

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

Title: **Tuesday, April 14, 1987 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 87/04/14

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

**PRAYERS**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

In our mind's eye let us see the awesome grandeur of the Rockies, the denseness of our forests, the fertility of our farmland, the splendour of our rivers, the richness of our resources.

Then, O Lord, let us rededicate ourselves as wise stewards of such bounty on behalf of all Albertans.

Amen.

**head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 212  
Retail Business Holidays Act**

MR. PIQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present today for first reading Bill 212, the Retail Business Holidays Act.

Modeled closely on the intra vires legislation in Ontario, the Bill would ensure that a retail business establishment with a floor display of greater than 220 square metres close on statutory holidays and at least one day every weekend, which day would be at the owner's or operator's discretion.

[Leave granted; Bill 212 read a first time]

**head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 15th anniversary of the formation of the Alberta Grain Commission, a commission which I had the pleasure of serving during its initial four years. Members of the original commission are in Edmonton today to mark that occasion. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I'd like to introduce them and have you hold your applause until they are all standing. They are: Mr. Art Rendfleisch, Mr. Gunar Lundquist, Mr. Con Yurkow, Mr. Joe Ference, Mr. Jack Gorr, Mr. Dave Bernsten, Mr. Dave Jantzie, Mr. John Channon, the chairman, and Mrs. Donna Wadley, the secretary of the commission. Would you kindly give them your applause.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly this afternoon, 20 students in the grade 6 class at Meyokumin school in the constituency of Edmonton Mill Woods. They are accompanied this afternoon by two teachers, Mr. Vlad Eshenko and Mrs. Sylviane Benoit-Servant, and I would ask if they would please rise in the public gallery and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. YOUNIE: Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in introducing to you and to members of the Assembly, 20 grade 6 students from

Lauderdale elementary school. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Ronda Safont, and their bus driver, Mr. Herman Hamilton. I had the pleasure of meeting them and talking with them earlier today, and I would like them to rise now and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. DROBOT: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and members of the Assembly, 18 grade 10 students from Mallaig school in the St. Paul constituency. They are accompanied by their teacher, Don Katerynych. This group is their teacher's delight and their parents' hope for a better tomorrow, a great tomorrow. I would like them now to rise and receive the traditional welcome of the House. They are seated in the public gallery.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, 37 grade 10 social studies students learning about parliamentary democracy, here from Victoria composite high school. They're with their teachers, Ms Frema Bram and Mr. Mike Sorochan. They're in the members' gallery. I'd ask if they'd please stand and receive the warm welcome.

**head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Unemployed Youth**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Social Services. Young people who lack employment options and unemployment insurance benefits are forced under our system to turn towards the provincial government. There are studies which show that few if any young people on social assistance receive any job training or counseling. My question to the minister: could the minister indicate how cutting the housing allowance will help this growing group of young people cope with society in the future?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the shelter allowance reductions are unrelated to the programs that -- obviously, the hon. member is right -- must be delivered to enhance the educational opportunities and job opportunities for these young people. My colleague the hon. minister responsible for career development may like to supplement, but those opportunities are there.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary question. I would like to see the studies on that, because I don't believe that they are.

To the minister: I'm told that the minister told a meeting of the Youth Emergency Shelter Society last night that taking funds for emergency housing assistance -- the recent announcement -- is actually a government program to combat loneliness, sort of a lonely hearts club, if I may say, Mr. Speaker. But my question: does the minister not fail to appreciate the insensitivity of telling people who must choose between paying the rent and buying groceries that their real problem is loneliness?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I regret that my reference to that particular area last night would have been taken in the type of context that the hon. leader has. If in fact -- and it will be interesting to read his remarks in *Hansard* -- the report of the two members that were also at that meeting put it in that light, that is most unfortunate, and I can now understand why the opposition is having a problem with dealing with the real facts in

this area.

In reference to the shelter allowance, Mr. Speaker, as I have said time and time again -- and if the hon. member would once again read my ministerial statement -- we have concerns about the growing caseload and the cost of that as well as the single-parent families that we believe are the hardest pressed in order to meet their needs and the fact that some people have relayed to me that they would like to set up some sort of system to help people who have come forward to them and said, "We are lonely, and we would like to share accommodation." That request has come to me. It is not something that I have offered by the department. But I've been very clear that the shelter reductions have been predicated on other reasons.

MR. MARTIN: Well, let's look at the real facts, Mr. Speaker. Let's look at the real facts. Officials of the Youth Emergency Shelter have pointed out to this minister an alarming increase in the number of homeless youth in Alberta, and they've also pointed out that this will be exacerbated by this government's policies. Those are the real facts.

