's important enough to make a statement on this so that we know where this government stands on what Mr. Kilgour is saying?

MR. GETTY: As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it appears that Mr. Kilgour has been listening to many of the things that I've been saying.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary. Well, that's interesting. We have a new-found agreement about patronage.

My question to the Premier: is the Premier saying, then -- make it perfectly clear in this Legislature, so we understand it -- that he supports Mr. Kilgour in both the patronage fight and the fact that they're not treating Alberta fairly? Unequivocally, yes or no, here today.

MR. GETTY: It's remarkable, Mr. Speaker, how the hon. Leader of the Opposition, when he's on some weak subject, starts to raise his voice, trying to make it more important.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear that the government of Alberta represents the people of Alberta very strongly with the federal government. We'll continue to do so.

MR. TAYLOR: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. When the Prime Minister commented on Mr. Kilgour's actions, he also said that there'll be no discussions on an elected Senate. Would the Premier care to comment just how he's going to bring that up in the next constitutional conference if his own Prime Minister, beside throwing a westerner out of the caucus, wants to throw his pet scheme out of the upcoming talks?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the government of Alberta will make sure that matters that we wish to discuss will be discussed.

##### Youth Unemployment

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

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, also to the Premier, who has an interesting approach to federal negotiations. A member of this government has finally come to acknowledge the dreadful record of this government in finding and creating jobs for our young people. In fact, I understand the Minister of Education goes further and suggests that one of the ways of dealing with unemployment is that our young people should go to Ontario to find work. My question for the Premier: when did the government decide as part of their economic policy that we'd deal with unemployment by exporting youth to Ontario?

MR. GETTY: We haven't, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary question, then. Could the Premier then say to the House that he disagrees with the Minister of Education suggesting that we should have our young people go to Ontario?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, since the Minister of Education is the person involved, I'd let her reply to the hon. leader.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: I appreciate the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to discuss an excellent MLA communication process which took place over the weekend in the Edmonton Glenora constituency. I didn't notice the Leader of the Opposition there, and I'm not sure how he has concluded that the policy is as stated in his first question.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary question. The poor old government; they're always being misquoted, you know. They're always having those problems. It's that awful media after them again, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Premier, though, is: my understanding is that the minister has acknowledged that the government decision to go for major tax increases and spending cuts is at least one of the causes of increasing unemployment among young people. Mr. Speaker, is the Premier not concerned, especially dealing with young people, that they're paying too high a price in terms of the government policies?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we are concerned.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's about the weakest response over an important issue like youth unemployment that I can imagine from the Premier of this province. He may find this amusing, but I can tell you that young people in my riding don't find it amusing.

My question to the Premier: instead of being flippant, what alternative solutions is the government prepared to offer young people when the official rate of unemployment is 17.2 percent? Of course, that does not include the discouraged workers at all. What is the Premier saying to these young people rather than saying he's "concerned"? What're you doing about it?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, both last year and this year the government has put in place the most aggressive employment programs in the history of Alberta.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the Premier. Wouldn't the Premier admit that this meeting on the weekend of former Tories -- they're coming to recognize the government for what it is: a stale, tired, run-down government that has no ideas on what it's going to do for employment?

MR. GETTY: I had some meetings on the weekend, Mr. Speaker, with many Albertans. and most of them told me how much they supported the government's plans to reduce the deficit, to build a future for Alberta. They also told me how poorly they felt the Liberals and NDP were doing in the Legislature this year. I said, "Well, you know that's just something about leadership, I think. They just don't have it."

MR. SPEAKER: Main question, Westlock-Sturgeon.

### **Job Creation Programs**

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, who has obviously been taking lessons with some ventriloquist. To reinforce again, on the weekend the Minister of Education talked to the used-to-be faithful Tories about jobs for their children, suggesting to them that they move from good old Tory Alberta to good old Liberal Ontario. Now, is the Minister of Education's comment nothing more than an admission that the job programs of this government that they list are not working?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. It would appear that the job programs are very ineffective, so why has the Minister of Career Development and Employment rejected our motion? If these are working and creating jobs, why did he

reject our motion calling for the government to provide Albertans with documentation showing the number of permanent jobs created during the past two years? Is it possible that they're not working?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, that's a previous debate that was decided.

MR. TAYLOR: It's not an answer, Mr. Speaker. They rejected it. He's hiding behind the skirts of privilege there.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier not admit that this information is being kept secret because it would indeed confirm that the Minister of Education is right in which she told her constituents this weekend and that the government's job creation is very ineffective indeed?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I sense blood here, so I hope you let me go after him. [laughter]

MR. SPEAKER: The blood donor clinic is tomorrow morning.

MR. TAYLOR: Mine will be A positive, his A negative.

In light of the comments made by the minister at the weekend meeting, would the Tories bash the government they elected less than a year ago? Will the Premier not take to heart the many criticisms voiced by Albertans and admit that many of his policies are not working and, most of all, that he will now instruct the Minister of Career Development and Employment to come clean and tell us what he's hiding behind when he refuses to put the information on the Order Paper?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, one thing the government does is get the information directly from Albertans. They don't take it secondhand through the press, the way the hon. member does.

MR. R. SPEAKER: To the Minister of Career Development and Employment. Could the minister indicate what the numbers are in terms of the brain drain from Alberta into other provinces of Canada or into the United States because of the downturn of the economy of Alberta due to a number of factors?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that there is a brain drain happening in Alberta. I think the point being that Albertans have the highest level of educational attainment of any province in Canada, so obviously they become attractive not only in Saskatchewan or Ontario but throughout the world. It's a reflection on the high calibre of education delivered by this government.

MSBARRETT: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Last year the federal Finance minister admitted that 95 percent of the jobs created during the last year through Canada programs in fact were created in Ontario. Will the Premier please tell this House if he is prepared to just sit at the sidelines and gripe about what they are doing in Ottawa, or is he going to take a fight to Ottawa to get our share of federal funding?

MR. GETTY: That's just what we are doing, Mr. Speaker.

MR. STEVENS: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Education. Would the minister advise the Assembly whether

or not she did or would encourage Albertans to leave this province to seek employment in Ontario?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting after 10 questions to finally get to the essential one. It's also, I think, an important thing to put on the record that I meet with my constituents from Edmonton Glenora as the M.L.A. for the riding, and I feel responsible for every single person within that constituency, not just those who voted for one party or another, as perhaps some other members of this Assembly might feel. But I would say that I would encourage all young Albertans to pursue every effort possible to receive the highest possible quality in their career options, given the incredible quality of education which they have received in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Clover Bar, designated on behalf of the Representative Party, followed by the Member for Red Deer North.

### Toxic Waste Sites

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of the Environment. The government set the date of March 31 as the date by which the inventory of toxic waste dump sites would be completed, and this seems to have been extended. Of the 800 industries and municipalities that the department contacted seeking information on old dump sites, to date how many have responded to the minister's office?

MR. KOWALSKI: We received, Mr. Speaker, 76 calls. The Member for Clover Bar is right that my original plan was to provide some information to the Assembly by March 31. Questions were raised by the Member for Little Bow on March 20, the Member for Clover Bar on March 24, and since that time a motion for a return has been put on the Order Paper by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. I thought that as the motion for a return was on the Order Paper, I would wait from a protocol point of view to see whether or not the Assembly would provide assurances that I should, in fact, provide the information, which I am prepared to do. But until Motion for a Return 179 comes up, I felt a little reticent about protocol and assurances to my hon. colleagues about doing it.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, of the deficit in the response: what is the department doing to try and encourage more respondents to the minister's request to try and identify these dump sites?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, over this past weekend phase 2, really, of public advertising to the people of Alberta took place in the daily newspapers yesterday. And it is my understanding that this week the weekly newspapers in this province will carry a second version of the announcement that I made last fall that basically said: "HELP. Help eliminate landfill pollution. If you are aware of an abandoned site that may have occurred in the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, give us a call, and we'll look into it."

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, seven of the 15 sites discovered seem to be having a problem. Can the minister indicate what these sites are and what the potential is for danger at these sites?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, at this point in time the potential for danger is very, very limited. We have basically identi-

fied some 15 sites that could possibly have a potential -- and I really want to underline the words "could possibly have a potential" -- problem. A cursory overview in reviewing some of the records really basically does not lead anyone to believe that there is any kind of a problem that exists at all in any of these sites, but because we had appealed to the people of Alberta and the industry of Alberta to go back into their memories and really give to us possible sites, we're going to take a look at each and every one of them as we enter phase 2 of the help eliminate landfill pollution program.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Has the minister been in contact with the Minister of Municipal Affairs to ensure that some of these sites that could have a potential danger will be rezoned out of residential so they cannot be used for residential purposes? Has he had any consultation with the minister?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, not to this point in time, because we have no scientific evidence whatsoever that any of these sites in fact would fall under the category identified by the Member for Clover Bar. Should it come to pass when we go through phase 2 -- and phase 2 will basically be an on-site, thorough, scientific evaluation of each of these particular sites -- phase 3 would then be a cleanup of the particular site if one was identified as a problem area. And I would suspect that if it came to pass that a site could not be reclaimed properly, that would probably be the appropriate time to seek advice from the Minister of Municipal Affairs to cause some zoning changes.

But quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time the type of contact and the calls being made, including ones in the Edmonton area, are basically, "I've identified that sometime in the past somebody deposited his tin cans or solvent cans," and they're really not of the major type that a lot of people would have fixed in their minds as being really superhazardous.

MR. TAYLOR: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of the Environment. Without endangering giving out his question within his own time, there is the question that is brought forward for the hon. Member for Clover Bar; that is, that there may be some damages that occurred or have occurred by these dumps. Is the minister going to set up a fund to recompense corporations or people or families that have been damaged by dumps and then in turn worry about collecting from who was the original perpetrator? Will we be setting up a fund to satisfy those people that have been damaged or hurt by hazardous waste dumps?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the health program that we're talking about this afternoon, introduced by the Member for Clover Bar, is the program that is attempting to locate industrial waste landfills that have been abandoned in the past, and when I talk about the past, I mean before the decade of the 1970s. So if the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon is saying, would the government today set up a fund to assist someone who may make an argument that they had suffered something in the decade, again, of the 1920s, the 1930s, the 1940s, the 1950s, the 1960s, the answer very specifically is no. In fact there had been problems -- and at this point in time we have no scientific evidence whatsoever that any problem does exist, so we're premature at this point in time.

I should point out, however, to the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon that last October when I chaired the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers conference that was

held in Alberta, we issued a release. One of the major points that the ministers of the environment across the country of Canada said that they wanted to see established in Canada was in fact a fund of the type that the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon has brought up today. Hopefully, it might be modeled on the American Superfund. In essence, it would be a fund that would be under the initiative of the government of Canada and in fact provide for dollars for major environmental cleanups wherever and whenever they will have occurred in this country.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Member for Edmonton Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Considering recent problems in Calgary and now this situation, will the Minister of the Environment develop and table for discussion a comprehensive set of regulations to accompany the toothless land reclamation Act?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, the phraseology used by the Member for Edmonton Glengarry is really quite incorrect. We are talking about abandoned land sites that have occurred -- and I want to repeat it for the third time this afternoon -- land sites that were abandoned going back 50, 60, and 70 years in the province of Alberta. The hon. member surely knows that as a result of an initiative of this government in the early 1980s, a massive review occurred on every landfill in the province of Alberta, a review that went from 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985. Over 1,050 landfills in the province were reviewed and basically were given a clean bill of health.

Now, periodically statements are made that would lead some to suggest that there are major, significant problems existing here, there, and everywhere. I referred to that kind of a scenario as being most anarchistic over the weekend, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to repeat it again today, because if there's any statement made by an hon. member in this Assembly that could cause greater concern than is really necessary among the population of Alberta, then I think that those are unfortunate statements and, in fact, add absolutely nothing to the credibility of the discussion and the debate at hand.

MR. SPEAKER: Main question, Member for Red Deer North, followed by the Member for Edmonton Glengarry.