My question is: can the minister explain how a speech by her blandly asserting the benefits of unmarried youth living together is going to deal with the real problems that homeless youth face today? Tell us how those are the real facts, Mrs. Minister.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I guess one must never pass along comments from the real world that are brought to the minister's desk. In the future I will be, obviously, more guarded with passing along those comments.

But many of those who are served by youth services throughout the province for the most part are, I believe, at an age where, appropriately so, they must receive educational opportunities, counseling, which should be available because they're obviously very troubled people, and in a number of instances I believe we should be looking to foster care and other types of care that would address the age and the inexperience of the people we're speaking to.

MR. MARTIN: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. That's absolutely correct; we're sometimes dealing with very troubled people. The point of it is that this government's policies are making them even more troubled. My question is: is the minister not aware, or is she oblivious to the fact that we will pay a huge economic and social cost in the future because of the punitive measures of this government?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I think all hon. members of the Assembly certainly recognize the what I would call small proportion of people who would be classified as single employable, and the hon. member I think is mixing two groups of people together here. The number of youth that should be served and those people that are troubled because of a number of horrendous circumstances that have been identified in their backgrounds need to be served, and that is unrelated to the shelter allowance that is being accorded to the single employables in the province.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Gold Bar, supplementary.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must say that local agencies, and I must say it with regret, are shocked and sur-

prised by the minister's gratuitous comments. Is the minister suggesting that any two homeless teenagers at the Youth Emergency Shelter experiencing difficulties, without any means, in need of support, should or could find suitable accommodation on their own at the current rates?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, every single circumstance for the teenagers who reach the stage where they must be involved in the care of the shelter obviously has to be spoken to in a very different manner than the single employables.

### Taxation Policies

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the second question to the Provincial Treasurer. I'd like to turn from the government's plan to shaft the poor to shafting everybody. My question refers to a statement made in *Hansard* yesterday by the hon. Treasurer where he says, and I quote:

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.

My question: would the Treasurer tell the Assembly that in fact low-income renters will actually lose up to \$400 in income because the government has abolished the renter assistance, and doesn't this really make a mockery of his statement yesterday?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, this government has always maintained a clear principle that we will protect those people on low incomes. Right across the range of assessment of taxation which has been introduced in this budget, that clear principle is at the heart. No matter what the socialists across the way say, in fact that is the essence of this. Had it been a socialist regime anywhere in the civilized world, taxes rise at a more rapid rate than any other democratic system. The facts speak for themselves.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, they certainly do speak for themselves; he forgot to tell us about that. But to move on, I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer: is he aware of the incredibly punitive effect of his tax changes on some middle-income renters who will face income tax increases in excess of 100 percent this year?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, those are wrong calculations. If the member wants to table something, whether it's a strange memo that showed up from somewhere, that's fine; let him go ahead and do it. But my calculations show that in fact at the middle-income to low-income levels, in fact the tax rate has been reduced relative to the increases in other tax-paying groups. And in fact, as I said before, the Alberta selective tax reduction will either ease or reduce entirely the tax on an additional 245,000 Albertans. Under the selective tax reduction some 500,000 Albertans will receive tax assistance or in fact tax reductions or will pay no tax under this tax regime.

Moreover, as I have pointed out many times before -- and I hope the Member for Edmonton Norwood is listening -- in fact the surtax applies to the provincial tax levels above \$37,000 and of course would exempt those people who have provincial tax below that level.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, right across the range of tax regimes, including of course the fact that Alberta still has no sales tax, which in fact is one of the most major savings in terms of

regressivity of the tax system itself, making Alberta unique among all Canadian provinces: that in itself protects the low-income people. And the member is quick to forget that and quick to not point that out when he is speaking, I know he doesn't like this tax system because it does in fact do as we say. It redirects the tax away from the low income... [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Supplementary question.

MR. MARTIN: Well, the minister has selective hearing. He keeps forgetting about the term "renters" that we're talking about, and he hasn't denied it. He's just trying to rant and rave so that people don't know what's really in that budget.

Let me give him an example. A taxpayer with a taxable income of \$10,600...

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question, please.

MR. MARTIN:... paid \$411 in income tax in 1986. They'll pay \$852. My question is: how can he justify doubling the income taxes paid by some middle-income Albertans?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to say that they've now shot all the salvos. They've brought in the Member for Edmonton Kingsway, who no longer is able to ask the questions, I notice. I don't think they trust him with those questions. If I was the Member for Edmonton Kingsway, I'd be scratching my head too. You know, he's supposed to be the critic. You never hear from him anymore.

MR. MARTIN: That's the type of smart-alecky answer that people do not want from this Treasurer. They want answers.

Mr. Speaker, he says that he's shifting the income onto the rich. We notice that people with taxable incomes in excess of \$75,000 face an income tax increase of closer to 25 percent and corporations will only pay 7 percent. When is this government going to put some fairness into the taxation system and quit giving us this buffalo that they're giving us?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is one time when we're not talking to the socialists across the way. We're talking to all Albertans with this plan, because the people of Alberta know that under a socialist regime the taxes would increase infinitely. What happens is that the people of Alberta know full well -- and it's been tested in a variety of approaches by a variety of independent groups -- that the tax regime in Alberta is the most favourable tax regime probably anywhere in North America. Clearly, here in Alberta we have the lowest taxed citizens anywhere probably in North America.

We're going to maintain that priority, Mr. Speaker. The opposition across the way, with their narrowness and their nit-picking, wants to look at ways to confuse them. This is a comprehensive tax regime, one which protects the low-income Albertan, and one which will surely keep us, Alberta, in the most preferential position of any province in Canada. That's our mandate; we're committed to it. And we're doing just that, notwithstanding the cynicism from the socialists across the way.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, if I may ask a question of the Jimmy Swaggart of the front benches over there, I would like to ask the Treasurer if he would just consider reinstituting the rental credit for low-income earners. It's a good cash credit which would bring out some of the vicious discrimination that is

now in his budget against the low-income people of Alberta.

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, again the two socialist parties now are misstating the position. You talk about vicious moves; the history of the Liberal Party in this country is rampant with vicious statements and vicious policies directed against the province of Alberta. That is clearly the legacy of the Liberal Party across the way.

Let me talk about the renter tax credit, Mr. Speaker. Here we have a case where in fact we have in Alberta, probably across all of the urban communities, the lowest ratio of rental cost to income. Now there's no question that in fact that is the case. Moreover, the vacancy rate across most of Alberta is in fact at the highest levels ever. What we find is that the economic comparatives which drive the relationship between the amount you pay for rent and the availability of rent itself are in favour of the tenant right now. Therefore, this adjustment does very little to impinge or to put additional costs on those people who rent because they now have a market economy where in fact the renter drives the economy.

Mr. Speaker, as well I should be very clear that this program does not impinge or does not impact the lower income rental assistance programs, which in fact are provided by the government in a range of other areas, protecting lower income people once more and sheltering their cost of shelter from less income and higher cost. It is the rental tax credit that he's referring to. It's not going to impinge that much on the renter, and in fact the market system itself is going to correct and will in fact be in favour of the person who's renting right now.

#### **Vencap Equities Alberta Ltd.**

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct this question to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. At a time of high unemployment the government must do everything it can to create jobs, and last Tuesday I believe I recommended that the minister -- and he apparently agreed to it -- give Vencap a push to look for more SPURT-type investments and to put its pool of \$200 million to work for small business.

I would like now to move on to how the minister accounts for the investments which Vencap makes. Can the minister tell the House what procedures are in place to monitor new and past investments by Vencap to ensure that they do not violate the investment guidelines made by Vencap?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, the legislation under which Vencap was created provides for Vencap to be an arm's-length corporation, and it is arm's length from the government. The government, as I've indicated in the House on a number of occasions, does not get involved in the decision-making of the corporation with respect to selection of clients or investments in various equities or other things. I do, however, from time to time have meetings with the chairman of the board, and those will continue.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the guidelines, if I may refresh his memory, are half a million dollars and not in oil and gas. Can the minister then tell the House if there's been any evidence of any firm that Vencap's given money to, engaging in business activities which would violate these investment guidelines?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of Vencap giving

money to companies. The mandate of Vencap is to make investments -- equity investments. I do not have in front of me the annual report of Vencap, but I will get it and check and also provide the hon. member with a copy so that he in turn can check on investments that have been made by Vencap.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister should find out. Could I suggest to the minister: could he tell the House what penalties there are if a firm is found to be engaging in activities which violate Vencap's guidelines?

MR. SHABEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, guidelines are guidelines, and they are set out as a guide for the operation of the corporation. The corporation is bound by the legislation, and the guidelines have been provided to Vencap in addition to that, expressing a direction that the government requested Vencap to take in March 1983 with respect to the nature of investments that they would make. Those are guidelines and not legislation.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, it would be interesting to know if even those guidelines were kept to. But let's try something. Was the minister consulted by Vencap officials before Vencap recently sold its 10 percent share in a Nisku company, Corod Manufacturing, to Canadian General Electric, and did he approve of the sale?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I guess I'm having some difficulty in communicating with the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. The company is an arm's-length company, and it was structured in that way to eliminate political interference in their decision-making. The company functions in that way. The government does not get involved in specific decisions that the company makes with respect to either making acquisitions by way of venture investments or disposing of those investments. Nor do we as a government think that it would be appropriate for the government to be involved in those decisions. It is appropriate for the government, from time to time, to express its policy views but not to get involved in the decision-making with respect to individual loans or divestiture of those investments.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. We realize that Vencap and the Alberta small business equity corporation serve different purposes: in the SBECs program, Alberta small business equities is basically for the small business. But has Vencap done anything at all for small business in this province?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, Vencap has focused its investments on those that are \$500,000 or larger, and that is the focus of the corporation, other than its investments in another venture capital organization known as SPURT, where through that subsidiary smaller investments are made. Vencap has to this time focused on larger investments, those above \$500,000.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Kingsway, a supplementary.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the minister is: during the heritage trust fund hearings I raised the question that several of the companies that had been invested in by Vencap were not registered in Alberta. Have you any update on that situation, or have you checked that out?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, the investments that have been