### Day Care Standards

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Social Services. The licensing officers who inspect the provinces' day care centres use detailed and exhaustive checklists to determine whether any given centre will have its annual licence renewed. These lists cover everything from health and safety requirements to program delivery and evaluations. Is the minister considering a way in which these lists can be posted along with the licence itself in the centres where parents could see the individual item evaluations?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is not an area that I've had under consideration, but I believe that it deserves consideration. My initial feeling is that we would want to be very careful to exhaustively describe what each check was about so that there could be no misunderstanding by the parents.

MR. DAY: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is either the ministers' office or, for that matter, the offices of the licensing offi-

cers considering maintaining an index which parents could consult if they wanted actual details of items?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Again, Mr. Speaker, the information -- and I believe it to be very valuable -- would have to be presented in a very objective fashion. We do present to the parents a pamphlet and any other discussion that they might require or ask for relating to child care centres and what we believe parents should be looking for in those centres, and I certainly will take the hon. members' observations into consideration.

MR. DAY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister tell us if there are figures publicly available which point out the ever increasing number of centres and care givers who are availing themselves of the various child care educational programs that are now available in many colleges and institutes?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am aware that there are increasing numbers as a result of the contacts with our office and also the postsecondary institutions that offer them. I should say, as well, that several organizations of child care centres have framed courses and make them available to people who are working within the centres; I will undertake to get that information for the hon. member and the House.

MR. DAY: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Are there mechanisms in place which can be activated to close down a day care centre which would be deemed to be substandard?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of ways in legislation and regulation. With respect to ministerial responsibility, I did close a centre last year and successfully so in terms of bringing to the operator's attention many, many things that ought to be corrected. Staff have some discretion there with respect to licensing. On the other side of the discussion, also in fairness to the centres, if they believe that staff is not being objective, they have an appeal mechanism.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Highlands, supplementary, then the Member for Edmonton Gold Bar.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the minister. I understand the minister is reluctant to establish minimum training requirements for child care centre workers. However, following on the previous questioner's line of thought, would the minister require child care centres to post the number of staff who have early childhood training, along with their business licence, so that those famous shoppers for child care will know what standards they are getting?

MRS. OSTERMAN: A very good suggestion, Mr. Speaker. I don't think anything replaces the parents' direct contact with the child care workers who are going to be relating to their children on an ongoing basis all day. But that information as well I will take under consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that we have some information coming from a number of sources out of Ottawa, is the minister, finally, considering upgrading the child care training standards for all staff members to bring Alberta into line?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker. I have reflected on that on a number of occasions in the Assembly and to the same hon. member. That is under consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Glengarry, followed by the Member for Edmonton Gold Bar.

### **Environmental Monitoring**

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. For the Minister of Community and Occupational Health. Much ado has been made over the toxic waste sites that have been mentioned over the weekend, and the minister has said it's much ado about nothing even though the investigations aren't finished. Assuming that the Minister of Environment has given this minister all appropriate information, what plans has the minister of community health put in place to inform and work with local health units on this potentially serious health risk?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. The Minister of the Environment and I have discussed this matter, and the resources are there between the Minister of the Environment's department, my own department, as well as the 27 health units around the province.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. In view of this government's frequent statements that the media doesn't have the ability to do so, what plans has the minister developed to keep the public fully informed on the location and potential health hazards of these sites?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, as the sites are identified through the minister's excellent program, we will then go to work with the minister's department, with the Department of the Environment, as well as the 27 health units around the province. The measures are there, and we will implement them as those hazards, as those problems, become known.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. I would like to know: is there any correlation between the location of the Edmonton area sites and previous cancer board findings that the county of Strathcona may in fact be a hot spot for some types of cancer?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of any correlation that the member might suggest, but we are aware of some statistical problems and perhaps some potential health problems related to cancer in county 20, and we have been working with the Cross Cancer Institute to come up with a fairly definitive understanding of potential problems out there. I haven't got a detailed or final report from the officials at the Cross cancer clinic, but we are working with them.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. Considering that this is Soil Conservation Week -- and as the minister pointed out, soil conservation is everyone's business -- and it will soon also be Environment Week, will the minister of community health lend his support to the need for a serious clean soil Act with more power than our Clean Air and Clean Water Acts?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, as a member of this government I will continue to fully support my colleagues the Minister of the Environment and the two ministers responsible for Agriculture.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In the studies that are going on in the county of Strathcona, has the minister had an opportunity to look to see if there's any correlation between the fact that many of the people in that area have worked in the petrochemical or the mining industries all their lives, because of the danger in the workplace, or are there any other statistics that make the minister think there may be a correlation?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, as the member well knows, those kinds of studies are difficult ones to do, given the inflow and outflow of the population in the area and that you're looking at not just a constant population. What the member raises is certainly a part of the study that's being done between our department and the Environment department as well as the Cross cancer people. But it's a difficult problem, and one that we are naturally concerned about, and before raising any serious concerns, we want to have our facts straight.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. In view of the fact that there are monitoring or testing systems which were quite up-to-date and modern maybe eight, 10 years ago and now do not test for many mercaptans and trace elements and bisulfites that can be used to pollute the soil or the air, will you put some pressure on the Minister of the Environment to bring his monitoring and testing equipment up to modern standards, so we test indeed for many of these things that could cause health damage?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to ask my colleague the Minister of the Environment to respond further to that question.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could supplement that. The minister of occupational health and safety surely does not have to put any pressure on his colleague. Both he and I consult periodically.

To the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, he should be aware that we constantly monitor and evaluate the programs that we have under Alberta Environment, on a periodic basis. In addition to that, we of course have one of the most sophisticated applied research laboratories anywhere at Vegreville, called the environment research facility, and we have continuous ongoing studies. In addition to that, the member should also know that we have in Alberta today the medical foundation for research, funded by the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, which is a world leader in terms of looking at new innovations for the protection of people and the environment in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Gold Bar, followed by the Member for Edmonton Strathcona.

### **Aids to Daily Living**

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Both users and suppliers of prosthetic devices are concerned about the 25 percent user fee recently imposed through the Aids to Daily Living program. In effect the imposition of this fee will pose problems for users who are already coping with handicaps, and it will threaten to pit suppliers of artificial limbs against users because of the difficulties involved in collection. To the Minister of Community and Occupational Health: a case has been brought to our attention of a person requiring a prosthetic device who is

not aware of his surroundings due to a recent accident. What advice is the minister's department giving to the suppliers, who are faced with collecting bills of up to \$1,000 from people who are suddenly facing trauma and financial hardship?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, we've put in place a program, the most comprehensive of its kind in this country, providing benefits to disabled citizens, to Albertans who are terminally ill or chronically ill, and in putting that program in place, we've also maintained full benefits at no cost to our senior citizens, to those on the Alberta assured income for the severely handicapped, those on social allowance, those on the handicapped children's services program, and the polio program. We believe that the program we've put in place, asking a small number of Albertans to share a small cost of the program, is a responsible and effective one. I'm not going to suggest to a business in Alberta how it ought to go about collecting its income, but we are asking Albertans to share in the cost, and at the same time, suppliers are going to be asked to ask their customers to pay a small portion of the cost of the benefits that they receive.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, not much consolation to the working, taxpaying amputee making \$11,500 a year. The minister has promised he will be sensitive and responsive to unusual situations. Will the minister make good on that promise by exempting all inpatients receiving treatment who are uncertain about their future income, regardless of whether their income made the poverty line, which is the point at which the new fee is applicable?

MR. DINNING: Again, Mr. Speaker, we've put in a program, put in place provisions in this program, whereby Alberta families who make \$24,000 or less in a given year will continue to receive all of these benefits free of charge. There's no program like that in this country. Those Albertans who are uncertain about their income, who for some reason, perhaps through unemployment or other problems with respect to income, maybe a temporary shortfall in their income -- those situations have been looked after, again, under the same program. The appeal committee will be a responsive and sensitive one.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, despite the minister's statements of goodwill, people in his department and his office are telling suppliers: "You're a businessman; you collect it." That's the word that's going out from the department. Is this the spirit behind this fee imposition, to reduce the provision of these essential devices keeping people at work to a business proposition, a deal that may or may not ever take place?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, these suppliers are entrepreneurs in the province of Alberta, and we welcome their participation in our program. Some of those suppliers provide benefits under the Alberta Aids to Daily Living program. They also provide benefits that are not part of this program, and under those benefits they're obliged to get their income from those people directly, 100 percent of the cost. So I would suggest that those suppliers who have problems with their income and problems with respect to getting fees from clients and patients -- they've got to deal with those people on a case-by-case basis. But what we've done is put in place a protection for those Albertans who have real need for these benefits and who have a reduced ability to pay.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister will let us know what mechanism he's putting in place to monitor an account for this unwieldy process: \$11,000 taxable last year maybe. Based on it, this is the year they've got to pay 25 percent, up to \$1,000. Who's going to do the bookkeeping? What is all this going to cost us?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the program is very clear. What we are doing is not introducing another program. What we're doing is simply piggybacking and joining in on the program that the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care provides to thousands of Albertans to protect them from paying the premiums under the Alberta health care insurance program, and as a result, we can simply piggyback that program, reduce the administrative cost, reduce the administrative overload, and continue to deliver this high-quality program.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Community and Occupational Health discuss the matter with Alberta Blue Cross to see whether or not Blue Cross could cover all prosthetics and orthotic needs that Albertans may have? I understand that in fact Blue Cross used to cover it before the Aids to Daily Living program took over.

MR. DINNING: Yes, Mr. Speaker; we have discussed the matter with Blue Cross.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Red Deer North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the minister. In light of the concern about collecting up to \$1,000, which would be the maximum that would have to be paid by an individual, can the minister tell us, from his analysis of Albertans, how many Albertans would potentially fall into that particular bracket of having to pay the full \$1,000?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, we've not normally kept records of this kind in the past, but our estimation of the number of Albertans who will be asked to pay the maximum of \$1,000 per annum is in the range of about 70 Albertans.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Strathcona, followed by the Member for Calgary Mountain View.

### Court Reporting Services

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Attorney General. It concerns the question of the 25 court reporters who recently got their marching orders. You will recall they were the pen writers, whose long and faithful service with the government has been thus rewarded.

The Attorney General is reported as saying, Mr. Speaker, that in fact he is prepared to retrain these reporters on the computer-assisted transcript system so that they can after all return to their craft, which is something they didn't know. Will the Attorney General please confirm this and state, broadly speaking, what the conditions are for this?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised that the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona has indicated that the reporters did not know this. When the computer-assisted program was introduced, encouragement was given to people who wrote with pen and ink to convert to the new process, and that took place

some time ago. They chose not to do so. I have indicated since that time, however, that the offer still stands, and I think that has been made clear.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, has the Attorney General not found through his inquiries that in fact some pen writers did start taking courses and stopped and others did not take courses because of an assurance to them that it was unnecessary?

MR. HORSMAN: No, Mr. Speaker, I have not been able to ascertain, in answer to the second question asked in the supplementary, that any such assurance was given.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, what if any control does the Attorney General have in readiness over the charges of the private court reporters to the public, when they have the monopoly of civil transcripts, to prevent overcharging to those caught in the toils of the law, if I may?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that with respect to the public and with respect to the court reporters, there have been private-sector court reporters in existence in Alberta now for some time whose services have been available to the public. In fact, the Department of the Attorney General has, through the employment of government court reporters, provided to them a system whereby they could compete with the private sector. This is an unusual situation in Canada to my knowledge and to the knowledge of the department.

It has been made clear that those court reporters who wish to continue using their current skills can do so still by going into the private sector, and if, as I said in an earlier question period, their skills are so appreciated by the legal profession that they prefer those skills over those others who offer a different system of reporting, well then, I think they would find that the private sector would provide them with an opportunity.

With respect to the cost to the public, I don't see that that would make much difference. In any event, if the private sector can provide cheaper rates, then of course that's what private enterprise is all about.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, will the Attorney General once and for all then confirm that the court reporters who are being dismissed because they write with pens will in fact now be offered the chance to retrain so that they can return to their craft and, if so, state the conditions?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the department has offered assistance to those whose positions are to be abolished, firstly, by extending the notice period to almost double the required 90 days. In addition, we have provided entrepreneurial training sessions which would assist the court reporters in making a transition to the private sector. We have also advised them of vacancies within the court service to provide positions for court reporters who wish to change their career direction. Any further support to these reporters brings us back to the very type of subsidization we are striving to eliminate. In addition, it would disadvantage those individuals already in private-sector reporting.

With respect to the court reporters who are continuing on staff, we believe there is an adequate compensation for them in the form of salary and transcript fees from court-related duties. The department has never provided a guarantee of income on transcript fees, although it does recognize the potential drop in

income which may occur.

As to the litigating public, we believe that the user-pay concept appropriately applies to the parties in dispute and that the transcript costs are not a significant aspect of the total cost of litigation.

Mr. Speaker, I apologize for reading the answer, but it's in keeping with the practice of the opposition, who read their questions.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, the minister has referred to a notice period of double 90 days, which in fact means six months. Is it the minister's position that six months' notice is adequate for employees who may be in their fifties and who have been employed by the department for 25 years? Is that adequate for that kind of service?

MR. HORSMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, that should be adequate for highly skilled and knowledgeable people to make a transition.

### Tax Increases

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer some questions about the impact of his budget on consumer spending and the economy of this province. Will the Treasurer confirm that for most Albertans with an income in excess of \$16,000 per year, the Alberta personal income tax bite is going to jump by between 18 percent and 22 percent, an increase of more than 8.5 tax points as a result of the budget he brought in to this Legislature earlier this month?

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Might we have unanimous consent to complete the series of questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'll let the member do his own calculations, except we should point out, however, that what this budget does is redirect any tax impact away from lower income Albertans onto the higher income levels, clearly saving those low-income Albertans from the major impact of this tax.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, supplementary. Will the Treasurer confirm that due to the double-up provisions for the second half of this calendar year, Albertans will actually see a jump in their provincial income tax payroll deductions of between 35 percent and 45 percent?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well again, Mr. Speaker, I haven't got those numbers here. Given the efficacy of the calculations by the members opposite, I would have some doubt about the accuracy of what they are reflecting. Nonetheless, it is clear that because of the tax-sharing agreements with the federal government, the impact of these tax increases will be operative in July because of its six-month lead time to get into the tax-sharing arrangement . . . But I can confirm that there will be a double impact after July to December to reflect the annualization of the tax deductions.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada figures show that for Edmonton, Calgary, indeed all of Alberta,



we've seen the most precipitous decline in department store sales in all of Canada from January '86 to January '87. In view of the billion-dollar tax hike which this Provincial Treasurer is bringing in in this year's budget, will he advise whether, in light of this precipitous drop in department store sales and retail sales, he will reconsider his punitive tax hikes in this year's budget?

MR. JOHNSTON: Once again, Mr. Speaker, the selective approach to analysis is causing the spurious kind of conclusion which we see across the way. What we do know in Alberta is that this government steadfastly holds to the view that we will maintain the lowest tax regime of any province in Canada. Even independent analysis has confirmed that as recently as the weekend, and if he wants to quote that, he should look at the facts. We maintain that as a steadfast platform.

We've now also concluded by our policy that the people of Alberta will not have a sales tax, contrary to any other province in Canada, and nothing more than that will protect the disposable income of Albertans. That's the policy; that's the plan. And I know the reaction is going to be positive in terms of disposable income, because that is what drives this economy. These people across the way know it. They refuse to meet the challenge. They refuse to recognize what has been done on this budget. They're misleading the people of Alberta by these continuous statements.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, does the Provincial Treasurer honestly ask us to believe that a billion-dollar tax increase will not further send the retail sector of this economy towards bargain-basement levels?

MR. JOHNSTON: We know, Mr. Speaker, that the member does not want to talk about the strength of this economy, which has exhibited itself in the last year and a half in this province. He does not want to talk about the kinds of jobs that have been created by a number of initiatives in this province; protection of the private sector, which he knows nothing about; initiatives to create investment, which he does not understand; and the way in which the private sector drives this economy, which is a cloud in his head. For him to argue that this is a contraction of the economy is just false.

I have gone on to say, Mr. Speaker, that the major amount of expenditure by this government, both in terms of the new job strategies, in terms of deficit, in terms of capital projects, will be expansion. He knows it; he does not want to be caught in his own challenge. It's a sad day that he is speaking for the economic side of that group across the way.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary on this issue. A supplementary?

MR. CHUMIR: Yes, Mr. Speaker. In light of the negative features of a billion dollars being taken out of the economy, the retail sales declining, the Olympics ending, notwithstanding the bullishness of the minister, if it should happen that unemployment increases to the extent that the opposition is concerned about, will the minister undertake to take immediate steps to reflate the economy under those circumstances, or is he going to continue in the pigheaded way to deflate this economy?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I know the history of liberal economics in this country. I could recite some stubborn policies which have been clearly outlined for us across the way.

Now, we know full well that their understanding of the way in which western Canada operates is predicated on a centralist point of view, and that centralist point of view has nothing to do with the economic plan which we've put forward. It's well known that this is a balanced approach to dealing with the economic situation. The people of Alberta know full well that if they want the high level of services which they've become used to experiencing, they agree that they may have to pay a touch more for that. But overall they know full well that this is the best tax regime in the world, the best level of services in the world, and this is a balanced approach to dealing with the fiscal problems which are before us. We will not burden our subsequent generations with that deficit, contrary to the Liberal policy.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

8. Moved by Mr. Crawford:

Be it resolved that when the House rises at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 15, 1987, it shall stand adjourned until 2:30 p.m. on Monday, April 27, 1987.

[Motion carried]

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

#### Bill 1

#### Department of Culture Amendment Act, 1987

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 1, the Department of Culture Amendment Act, 1987.

I'm pleased to present this Bill to the House, Mr. Speaker, because it reinforces our long-standing commitment to multiculturalism by creating the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism. which, I might mention, makes Alberta the first Canadian province to have such a department. Alberta has been and will continue to be multicultural. The concept of multiculturalism presents us with a unique model in this province for future cultural, economic, and social development. The new Department of Culture and Multiculturalism will provide the framework for our development and will allow us to work in full partnership with our ethnocultural communities to achieve our mutual goals. I urge members to approve second reading of this Bill.

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to follow the Premier's urging and I'm going to support this Bill, but not without a few points of criticism.

It seems to me, first of all, that I heard a few days ago a cabinet minister reflect on how government deals with the good ideas it hears from the opposition; that is, that they pretend to ignore it for a few years and then when nobody's looking, adopt some of the policies, I believe that's true, and I think this case might be one example worth citing, because last year, as a matter of fact, I sponsored a Bill which would support and call for a department of multiculturalism. The reason I did that and the reason this caucus supported that is because we know that ethnocultural communities and artists are all too often faced with fighting or seeking funding from the same pie in such a way that whatever one side doesn't get, the other side does; there's always a winner and always a loser. And this would be the one

way that we could assure that our emphasis on multiculturalism is legitimate and serious.

Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, I need to point out that what this Bill does, however, is change almost nothing. It adds the words "and multiculturalism" after most references to culture in the current Act, and it actually doesn't do any more than that. It is not a new mandate for the department. It is not an enhanced mandate for the department. It is your classic example of lip service. But, that said, Mr. Speaker, I still think that it's moving in the right direction.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to see the mandate fleshed out a little bit so we can take a little bit of the political meddling out of multiculturalism and let ethnocultural communities survive in a way that they choose to, not in a way that is politically expedient for the government of the day. I'm particularly concerned about the regional components of the Alberta heritage council, who on a regional basis, eight in total, meet frequently and hammer out certain resolutions that they would like to bring to their annual meeting with their counterparts from throughout the province. Those resolutions are vetted centrally by people with direct political interest. You wouldn't believe -- every single ethnocultural community with which I have met over the last several years has pointed out that this is like running political interference. Either you have a council that makes certain recommendations to the government on its own volition or you don't. The halfway in-between is perceived to be the running of political interference. Maybe what we need to do is see a restructuring of that council so that they have the sort of autonomy that they require, the sort of autonomy that will prove this government's sincere intentions when it creates a Department of Culture and Multiculturalism.

Mr. Speaker, when I was talking during the estimates of the Minister of Culture just some 10 days ago, I referred to a study which was conducted by Mount Royal College a few years back in Calgary, and I think it needs to be referred to in the context of this new Bill, because I think the government ought to be aware of how much more work is to be done in the area of multiculturalism in order to achieve a society which recognizes multiculturalism as a value in its day-to-day life. Certainly it is a constitutional item; it's in the preamble to the Constitution, recognized as a value, and that's good. But it's not good enough when you have a province that has an underbelly of severe racism.

Now, what the college did was they questioned the public on a number of issues, including the perceptions of social status of ethnic and racial groups. The scoring, I should explain, is that low scores indicate a very favourable response and high scores indicate an unfavourable response. Now, just on social status, all of the Caucasian ethnocultural communities identified, of which there were seven, rated somewhere between 1 and 2.75, but the minute you get into the nonwhite categories, of which there were six, the minimum score was 3.14, the highest of which was 4.50. What that tells me is that we don't think, as a society, very highly of people whom we now call members of visible minorities. That study also gathered information which showed that the Alberta Human Rights Commission continually deals with more complaints on the matters of employment than it does on any other area when it comes to complaints of discrimination.

It seems to me that what we need with this Bill is a policy worked out with a whole number of other departments, including the Department of Career Development and Employment, so that we can enhance employment opportunities for those people

we call those of visible minorities, particularly given that the study again showed that a vast majority of the groups surveyed, 83.7 percent of the visible minorities, held clerical jobs, while 13 percent were in technical and professional jobs, and a mere 3.3 percent had managerial level positions. I think that what we have to do is take a more proactive posture on this issue, particularly given another study which indicates that immigrants, in particular in the workplace, face greater levels of hazards, partly due to their training, partly due to their capacity in English, and partly due to, I think, some latent racism, a passive kind of racism, not an active one.

I think that the report conducted by the Alberta Committee on Occupational Safety and Health, which was published in December of 1985, entitled Alberta Immigrants in the Workplace, documents more instances of this than most people would really like to hear about. They point out that certain recommendations would be well in order, one of which I think needs to be discussed -- and perhaps the Premier will initiate just this sort of thing in advancing his Bill -- and that is that occupational health and legislation be incorporated into courses taught to immigrants.

Now, I realize that we have a number of immigrant services in the province and right here in Edmonton, but if they're just learning a very basic, fundamental English by which they can essentially get along at the local store when they're asking for some eggs or what have you, it isn't enough. It's certainly not enough to incorporate them into the employment system in such a way that they will achieve at least equal footing on the promotional ladder, upon which they will achieve equal footing in getting out of job ghettos, and upon which they will achieve equal footing in being able to survive the workplace, many of which, particularly the industrial ones, are genuine hazards to the health of the employees.

I also think that what we need to do -- and perhaps the Premier in his summing up would observe whether or not it is this government's intention to take any action -- is to follow in the footsteps of their federal counterparts, who by and large get a pretty negative press but who have sponsored a Bill, Bill C-62, which calls for contract compliance on the basis of sponsoring particularly affirmative action for ethnocultural communities, those particularly of the visible minority category. It seems to me that if we take some of the proactive measures which are available to us as legislators, particularly through our own employment and hiring policies, and then look at contract compliance, we can in fact issue a broader statement of our belief in the genuine equality of all members of society than just by calling a department the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism. We do have the ability to lead the way.

I know that this government is profoundly insistent when it comes to all kinds of issues, that they're not going to target specific actions. They won't target industries for development. They won't target job ghetto people for affirmative action. They're going to let the marketplace take care of all that. The fact of the matter is, and everybody knows this, the marketplace isn't taking care of those social inequities. And I think if we've got a government that wants to be in the forefront of promoting multiculturalism by sponsoring a Bill like this, surely we could put some meat behind it and give the department a new mandate, give it some new special provisions, and maybe even give it some new regulations, but certainly give it some programs that put substance behind what might otherwise be lip service.

I'm also concerned that if we rename this department without taking any further actions, we run the risk of continuing to

beg, borrow, or steal resources that are supposedly assigned to the division of multiculturalism and reassign them elsewhere. One example that occurs to me that's like this, Mr. Speaker, is what's gone on with the Ukrainian heritage village. They've had a plan on board for a very long while to get all of phase 1 accomplished in that project. To my knowledge what's happened over the years is that the conclusion of phase 1 has simply not happened, and phase 2 isn't even on the discussion paper any more.

Now, I know that tourism is very important to this province and that multiculturalism is, and it seems to me that if we've got this village that we tout as being very important, and I think it is, the least we can do is follow through on the commitments that we have already made to some of these historic sites. This one, of course, is a compilation of historic sites on a new site but nonetheless is important. It seems to me that what we've got is the people being assigned to work at the village and then being borrowed by the historical sites division for other projects. And I'm not sure that that shows a genuine commitment to the new department or what will be the new department after this Bill receives third reading and Royal Assent.

Another issue that I think is really important is the issue of the federal government's changes to refugees coming into Canada. As you know, Mr. Speaker, what the government has done is taken parliamentarians' ability and bureaucrats' ability to determine on the basis of from whence a refugee comes the order of importance or priority with which that application ought to be dealt. This has had the direct effect of hurting mainly refugees from Central America, particularly from Chile, from Guatemala, and from Salvador.

I don't think it's any coincidence, Mr. Speaker, that this new federal directive which is going to be reflected in legislation comes at a time just a few months before the policies in the United States are going to change. Their amnesty program, or so-called amnesty program, for Latin American refugees is about to come to an end in such a way that those who came after 1982 into the United States will no longer be given the automatic benefit of the doubt, so to speak, and are basically going to be given the boot to go back to be tortured or murdered or watch their families be tortured or murdered. I think that this government should speak up on behalf of refugees who are attempting to get into Canada, refugees who are lining up at little refugee camps along the border.

I hear this government; every once in a while they want to talk about refugees from Afghanistan, and I think that's fair too, because I have every reason to believe that those people have suffered the same kind of brutality and the same kind of oppression that the people in Latin America have suffered at the hands of oppressors, to say the least. On the other hand, I think that with those people welling up at our Canadian border, knowing that they're going to be pushed back into those oppressive regimes in Latin America, we owe it to those people to fight on their behalf, to in other words validate their legitimacy as real political refugees. Most of the Afghans attempting to escape their war, imposed upon them by the Soviet Union, have other locations to go to. They're not knocking at Canada's door; they're much further away than the Latin American refugees are.

Now, we've got this new department, or we're going to have this new department; how about contacting your federal counterparts and saying, "We object; we think that we have the ability as human beings to determine the extent to which people are being oppressed and brutalized." How about a little action

there? It might go a long way in showing that this Bill is not one merely of lip service.

Mr. Speaker, there are many other things that this government can do to revise the mandate of the department in such a way that it gives substance to the department of multiculturalism component to it. I fear that I would tread at that point on what should otherwise be contained in estimates debate, because much of that has to do with the way we fund ethnocultural associations, so I won't go into that territory. I will remind the Premier and the minister who will be administering this new Act that we have to put a little substance where our mouth is, and just calling it a Department of Culture and Multiculturalism is not good enough. Why don't we see some changes? Prove to people that multiculturalism isn't something that is a matter of pure political expedience to this government and get on with some real, progressive changes to go along with the Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not surprisingly, I too am pleased to speak in support of this particular Bill. I believe we've achieved in our province and in our nation many advantages as a result of the Canadian constitutional recognition of the benefits of multiculturalism, and I hope that by changing the title of the department, that is a signpost and an indicator that it's going to have a much wider commitment in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing from the Premier or the minister in perhaps more detail on what this is going to mean in actual day-to-day operations in the department and what it might mean for the ethnic communities of Alberta and for those who do not consider themselves to be part of that ethnic community. In fact, I do want to see an enhanced mandate for the department to go along with the new title. I want to see the mandate of the department widened to match what I believe are the convictions of people in Alberta relative to multiculturalism.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to speak very long. I have made some comments in the estimates on the department, but I believe that multiculturalism is a major industry in our province and will continue to grow and develop, create jobs, and create interest and excitement through festivals and many other activities that will have an enormous economic benefit to Alberta. I think the whole notion of festivals is one that has come fairly recently to this nation. Alberta is picking up on that idea, and I hope we'll be able to support those many events throughout our province that attract people from all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, the notion of multiculturalism has, for me, enormous advantages in the context of trade, and I am hoping to hear from the Premier or the minister that there is consideration given here for a collaborative approach with the minister of economic development in his department and with the trade commissioner. I am aware that we have many cultural exchanges with other parts of the world, and these of course have great advantages to those who move about, both into our country and out of our country. But I believe that we must take firm hold of this capacity and take advantage of the potential that every time we are sending missions of music and dance -- choirs, orchestras, ballet, and so on -- we are also sending along on these cultural exchanges people who can help the country in which we're visiting to understand the tremendous service capacity of our country and the manufacturing capacity and the sorts of trade potential that are available in Canada. I'm hoping that either the minister or the Premier will reassure me that this is in

fact a significant part of this move to change the development in the department and to expand the idea of multiculturalism in Alberta.

In that light, Mr. Speaker, just a short aside about foreign students in Alberta. It's my wish, as well, that the minister will continue to work with the Minister of Advanced Education to ensure that foreign students are made welcome. All too often we have this great sense that we must cut back on our capacity to expand our educational institutions to take in foreign students. It is my own personal belief that they become part of that cultural export and trade development that we so dearly need in the province of Alberta, that they are paying students, that when they do go home they know our country, they know our culture, and they will want to continue to consult with us and do business with us. I think it's counterproductive when we try to cut back in the sense of attempting to economize and restrict the quotas of foreign students who can come to our postsecondary institutions.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton Highlands has already commented on racism and, to be sure, I think many of us are concerned from time to time that there is an incipient racism in our province and that we must do everything we can to stamp that out and to prevent any uprisings of that kind. We've been privileged to have the Ghitter report, with some excellent recommendations that we should all take to heart. I hope that this department will accept responsibility, not just for assisting multicultural groups to do their thing, so to speak, but to assist those groups and, working with those groups, to promote a kind of education mechanism that will help all Albertans to reduce our defensiveness, particularly related to the visible minorities, to expand our thinking, to see that there can be enormous strengths in other cultures, enormous health and well-being in the way other cultures relate in family life, in community life, in business life; that these are not new ideas and new relationships to be afraid of but in fact are some we could expand and take into our own, that they are very healthy and strong, and that collectively they will increase our strength as well.

Mr. Speaker, just a comment about immigrants. Hopefully, our education processes through the department will also reach out to immigrants in their capacity to integrate in our communities, not just by getting jobs but, in addition, reach out to those who are isolated, particularly the women in immigrant families, who very often find themselves trapped at home. While the spouse is more apt to learn English and to form a connection with the community, the women often find themselves restricted and never able to become integrated. I would hope that the department will again expand its mandate to reach out to those.

Mr. Speaker, just finally, I will, and my colleagues will, support the Bill. We look forward to seeing the regulations which I'm anticipating will be expanded and will over time begin to stretch themselves to do some of the things that I've asked for and reach beyond the wonderful Heritage Days -- which we support; but the limits that imposes -- and stretch our minds and our activities to some of these other fields of practice.

MR. SPEAKER: May the Premier sum up?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there were some suggestions which I found, and I'm sure the minister will find, helpful in dealing

with multicultural matters raised by two speakers. I should say that the Bill is framework, obviously, and that -- as I said earlier -- we will be able to present more material as the session and the year go on, and that the minister will deal with it in much more detail at committee study of this Bill, if it's necessary.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to make a comment which I think -- I want the two hon. members who spoke on this Bill to know that I personally am tired and fed up with people who are starting to knock Albertans as being some kind of racists. And to have the Member for Edmonton Highlands, which I guess is representing the NDP position, put down the people of Alberta and accuse them of racism, and now the Member for Edmonton Gold Bar -- "incipient racism," I guess -- I find completely offensive and I feel should be rejected by this Legislature. The people of Alberta spend more money, are sensitive and tolerant, and are prepared to support multicultural beliefs not only in their province but throughout the world. They are leaders in expenditures. And when we have members in this Legislature stand up and accuse the people of Alberta of being racists, I say they are totally out of touch with the province and they should be rejected completely.

Albertans are doing it with their own tax dollars, their own money, whether it's through the education system where the curriculum calls for tolerance, understanding, awareness of communities, individuals, and countries working together. And there are a lot of people, I guess, who want to take shots at Alberta now and then. Sure, now and then there are problems with individuals in this province, but when elected members in this Legislature join that and start to put down Albertans, then I get very, very upset and reject it totally.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a second time]

#### **Bill 4 Supplementary Allowances Repeal Act**

MR. DROBOT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move second reading of Bill 4, the Supplementary Allowances Repeal Act.

This Bill is merely a housekeeping Act and is no longer applicable.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Calder, speaking to the Bill.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you. I just have one quick question to ask. This Act apparently last appeared in the *Revised Statutes of Alberta* in 1955. It was omitted in 1970 in the revisions, and it was also omitted in the 1980 revisions. So I would just like to ask: what specific factors were involved in making the decision to repeal this Act after 25 years of not appearing in the revisions, if someone could answer that for me? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Other members? May the Member for St. Paul conclude debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DROBOT: Well, Mr. Speaker, as was stated, this Bill was repealed several times. It's consequential, and I move that the members support it.

[Motion carried; Bill 4 read a second time]

**Bill 5**  
**University of Alberta Foundation Repeal Act**

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 5, the University of Alberta Foundation Repeal Act.

I believe hon. members will find the Bill self-explanatory. It is a repeal Act requested by the University of Alberta board of governors and simply reflects the contemporary method of receiving financial contributions that are now in effect.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I have no problem supporting this particular Bill. But a few comments are in order, because I think it addresses the larger issue, to a degree, of postsecondary financing, particularly in the case that now almost all of the universities, colleges, and technical institutes in the province have foundations. I think they serve certainly a legitimate role in the sense that they assist the institutions in their fund-raising capacity for equipment and other purposes which are not covered by public financing.

In fact, I was at a fund-raising dinner recently for the Grant MacEwan Community College Foundation. I think those kinds of activities allow members of the community and, perhaps in particular, ministers of governments and MLAs who are well paid and perhaps who can attribute part of that privileged position to benefits they received going through the postsecondary education system of our province, to in turn make some support for the institutions of our province. I think that's quite legitimate. I would express some concern, though, that the current tenseness in the postsecondary environment is going to jeopardize the ability of foundations to be raising funds for their various institutions.

I think the minister is probably quite aware now that we're talking about the University of Alberta Foundation Repeal Act in particular, that the University of Alberta board of governors recently, just on Friday, approved their budget and fee structure. I think he's also aware that university students are very concerned and, I think, are going to lose confidence in the idea of the foundation as a fund-raising tool if the minister doesn't take some action there. They are concerned that the boards of governors of institutions are in effect raising tuition to students beyond that 10 percent by way of supplementary fees such as library and computer services fees. Other institutions are instituting lab fees and others. I'm wondering if the minister intends to allow these back-door tuition increases to go through, because I think if he does, students and perhaps other sectors of the community are going to have some concern about these foundations and their fund-raising appeal. I think the frustration that's being developed there to the point where students and perhaps others may be looking at litigation is a very sad comment on the system.

I think we need to ask if the minister is concerned that that kind of tense environment is going to make it very difficult and jeopardize the public goodwill that is necessary for foundations to do their job in raising funds. I think if he is concerned he could advise us. We would ask if he would advise us in the House how he intends to address that tension within the system, because while we agree that foundations are certainly doing some very good work, the tension that is existing, that is building now in the postsecondary education sector, I think is going to jeopardize those. I would appreciate his comments in that regard.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Bill is very plain, but I do question the minister on a couple of points. The first is: what happens to the assets, if any, of the current foundation? Or doesn't it have any? Is the minister sure that it doesn't have any assets? Because while the Bill makes provision for future assets or proposed assets, which will then go straight to the university, it says nothing about the existing assets, and I'm just curious about that.

The second thing I'm curious about, Mr. Speaker, is the question of what replaces it, if anything. Does the minister not think it good in principle to have a foundation? Is there a foundation so called, just a part of University of Alberta now -- I thought there was, I must say -- that in practice replaces this body corporate? And how is it staffed? Does the minister not think that it is good to have something called a foundation; that people are perhaps a little more apt to give money to universities if it goes to a foundation instead of just straight to the university, having the idea that perhaps some people with somewhat of an independent view might have a better idea of priorities for donations than the board of governors of the university itself, who may be beset with day-to-day problems in administration?

MR. SPEAKER: May the minister sum up?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Advanced Education.

MR. RUSSELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the opportunity to make some comments on voluntary contributions to our postsecondary education system, because if there's been a success story in Canada in the last year, it's our matching endowment and incentive fund. And I must say I sat speechless when the hon. Member for Edmonton Mill Woods used phrases like "jeopardize the ability to raise funds" during the course of his remarks. If ever a campaign or a government program has been successful, it is the one this government made reference to in the 1986 throne speech, which put the finishing touches and the second phase into a program that had been earlier announced in 1980.

So I'd like to take this opportunity to inform all members that the entire quota of matching funds for this fiscal year, 1987-88, has already been oversubscribed, and we're less than two weeks into the fiscal year. The entire amount has already been oversubscribed, and of course last year's entire vote was also oversubscribed. To me that's just an outstanding mark of achievement by voluntary fund-raisers in the university and colleges community.

The existing assets question raised by the hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona is a question that I can't answer. But I will undertake to get the answer by the time the Bill comes into committee. I believe that they're simply transferred, such as they are, to the university board of governors. The replacement is the university administration and the board of governors. With respect to the U of A specifically, that this Bill refers to, I think hon. members are perhaps aware that some time ago, several months ago, they hired a full-time manager of voluntary fund-raising. He's on their payroll, and I made reference to the outstanding success he is having. He's the former regional manager of the Hudson's Bay Co., Mr. Hal Spellicy. The other institutions are doing a similar kind of job. I'm so pleased with the way this is going, Mr. Speaker. In the last 10 days I'm personally aware of two half-million-dollar contributions to the

University of Calgary to fund two new chairs and will be having the \$1 million in matching endowment funds on the two-for-one basis put up through the General Revenue Fund of the province. So that is just an example of what's going on. The success is really very outstanding, and that's why I'm so puzzled by the picture of gloom and trepidation painted by the Member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

In any event, I would ask hon. members throughout the House to support this repeal Act.

[Motion carried; Bill 5 read a second time]

**Bill 9**  
**Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1987**

DR. CASSIN: Mr. Speaker, I move for second reading Bill 9, Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1987.

This Act has four main points. Amendments are being made to section 65 to require people to wear seat belts that are already installed in motor vehicles. The previous section 65 required that seat belts in vehicles should not be removed or made inoperable, and this requirement will be retained. Point two: the existing Child Transportation Safety Act will be repealed and the provisions of that Act will be incorporated in section 65. The third objective amends section 65 to make provisions for the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations exempting penalties on motor vehicles from the requirements of this section. And the fourth objective is that section 169 is being amended to remove the graduated penalties for speeding violations from the Act and provide authority for the passing of regulations to establish penalties for speeding violations. This will permit the penalties to be revised in the future without having to amend the Act.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that we've had a great deal of debate in the past on this particular Bill, and I also appreciate that there is a great deal of sensitivity and some perception out there that this interferes with individual rights. I do appreciate that a number of our members have championed the causes of their constituencies in past years and perhaps they would still like to represent those constituencies. I feel it is important that we have a hearing, but I would urge this government, as the government of the province of Alberta, to pass Bill 9 for second reading.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to raise a couple of points on Bill 9. I would like to commend the member who just spoke on his encouragement of this type of legislation both in the last session and in this session. It seems likely that it is a government Bill destined for the unanimous consent of the House.

As a member who did survey his constituents on the issue of legalizing or making mandatory the use of seat belts in Alberta, I did have a number of concerns raised with me by people, and I wonder what there may be in the Act that will take into consideration some of the concerns people have. I think in general most of the people who object to the passage of laws on seat belt use do so on the basis that it will restrict their freedoms, but it's based primarily on the feeling that they just don't want to wear

them, they don't like wearing them, and they find them to be an inconvenience. But I did run into a number of people, Mr. Speaker, who have had personal experiences with accidents, and they are left with the feeling that had they worn seat belts in those accidents, they would have suffered very serious and even life-threatening injuries. So the idea of their being forced to buckle up is not only abhorrent to them but kind of frightening. I'm just wondering -- asking for guidance from some learned members -- what sort of exemptions might be reasonable in cases like that.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Lacombe.

MR. R. MOORE: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I think this Bill that's before us today is a very sensitive Bill. There are a lot of varying views out in the public. I think it's a serious Bill when we bring forward legislation that legislates a person against himself. I can see legislation being brought into this House that legislates to protect the public or an individual against the action of an individual, but this Bill actually goes in an area that find personal responsibility, when you as a lawmaker decide that the government knows better than you yourself know. So it's a very, very serious move that we're considering here today and it shouldn't be taken lightly.

It also bothers me, Mr. Speaker, that we have so much concern about seat belts, and I'm just as concerned as anyone about that. I know that seat belts do save lives and they do save people from serious injury. But we should look not at the end result but at the cause, and I don't see anyone around here on all sides of this House standing up and looking at the root cause of our vehicle accidents in the majority of cases. I don't see anyone standing up here and saying, "We could save dollars in our hospital costs if we did away with the root cause." And the root cause, I will say to you, Mr. Speaker, is drugs and alcohol. I don't hear anyone jumping up in their place and saying, "Let's do something about that" and putting their enthusiasm behind education and bringing in tougher laws to curb drinking on our highways, which in the beginning was the cause of that accident we're talking about seat belts saving or not saving. So it bothers me that we sit here in Legislatures, very righteous in our places saying, "We're going to bring in this legislation and save a person against himself," when we don't look at what's causing all the accidents and all those deaths and that it's alcohol.

In this House we brought up one time since I've been here talk about more money for Check Stop. The question was that we didn't have enough money for Check Stop, but here we're going to have our police forces going out there instead of Check Stop. We're going to find the money, Mr. Speaker, to check to see if somebody has a seat belt around them. That is a very big concern to me. We haven't got our rationalization in the right place here somewhere. Something is wrong. I feel this is a very, very serious Bill before us today and should be given serious consideration of what we are doing.

I'm not minimizing what the hon. member that introduced this and the hon. member that followed him say, that it saves lives. I can say, and I've heard it said so many times, that if it saves one life it's worth it. But the other side of the coin: if it causes one death, is it worth it? Nobody ever says that. I've heard that so many times from the proponents: if it saves one life, it is worth it. But the other side is: if it causes one death, is it worth it? So I think everybody in this House had better think about that when they vote on this Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few very brief comments. I think the member is to be commended for bringing in this Bill, and the government, too, particularly knowing that many of them have their reservations. The jury is in, and there's no doubt that seat belts will save money and lives and help our health care situation in this province. A lot less people will be living with injuries sustained in car accidents if we have seat belts.

As to considering it a great violation of people's rights to make a decision, I don't really see it that way. It doesn't seem to me that it's very much different from asking somebody to wear a helmet on a bicycle. I know that it's not that onerous; it's just a part of the safety equipment. If you're going to ride a skateboard, you should put on knee pads and elbow pads and helmets and that sort of thing. It's part of that safety kind of thing that we do in so many other areas. Nobody is setting out to tell people that they've got to restrict their freedom for the greater good of other people; it's for their own benefit that they should suit up when they get into a car.

As to the feelings of claustrophobia that some people might have, or some truck drivers and bus drivers that have some real reservations about this, one of my constituents put forward an idea to me that may be of some help in terms of the kind of seat belts we have in cars. The small button that you have to push in order to release the seat belt is indeed sometimes hard to get your finger on at the right time when you want to get out in a hurry. Particularly if there were a lot of pressure on that seat belt, that might be a rather hard thing to do. It makes me wonder, Mr. Speaker, if as part of the program of requiring people to buckle up, we shouldn't seriously give some consideration to the kinds of seat belts people are buckling up. If you think about the seat belts that are in airplanes, they're much easier to release. They're just as strong and just as good and probably even a better mechanism than many of the ones in cars in terms of holding when required and when needed, but in terms of releasing to get out of them, it's a lot easier the way the mechanism is set up. So in terms of regulations that may follow from this Bill, the government should very seriously take a look at -- I know they don't have jurisdiction over the kinds of seat belts put in cars in the United States, in Japan, in eastern Canada, and so on, but there may very well be some representations that can be made to upgrade the level of seat belts and therefore make them a little safer even than the ones we have now.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In rising to support Bill 9, I'd also congratulate the hon. Member for Calgary North West, not only for framing the Bill and bringing it in but also for having the perseverance. Lesser men or representatives might have thrown in the towel by being talked out last year and jacked around in a number of different ways by government members, but he came back strong and survived and I want to congratulate him on it. It shows you there is still room for initiative on the back benches. I also want to compliment him for bringing the legislation into the Highway Traffic Act -- it is hard to get by those dinosaurs on the front bench -- for using the Highway Traffic Act, because that's where I tried to bring it in last year, amend the Highway Traffic Act. Mr. Speaker, I think you can remember the rhubarb at that time. I was ruled out of

order for trying to bring it into the Highway Traffic Act, so . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Chair hesitates to interrupt, but it's about to happen again unless the hon. member returns to the principle of Bill 9.

MR. TAYLOR: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I was just seeing if you were awake. Thank you. I did want to point out though that they had used the Liberal Party's method of inserting it into the laws of the country.

I want to also, Mr. Speaker, answer if I may a bit . . . Well, maybe even before I answer, I want to pay another compliment while I'm on my feet, also to compliment the Member for Red Deer South for introducing a motion on the Order Paper for impounding a car -- that taken hand in hand with the seat belts. Also, the Member for Lacombe mentioned drinking and drugs. I would point out that one of the few things I've consistently supported that the government has put forward in this House since I've been here are the efforts by the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane and also you, Mr. Speaker, even prior to that. I think our AADAC organization is a model for the rest of Canada. You've done an outstanding job on that, and indeed you are attacking those very worries the Member for Lacombe worries about.

Certainly there is no question it's not the nut on the car; it's the nut behind the wheel, as the hon. member, I'm sure, was inferring. But I think things have progressed since maybe he learned to drive. The old days of jumping out of the car when it got over 25 miles an hour and feeling saved are gone. The modern projectiles we have today need seat belts. They need the belts not only to keep you from bouncing around after you've had an accident; they need the belts to keep you behind the wheel. And I think if the hon. Member for Lacombe will, say, one day take his first plane ride, the first thing he'll be asked to do is buckle up his safety belt. Otherwise, they won't let him stay on. It's not that our cars are traveling as fast as airplanes, but I can assure him that the modern car today travels as fast as an airplane did when he was back in high school. Consequently, the projectile we drive in and in fact control is up to the speed where it needs safety belts.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I just want to take my hat off to the House, particularly to the government and to their back bench, and tell them this may be the only words of kindness they'll hear in the next sixty days. I approve of Bill 9.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Cardston.

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak for a few moments on Bill 9. I have some concerns about what we're doing with this Bill, and I'm sure by the time I get through with my concerns, the hon. leader of the Liberal Party will be putting his hat back on when he speaks about the back-benchers over here.

I have some concerns that we're really doing the right thing, and I'd like to speak for just a few minutes about the function of a seat belt. Now, we get tied into a vehicle with a seat belt because someone is telling us that that's going to be for our best good, and that someone in this case is going to be the government. Just what we need is the government to tell us more things to do.

Let's just talk for a few minutes about some of the predicaments people can get themselves in with a seat belt. First of all, seat belts are universal, and when a person gets in it makes no

allowance for whether you're short or whether you're tall. It does make a little allowance if you have a politician's paunch, but other than that, not too much. Now, let's extrapolate that for just a moment and see what happens with a short person. The belt can come up across the person's neck. We all know what happens in a collision if there is something that's going to stop the neck and not stop the head and body. It could be very serious. In fact, there are some people in this Assembly who, I think, should be very concerned, because I could see the belt even obstructing their vision it would come so high on them. I wouldn't want to mention any names, but there are people who should be concerned about that, and I'll be surprised if they can support that Bill.

MS BARRETT: I sit on a booster seat.

MR. ADY: Oh, there you are.

I have some concerns about the function of seat belts in another area, and that has to do with the release mechanism, Mr. Speaker. I've had constituents call me and tell me that they actually were in situations where, in an accident or otherwise, when they exerted a great deal of pressure against the seat belt in a car, it was impossible to be released. The release mechanism would not work. Now, let's put those same people into a situation where the automobile is on fire or in water or what have you. What do we have? We have a tragedy on our hands just because we as a government decided that one day we should legislate everyone into a seat belt because we're going to take care of them. But what about those people who can get locked into those kinds of circumstances? We certainly have to agree that that circumstance could happen in an accident.

We're also going to tie in the driver of the tank truck, the guy who drives our gasoline around this province. The first thing that tank truck driver wants to do if his truck upsets or is in an accident is get away from that truck. And frankly, I don't blame him. But if the mechanism doesn't work or he can't reach the button, the story is over. But we've done a good job because we've legislated him in there.

Let's talk about the transit driver, the man who is hired by the city to drive the bus around the city and pick up all kinds of people. Now, a lot of the people that ride our transit in the city are older people, handicapped people, people who don't want the hassle of a vehicle. Oftentimes that transit driver is asked or expected to lend a hand to help the poor lady off with all her packages, to help the handicapped person in and out of their seat, to go outside and check his bus, check the tires, check whatever goes on outside of a bus. Fifty times in and out of his seat during a day and we're going to strap him in so that he has to stop, do it up, undo it, and go through all that routine. Now, they've asked for an exemption, but we haven't seen fit to grant that, Mr. Speaker. So all of a sudden, what happens? The transit driver gets in, does up his buckle at the beginning of his eight-hour shift and leaves it done up, and all those people that have expected some help from him are no longer going to get it.

Well, there are those who didn't check with the government prior to planning their families. Now they've gone and had in excess of four children. What in the world are we going to do? They should have checked with us on that, but they failed to do it. Now they've got six-belt cars at the most, maybe just five if they've got bucket seats; so you end up with three in the back, two in the front. What do they do? Make two trips? Maybe leave the baby at home and then the hon. members over here could be excited about the abused children. But in talking to the

minister, I hear that if there are not enough belts in the car, then you don't have to buckle everyone up. So if you've got eight children and mother and father, that's 10 in the car. You've got five belts. Five are ranging at large in the car and five are locked in. Somebody's got a handicap in that car; the ones that are locked in, because the five that are on the loose will get the upper hand and probably cause an accident.

Enough on the function of seat belts. I had some more, but I better not go on on those any longer. I would like to say, though, and go on public record, that I conducted a survey in my constituency, and the majority of the constituents -- the strong majority -- said, "Don't legislate us. Do anything you want, but just stay out of our lives. We don't need you telling us to buckle up." I'm sure that other MLAs got the same response. Maybe we'll hear from them later on this afternoon. But most of them said, "We have some individual rights, and we don't need you to tell us whether we have to do our seat belt up or whether we don't."

Well, it's a very difficult question as to whether we should enforce this or whether we shouldn't. But the problem is not the seat belt issue as much as it is the accidents and what causes them. Now, certainly mandatory seat belt legislation is nothing more than a first-aid, band-aid approach to a very serious social problem on our streets and in our cities. But the root problem is the driver's attitude. The vast majority of the accidents that we have could be eliminated and avoided if our drivers just had a different attitude about what they have a right to do when they get behind the wheel. Mandatory seat belts won't cure a bad attitude on the part of a driver. In my opinion, what will start turning around driver attitude in this province, in addition to more and better driver education, is significantly stiffer penalties for driving offences whatever they might be. Whether they're speeding, reckless driving, careless driving, drunken driving, impaired driving: all of those things are a factor. But we're really not addressing those, not very much. They continue to go on on our highways.

Perhaps we could come up with something that would do away with the public apathy about safe driving. Well, I have some views as it pertains to invasion of our ever-shrinking civil liberties, and this is unjustified because it is clearly distinctive from speed limit laws and other road laws where nonobservance affects the safety of innocent third parties. That is not principally the case with seat belt use. There is not unanimity of view about the value of seat belts in all cases. We've all got our opinions, and I'm not sure that we all just know what we're talking about there. I find it unacceptable to pass a Bill such as this one, which under certain circumstances might cause someone to lose their life rather than save it. Then who's responsible? The choice is gone. So I think we can leave it to this Assembly to decide who's responsible.

Then let's go on a little bit further. If we're going to legislate things such as seat belts, how successful are we going to be in enforcing it? Statistics tells us that in provinces where it's legislated, the use factor ranges somewhere between 60 and 65 percent, not very high. So we're going to teach a whole generation how to flout the laws, because experience tells us that's as high as it goes. Maybe in the first week after July 1 we'll get 70 or 75 percent, but following that, it will drop off and people won't wear them.

If we're going to legislate that, why don't we go all the way? After all, this is a personal thing we're legislating: our own personal safety. I think we should be concerned about legislating what we have for breakfast. After all, it's our personal health,



and if we're not getting a good diet, maybe we should be involved to that extent as well. There are a lot of other bad habits out there. The Surgeon General prints some of them on the cigarette packages, but we're not prepared to legislate that out of existence, although our Provincial Treasurer helped a little just recently, and I understand that the sales are slipping a little.

MR. ORMAN: Introduce a Bill.

MR. ADY: Next session.

We talk about some of the things that we're going to cure with seat belts. Well, here we come with a regulation. But I notice that when we talk about cures for things, we don't ever hear very much from the opposition parties. Last week we had a private member's motion on liberalizing the liquor laws in this province and the accessibility to it. I hassled the opposition members to get in on that debate but couldn't hear one of them because there was no regulation there. I wanted them to get in and say, "How about these concerns that you've had about child abuse and wife beatings and so on; why don't you address the fact that 50 percent of the cause of all those things is caused by alcohol?" Couldn't get them off their hands; didn't want to talk about it.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I won't go on any longer about this thing other than to say that I have some very serious concerns about what we're doing with Bill 9. Thank you.

[Two members rose]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities.

MS BARRETT: Just because you're taller.

MR. ADAIR: Quite a bit taller, as a matter of fact, and wider and heavier.

Mr. Speaker, I thought possibly this was an opportunity for me as the minister of transportation to get in and, most appropriate after the last speaker, to set aside some of the concerns that are in there. I believe that before I do that, I should once again let everybody know where I come from. I wear seat belts. I'm 100 percent for them. And my constituency is not necessarily in favour in legislation, nor was I. The key word is "was." As minister responsible for transportation, when the decision comes down that there is clearly a majority who are in favour of seat belt legislation, then I have a responsibility to the citizens of this province to ensure that that is carried out.

There were concerns raised about the exemptions, and we're working on those exemptions right now. We're reviewing all of the provinces that presently have legislation in place, and we're reviewing the 22 states in the United States that have legislation in place. Just recently two of the states in the United States repealed their legislation for reasons not totally known at this particular point in time.

But in the area of exemptions, the ones we are looking at that appear to be the most consistent in all of the provinces and most of the states are pick-up and delivery operations where speeds are of either 40 or 50 kilometres or less. As a matter of fact, in some provinces they clearly state that the postal service should be exempt, and I can see why. It's probably the slowest service in the nation. Persons riding in a parade would be exempt, and that is mostly because of the speed of the vehicle in a parade and the fact that, particularly in the case of some members, they

couldn't be seen if they were sitting in the seat, I say that with a bit of facetiousness but in the sense that people who in parades would be sitting in the back of a car would not be subject to the belt situation in a slow-moving parade.

Probably one of the most important ones that we're looking at is what's called the medical/physical condition exemption, and that covers people who with a certificate from a qualified medical practitioner could in fact then have that certificate submitted for exemption and would probably see the exemption take place. This covers people, for example, who may be claustrophobic, people who may have physical injuries or handicaps in the sense that the belt would cause some major discomfort. But the certificate would have to come from a medical practitioner, and that is generally the case in the provinces that in fact do have that in Canada and the states in the United States.

One of the ones that's being considered for exemption is driving a vehicle backwards; in other words, backing out of your driveway. Now, I drive out of my driveway with my seat belt on because with the new seat belts they've got, you have the flexibility of setting it and then loosening it off and allowing it to be there for you.

The question came up from the hon. Member for Cardston about the number of people in vehicles, relative to the number of seat belts in a vehicle, and as I understand it, 98.7 percent of the vehicles on the market today and being driven today have seat belts in them. Generally, they have three in the front seat and two in the back seat, and if there happen to be six, the choice then is which person might not have to wear it in a vehicle with six, I think the number that was mentioned by the hon. Member for Cardston was 10, I would assume that at that point the driver would consider it somewhat hazardous to be on the road with 10 in a car and consideration may be given to whether they have a van or something along that line. But when you're talking the one or the two extra seats, that possibility exists that they then could be handled by the people within the vehicle. In other words, if there are five, five would be buckled up and there would be one that would not be, and that one would not be, as we understand it, charged for not wearing a seat belt. Now, we have had some calls from people who have suggested to us that they may want to put the other seat belt in, and we have indicated that is a possibility and that first they should check with the manufacturer or the dealer from which they got the car whether that possibility does exist.

The others are people like driver training and driver examiners with the exemption. There is a possibility, and in some cases there's a unique situation in most of the provinces in Canada where in taxicabs the driver is compelled to wear the seat belt when he has no one in the vehicle but not when he has passengers. The reason for that, as I understand it, is primarily to do with safety, the ability of someone sitting in the back to pull that strap around the driver's neck and then hold "that person to ransom," for whatever the purpose may be. It's a safety feature from the standpoint of the taxi drivers. We're looking at that.

Bus drivers. Generally, the provinces in Canada where belts are installed in the bus require the bus drivers to wear them. Now, there has been a change, I believe, in one and possibly two provinces, and we're checking that out. Where that exemption does exist, we're checking to see just exactly what the cause for the exemption is, but it's our feeling that if the belts are installed at manufacturer, they should be used.

I had a call from a fellow driving a 14-wheeler, and I've got

to express this in the sense of the way he called. He was really upset about the fact that he had just read in the paper that they were going to enforce seat belt legislation in Alberta and that he would have to install seat belts in his truck. He managed to get through to me on the first try and was somewhat concerned about that, that he was able to get through on the first try. But I read to him the fact that it says in the Act: operate a motor vehicle equipped with a seat belt assembly at the time of manufacture. In other words, we weren't going to force him or her to put seat belts in their vehicle. He said, "You saved the life of a civil servant, because I was going to run over the first government truck I saw." Facetiously, but he was upset enough to say something along that line but didn't really realize what we were intending to do. So we were attempting to clarify for him what was there.

We hope to have ready by the time we get to committee stage a draft of the proposed regulations and exemptions so that we can get into that discussion as well, because it is important for us to make sure that we have the best exemption list possible in light of where we're going with the legislation.

There are other arguments that can be made relative to whether you should be wearing them in a vehicle that may be burning. Transportation has made a list of arguments, the argument and the fact. If I wear a seat belt, I might be trapped in a burning or submerged vehicle: the percentage of that type of collision is less than one-half of 1 percent, primarily because of the calibre of the drivers in those particular vehicles and the kind of work they do when they're traveling across this nation and in this province. There are things like: I could be trapped upside down. I don't think there's any argument that can be made by anybody that won't have one side of the argument valid, that there could be times when the belt may be a problem for you. I think, from the standpoint of having worn seat belts since 1973 personally, that the degree of injury and the odds of major accident are much more on my side than they are on the other side, as a wearer of seat belts.

I don't like it anymore than anybody else that we're here today with Bill 9, and that I as minister, working with the hon. Member for Calgary North West, am presenting a Bill which in essence does have some infringements on our rights. But for some reason there are those of us out there that say, "Well, I'm a law-abiding citizen; you make it a law and I'll buckle up." I have a little difficulty with that personally, but having said that, we are presenting Bill 9, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act, for your approval this afternoon.

I wanted to more or less get a few remarks in, Mr. Speaker, relative to the exemption clauses that we are considering at this particular point in time. We will be bringing forth that group as a document at the time we go to the committee stage.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. It's about time, she says.

I also want to add my voice in support of Bill 9. although I do recognize the legitimacy of the concerns expressed by many members, especially members who represent rural ridings. I do understand that there is a different public attitude in rural Alberta than there is in urban centres. That could be because we are exposed to a different type of conditioning factor.

When it comes to the comments of one member, however, about the root cause of accidents being drugs and alcohol, I think that's just a little bit off target. I think that what we have

to do is engage in a massive education campaign about driver training and how important it is to be very careful at all times. Certainly, drug and alcohol abuse are major factors in contributing to the high incidence of vehicle accidents that we do have in the province, but I think the member is a little bit off target when he deflects the issue of seat belt usage onto the issue of drug and alcohol abuse and impairment while driving. If you really want to deal with that, Mr. Speaker, you do like what Germany has done and what other advanced industrial nations have done, and you don't permit any blood alcohol whatsoever as a legal limitation. Now, if the member is so serious about his concern and his belief that the root cause of all accidents is drugs and alcohol, then maybe he'd want to sponsor a private member's Bill that calls for legislation such as that which obtains in West Germany. I'm not sure that Albertans would like that any more than they like seat belt legislation. In fact, it occurs to me that they might like it a lot less, although I personally might even consider supporting that because I think that we are a society out of control when it comes to the way we treat vehicles and the relative worth of other peoples lives, let alone our own.

Another person talked about how it is that there is no money for special or prolonged Check Stop programs, but we've got money somehow to check and make sure that people are using their seat belts.

Well, it seems to me that there is another mechanism that we can support which would actually eliminate the need for seat belts altogether, except consumers themselves have proven that they're not very interested in that, and that is pursuing the automatic inclusion of air bags in all vehicles at the manufacturing level. I think it's been demonstrated sufficiently at any rate, although I wouldn't argue amply, that with or without seat belts, air bags have been shown to be more effective in saving lives and reducing the severity of injury under impact than seat belts alone have. I understand that one automobile manufacturer does offer the option of air bags, but the problem of course is that it's expensive, and consumers don't want to spend the extra money. So until, probably, as a country and probably on the heels of another country -- that is, the primary manufacturer of automobiles, the United States -- determined that air bags shall be essential components of vehicles, I think we're basically stuck with seat belts as the next-best alternative, although I would certainly prefer to see air bags in all vehicles.

Another member mentioned that the upper belt of the more contemporary seat belt components can get in the way of short people. That is certainly true. As one of those people I can attest to that fact. But I'll tell you what: I feel a little bit safer with that seat belt tucked over my shoulder, even though it does come too close to my neck for my comfort, than I felt with the single lap seat belts that I used to have in my older cars, I'd rather wear it the way it is, and I for one won't be running to a physician to look to qualify for the exemptions that were speculated upon or enunciated by the transportation minister.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important to have a look at driver training. This province embarked upon an experimental program in which private driver-training companies could also test the people they were training over the course of weeks or months, as opposed to having those student drivers go to basically a government-operated department for the testing. I have always maintained that the private training companies in fact are engaged in something of a conflict of interest by testing the very people that they have been training. It's a little too difficult for them to not feel a contractual obligation with the stu-

dent driver, inasmuch as the trainer may feel that he or she has done an adequate job and will subsequently agree to issuing a licence to that person. Because after all, the student paid for it, didn't he or she?

So I think that what we should be looking at aside from this Bill is removal of the private testing of student drivers. I think we should put that right back into the minister's department. I think the experiment has not worked very well, and we can do other things to ensure that driver safety is a high priority in the minds of all drivers. I cannot believe that alcohol or drugs cause all accidents. I think that's nonsense, just as it is to say that alcohol causes all child abuse or wife battering. I think that's non sequitur logic. I've never heard of any stats to prove that.

Thank you. [Two members rose]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair would observe that the Member for Cypress-Redcliff sort of was up ahead by a whisker. The Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to participate for a few moments in debate on Bill 9, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1987.

Mr. Speaker, many of the other members have said and made much of the same comment that I'm hearing in my constituency regarding that Bill and the use of seat belts. And I should say, as one that's worn seat belts for a number of years and believes very strongly in the use of seat belts, I too have a concern about making them mandatory. We hear all sorts of figures, but let's assume there's 60 percent or 65 percent of the population of Alberta in favour of seat belts, but yet we've got something like -- what? -- 28 percent or thereabouts wearing them; maybe not quite that high. If you're in favour of it, why aren't you wearing it? Why do you need the law to say that you have to wear it, and then you'll put it on?

Mr. Speaker, I'll bet you a dollar that the usage will increase some, but I bet you it won't get anywhere near those rates of those people who say they're in favour of seat belts. Because if they were in favour and they did use seat belts and practised what they preached, we wouldn't be standing here today debating Bill 9. If they all believed in the use of seat belts and used them as I do and many other members of the Assembly do, we'd have the highest usage of seat belts in Canada, and we wouldn't have needed the law to do it.

Coming from a rural area, naturally there is concern about the mandatory use of seat belts. Part of it stems from: will grain trucks coming to and from the field be in the same category as those in pick up and delivery in the city? Are they going to have to put the belt on and off? You get a grain truck loaded and start coming through the field, the field is not always necessarily smooth, and you're not always necessarily going slow because it can be soft and you want to get all the way through; it's rough. They're asking the same questions related to pickups and going to and from the field -- maybe down the road a ways and then into the field with a truck, and two or three in the cab often. And sometimes, naturally, a farmer doesn't always like to take his newest truck out into the field to haul fuel, so some of the ones that are used in the field aren't equipped with the same seat belt as we have in the vehicles today.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would wonder, and I express concern at this Bill. I agree with what the Bill is trying to achieve, but I wonder if this is the way to achieve it and if there wouldn't be better ways. Because if there's that many people supposedly in

favour of seat belts, why do we need to make it mandatory? I would wonder what percentage -- and maybe this is hypothetical -- one can expect to achieve with mandatory seat belts and what percentage the department expects to maintain once that initial usage of seat belts is over. Undoubtedly as time goes on people get used to wearing them and the objection to it may wear off, but initially there is going to be an objection there, at least in the area that I represent, and maybe many others, to the usage of them. It will take time.

If we cannot now just assume that people are going to automatically wear seat belts, I think we also need to continue the system that the department has done in trying to teach people why seat belts are good and why they in most cases do save lives or save one from being injured seriously. Naturally you could argue you could get hurt wearing a seat belt, and there's no doubt that in some accidents you do, some accidents you don't. I take for granted that those figures that they used -- the majority of cases it works.

I would ask all members to seriously consider their position when they vote on this Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Calgary McCall.

MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought I'd like to rise and make a couple of comments relative to this piece of legislation that's before us here.

Mr. Speaker, I should qualify that I have in the past both been a driver of a transit vehicle and also on racetracks. Quite frankly, when I hear some of the comments being made, I find that they're not being quantified, as possibly maybe they should, by people with experience in the business.

First of all, the issue of transit drivers wearing a seat belt. I guess you can relate back to a recent occasion here in Edmonton where a transit driver was hit by a vehicle and he was thrown out of his bus and run over by the wheels of that vehicle. Of course, if he had worn a seat belt, he probably would be alive today. However, the difficulty I have is that that's a very rare happening, and because of the position of a transit operator in his seat, being strapped in may not be the most happy occasion for most of them.

In any event, the circumstance as far as transit operators getting on and off their vehicle to help people: that day really hasn't been here for many years, and in fact it's a very rare occasion that a transit operator really has to do that.

I reflect on people getting into an airplane. If you wish to fly on that airplane, you strap in; otherwise, you'll either not fly or the plane will just not leave the ground. They will not tolerate people not being belted in. [interjection] And for other reasons, and I'm sure most of us appreciate that.

The same thing if you're driving on a racetrack. You're not just belted in with a lap belt and a little strap across your chest; you're harnessed in. And the reason for that is safety. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I would rather drive on a racetrack at 150 miles an hour than I would on the highway at 60 in many cases, because at least I'm pretty well assured of what the guy in front of me and behind me is going to do on the racetrack. Out on the highway I question whether that would be the case.

I guess the question here is: why is it necessary to examine why we should legislate belting up? And I guess the difficulty I have with it personally -- I should indicate, Mr. Speaker, my position personally and those of my constituents differ. My constituents, by telephone survey of some 900 people, using a scientific poll, indicated their support for seat belt legislation, if

they had the opportunity to vote for it, by some 62 percent. I also sent out the same survey some time afterwards in written form, and the responses I got offered me a 64-point-something percentage of the people indicated that they felt seat belt legislation was appropriate. My own personal feelings being diametrically opposite -- I think we have enough government interference in my life and others' as it is now. However, I have to consider the position of my constituents.

I think this is a cop-out, in offering seat belt legislation. Why do we have to deal with this? There are a number of reasons. First of all, it's the attitude of drivers. We drive in this country very aggressively; people don't understand defensive driving. The giving of a driver's licence seems to be taken as a right rather than as a privilege. Many people are offered driver's licences, and quite frankly, I often wonder if they're able to really understand what they are being given. Some concern themselves with the speeds on the highways. Well, speed is not necessarily the biggest killer on our roads or the biggest area of injury; however, it does effectively have one of the problems that we're dealing with.

The biggest problem we have, Mr. Speaker, is our inability to educate people, is our inability of, maybe, government departments getting together and dealing with the issue, for example, of traffic fines. The city of Calgary took a position a number of years ago, through recommendations of the Police Commission, to increase fines to such a circumstance that people might consider twice about speeding or running a red light. Running a red light kills a lot of people. So I often wonder: because we don't want to deal with the cure, we just add another regulation in there to try and make people think about something different.

Let's examine some of these things. Let's go after some of these drunk drivers a little more aggressively. Let's consider raising fines on the highway for people who are blatantly out to lunch when they're driving, especially on those moving offences.

The other question I would like to ask is considering a study done by the U.S. National Research Council about the lap belts in the rear seats of cars and the injuries they may cause during accidents. I think that has to be examined a little further. The size of the people within the car has to be examined.

The other thing I'd like to examine is: where is the onus insofar as if I'm stopped in my vehicle and I'm belted up and my passenger isn't? Who has the onus? Is it on the driver or the passenger? I think those areas have to be examined, and quite frankly, I think it has to be on the passenger.

I often used to think that people who suggested that wearing seat belts be mandatory were those people who in fact were already belted in. That is not the case; it is a fallacy that has been put out there. However, I think the general attitude of people -- at least in the urban centres, by just about a two-thirds majority -- support the advent of seat belt legislation. I know there is a concern in the rural communities; I know they don't want it; it's diametrically opposite. However, in representing my constituents, I have to put that view forward.

Just in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I think the government needs to examine drivers' attitudes and look at those areas I've identified of fines, drunk driving, regulations, giving of driver's licences, and what have you. I think then we will see an improvement in our highway driving attitudes, and maybe a lot less costly to both the people who are injured in accidents, a lot less costly insofar as insurance costs are concerned, which we are all concerned about both from the medical point of view and

also the point of view of our vehicle insurance. So I would rather see the government take that position of looking at those areas rather than having to tell us to lap up. I know it's a fait accompli; we're going to be given seat belt legislation in this session. However, I think those views should also be examined and maybe, just maybe, we might save a few lives rather than telling people that they have to belt up.

Thank you.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to support Bill 9 and compliment the member for agreeing to sponsor this Bill. He and the minister of transportation are working very hard to ensure that not only the Bill but the regulations that will follow will be appropriate for Albertans. I just had to join the debate in second reading because I am concerned and would like to remind us all that we are now the last province in Canada to enact this legislation; even Prince Edward Island finally proclaimed the legislation that it had on its books for some time. I'm very sorry that we're the last, and I remind all of us that every year, needless deaths and countless tragic circumstances in our family lives and in industry and in our society in general -- because we have not passed this legislation until 1987.

Mr. Speaker, there is concern about the lap belt in the rear seat, and I think it should be -- perhaps the minister might address this; my understanding of the particular study is that it dealt with about 25 to 26 front-end collisions only and that the study proponents note that very carefully and that it is not a conclusive study for sideways or rear-end collisions and that a great deal of work needs to be done in that area. But certainly the authors, whom I watched on television recently, point out that if you wear the lap belt correctly in the rear seat, the chances of serious injury are reduced tremendously and the chances for a fatal injury are nearly negligible. So it's the wearing of the belt that must be done properly.

With respect to the Member for Edmonton Highlands who mentioned the concern about air bags and supported the idea of air bags, again, I think the minister and the sponsor might comment in committee stage on air bags. The air bag by itself is not sufficient, because a fraction of second after it is inflated it then deflates, and of course if the driver and the vehicle are still careening about, then there is no hope for that driver to maintain control of the vehicle without the adequate protection offered by a seat belt.

Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on school buses, and I hope that the sponsor will identify some concerns with respect to school buses. But I do share with the Assembly this: that although school buses and children and their use of seat belts has been discussed by probably every member with their constituents, the real concern about school buses is not whether or not there should be seat belts but whether or not we have adequate driver selection and training, which I believe we do, whether or not the school bus itself is designed appropriately, including escape exits in the roof, and all of the other features that make school bus driving, whether one is a driver or a passenger, very safe.

I believe there have been 90 crashes of school buses from 1978 to about 1985 in North America -- 90 crashes. Only eight passengers were injured, with the most serious being a broken foot bone and a mild concussion. But in those same 90 crashes there were four bus drivers injured. And I certainly concur with the Member for Calgary McCall when he brought to the recollection of our Assembly today the tragic circumstances involving the Edmonton bus driver. I can't believe that the bus

drivers' union has requested that they not be obliged to wear seat belts, with a tragedy like that. But with regard to seat belts in school buses, obviously the interior of school buses is a relatively friendly place.

There is one sad case on record, to the sponsor of the Bill, and that involved a busload of disabled passengers -- I believe it happened in Quebec -- all of whom were strapped in their chairs in the transportation vehicle. Those 18 passengers drowned because they were strapped in. Those who were not were able to scramble out, and the accident was so severe they did not have the time to save those persons. That's a very sad but very, very rare situation in North America.

Mr. Speaker, I want to mention to the Assembly my concern on Bill 9. Perhaps the sponsor in committee stage might spend a minute explaining why section 169 is amended such that, as I read it, speed limits or their penalties or both will now be determined by the Lieutenant Governor in Council rather than in accordance with legislation that is presented to the Assembly and approved by the Assembly. I think there should be some clarification as to why that's being done, perhaps at another stage as this Bill progresses.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to mention the Alberta Motor Association -- not necessarily to single it out, because there are about 30 or 40 or 50 or more organizations in this province that support this legislation, including most if not all of the health care practitioner areas and a number of other ones. But with George MacDonald, the executive of the Alberta Motor Association, and Michael Bradshaw, some 12,000 names on a petition for this legislation were collated across this province within a two-week period. Now, this occurred before the Speech from the Throne indicated the government's intention to introduce this legislation, and I compliment the Alberta Motor Association and the many organizations that have presented their support for this.

Yes, there are concerns, Mr. Speaker, about drinking and driving. That is an area that needs to be addressed by all of us. And it will be addressed in the next while in the work of the Impaired Driving Countermeasures Co-ordinating Committee, which combines the efforts of three departments -- Transportation and Utilities and the Solicitor General and the Attorney General -- the work of the organization called PAID, People Against Impaired Drivers; two citizen members; and of course is chaired by a staff member from the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission.

I think we have concerns in this province about people who are not belted in because we have mountainous terrain as well as sometimes boring prairies, and people fall asleep. We have winter driving, much more than some other parts of the country, or certainly our neighbours to the south. As I mentioned in the debates before on this matter, Mr. Speaker, to the member, one of 20 drivers in this province on a Friday night or Saturday night is legally impaired. That's the sad record of Albertans' love for alcohol and their love for the automobile. They still get the two of them and put them together. And so I think by requiring this legislation, it will give us all a better chance for survival with that kind of irresponsible driver on the road.

Mr. Speaker, people of the province of Alberta are law-abiding citizens, and they will obey laws that are passed and presented in such reasonable fashion. It will soon become second nature. For those persons who are uncomfortable wearing belts, the law will require them to do so, they will do so, and it will soon become second nature when they get into their vehicles. I think most importantly we must not overlook peer

pressure, the fact that young people will see their drivers wearing their belts and they will put them on, just as you or I might do, or might not do if the driver is not belted in.

So, Mr. Speaker, I compliment the member and, of course, the former Member for Stony Plain who worked so hard before him -- and others in the Assembly -- to develop this approach for legislation.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Wainwright.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few reservations about this Bill as well, and I would like to compliment the member for bringing it forward. Certainly it's been a very sensitive, serious issue for a number of years. We mentioned that we were the last province in Canada that is putting this legislation in. We somehow or other are the last province in Canada to still leave some freedoms with our people here, and this is very important to me and my constituency.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

I would like to just speak for a second on our freedoms. We do know that seat belts save lives; the percentages show us that. But also we know that there are a lot of accidents where people die because they are strapped in. And when this happens, and we have put in seat belt legislation, that means that we have nearly sentenced those people to death by our regulation. I remember quite well a number of members speaking against our capital punishment Bill, and no one wanted to sentence anyone to death, regardless. I see us in this House interfering with someone else's life.

I'm not sure yet why we think that we know better what to do about someone else's life than the person themselves. I look at the members around here, and I think of myself in a car and in an accident. I'm not sure that I want our members saying that I should be strapped in there. Lots of times the doors pop open and you get thrown free. I know there have been a number of cases that have been mentioned -- or instances -- today, and certainly there are. The percentage isn't as high, but shouldn't the individual himself have the right to make up his own mind?

It frightens me just a little bit, the precedent that we are setting here with that legislation, because when we talk about what's harmful to people, we have a number of folks around here that smoke. We have a lot of smoking and cancer-related problems, and possibly we should do something about that. We also have talked quite a little bit this afternoon about drinking, and drinking isn't very good for you either, even though some of us do drink. It is not healthy for you, and should we be legislating that?

Certainly when we get into the accident business and so on, it's very serious. And then, when you think of it, it was mentioned earlier about foods. There are some foods that aren't healthy for you. I can honestly say when I come out of the country and into the city that I notice an awful lot of greasy foods that I don't particularly care -- it starts to all taste a lot the same, and I think it isn't very healthy. Now, should I legislate to the rest of the people around me, for the rest of the people in Alberta, that they can't eat certain kinds of foods?

Let's go into sports, for instance. I think Ken Kowalski can tell you that hockey is fairly dangerous; it's hard on your knees. And if you get into skiing, there's an awful lot of people that get trouble with skiing. Just with our recent outbreak in AIDS, sex is very harmful as well. Now, do you think that government

should get in to start legislating this?

Anyway, what I wanted to get at -- and I'd like to just relate this little bit of a story. This older fellow went to the doctor and said, "If I quit drinking and smoking and chasing around with the women, will I live to be 100?" And the doctor said, "No, but it'll seem like it."

I think that when we start talking about what we're going to legislate in here, we have to be very, very careful about interfering with people's lives. I'd like us all to think very carefully about that in this Bill.

Thank you.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I want to just very briefly this afternoon get into the debate, because it seems to me that it's always very difficult to legislate something that we should all be doing because it's common sense to do it. But unfortunately I've had people say that until you pass a law, I won't put it on. Now, that is really convoluted thinking, if I ever heard any.

But, in reply to the hon. Member for Wainwright, we pass laws every day that infringe upon someone's rights, or so-called rights. We pass a law that says you cannot go over 100 kilometres per hour. Now, some people like it, some people know it's necessary, and other people think it's infringing upon their rights. We pass laws saying that you must wear helmets when you're driving motorcycles. Some people think it tends to save their lives; other people think it infringes upon their freedoms.

I think that on this Bill we can all cite experiences where if he'd had a seat belt on, he would have lived; if he'd had a seat belt on, he would have died. So if you were going to use that reasoning, I would vote against the Bill, because my fiancée at that time would have been killed had she had a seat belt on. But that still doesn't change my thinking about the fact that they do save lives and I as a taxpayer am contributing to those people who are hurt in motor vehicle accidents, because we have to pay for the long-term care. We know that in most cases if you stay in the vehicle, you've got a better chance to survive.

A fatal accident just outside my town, the city of Fort Saskatchewan: a three-vehicle accident. This little Camaro; the right-hand side was completely obliterated -- completely -- but the driver compartment was intact. The first question I asked the officer, "Did she have a belt on?" He said, "No." And before I could even ask the second question, "Do you think she would have survived?" he said, "That woman would have survived if she had had her belt on," because the passenger compartment was intact.

We know there are instances where vehicles roll into bodies of water, and they say you can't get out. Well, who knows if it was the belt that kept them from getting out or they were uncon-

scious before they got into the water?

So on an issue such as this, I think this is one situation where Alberta has been a follower, not a leader. And I appreciate the fact that there are rural constituencies in this province where many of those people are going to be very, very unhappy about the legislation. My own father -- God rest his soul; he's now departed -- spent half a day one afternoon on his new car learning how to make that cotton-picking buzzer stop so he wouldn't have to snap on the belt. You know, that makes a lot of sense, doesn't it? You know, spend half a day to figure out how to make that thing stop beeping. I said: "Dad, why didn't you just put the stupid thing on? It's there to save your life." "Well," he says, "I drove a truck all those years and I never got close to getting killed once." I said, "Yeah, but maybe once is once too many."

The belt is there to help save your life. Why do the race car drivers wear belts? Why does anybody object, hon. Member for Wainwright? And I know you're doing that because the folks back home are going to be on your case if you do vote for it. But we've got enough members that are going to vote for it, so you can vote against it. So you'll still be all right. Because I think there are enough enlightened people in this Assembly that we're going to pass it. Does anybody object when they tell you, "Snap on your belt buckle," when you're in an airplane? No.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope maybe we can get a vote. I would like to say I think that this is an instance where we have a free vote in this Assembly, I think the people of Alberta feel it's our responsibility to vote the legislation in, and I stand in my place and say I support the legislation.

Thank you.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, in light of the hour I request leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion, those in favour please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, as the Assembly will be in Committee of Supply this evening at 8, I move the Assembly now adjourn until the Committee of Supply rises and reports.

[The House recessed at 5:27 p.m.]