made by Vencap meet the terms and conditions of the legislation. There are a variety of terms and conditions, and I think the hon. member could find that information very easily by referring to the annual report of Vencap.

### Energy Seminars

MR. R. SPEAKER: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Mr. Masse, the federal energy minister, is going to establish an energy symposium in Calgary in June. It's an invitation only type meeting. Could the minister indicate whether the minister will participate in that meeting and the government officials of the province of Alberta will participate in that meeting in a very prominent way, and if not, is the minister doing something to see that the government does affect that meeting significantly?

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is referring to the hearings or seminars or conferences that the hon. federal minister announced yesterday to be held across the country to review a broad spectrum of energy matters. We have no objection to the hon. minister's proceeding with those discussions or those seminars, on the assumption that oil and gas and coal matters are going to be dealt with on an ongoing basis. When we met with the federal minister in January he indicated that he was wanting to initiate some broad-ranging views through these seminars to discuss a wide range of matters. However, we emphasized that our concentration in the upcoming months would be to first of all see a viable conventional oil and gas industry in this province; and secondly, to see that the nonconventional projects that we want to have go forward, we would consult with them and the industry to see that they do go forward. So our heavy emphasis would be on those areas.

With respect to participation, we haven't assessed at this stage and haven't consulted with the industry yet as to what kind of participation would result.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Tom Kierans, a Bay Street Tory, has been appointed the chairman of this series of meetings and hearings that will take place in Canada. Could the minister indicate whether there is going to be western representation and eastern representation to complement that central Canadian representation on that committee? If there isn't, is the minister prepared to recommend someone to the federal minister that should work with Mr. Kierans to carry out that task?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the federal minister is going to do in terms of makeup of that particular committee, although he did indicate to us by letter that he was initiating these meetings with the chairman referred to as Mr. Kierans. We were aware of that, but we don't know the makeup of the committee.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In terms of the recommendation that comes from that either one-man committee or small committee, will the minister be able to assure Albertans that the recommendations that come forth and may be accepted by the federal government, that the provinces in Canada, if their rights are infringed upon -- say the oil and gas rights or other resource rights that we have as a province -- will have some form of veto to prevent federal policy being imposed on us at the provincial level?

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly we can't anticipate what kinds of recommendations are going to be coming from that group. I will say, though, that the time frame that has been suggested, a one-year time frame, is not a time frame in which we intend to have our discussions as it relates to nonconventional oil projects to come on stream. We put in process in January at the federal minister's meeting, consisting of provincial ministers from across the country and the federal minister, that we would form an officials' committee. They would review options as to how we can see these oil sands projects and offshore projects come on stream, with recommendations to be made to ministers by July 1. So the time frame we're working in in dealing with oil and gas is in that time frame. I emphasize the oil part of it. On the gas side, with gas deregulation and the discussions that are going on there, it's our intention to have continued discussions with the federal government, so these problems are going to be dealt with in the upcoming months, not left to some long-term committee for discussion.

MR. CHUMIR: To the minister. The greatest threat to the petroleum industry today is the potential withdrawal of tax deductions for drilling and exploration as part of the federals' move towards tax reform. What can the minister tell us about progress on this issue, and what is the government doing about it as part of these discussions or any other discussions?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, we've had a number of discussions with the federal minister of energy on a broad range of issues, including the tax changes that may be coming up. But the main emphases on the tax side in representation of our positions have been through our Provincial Treasurer to the federal Minister of Finance.

MR. PASHAK: A supplementary to the Minister of Energy, Mr. Speaker. I don't think the minister's answers are good enough with respect to Alberta representation. With a federal energy minister from central Canada and a new Bay Street big shot appointed chairman of this national energy committee, who's looking out for Alberta's interests nationally?

DR. WEBBER: Certainly not the hon. member from across the way. We are, Mr. Speaker.

### Day Care Initiatives

MRS. KOPER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services. It is the understanding of this House, as it was announced by the minister, that she has called an interprovincial meeting of ministers responsible for child care. It is my understanding it's to be held next week here in Alberta and would discuss all relevant issues including the federal task force report. Could the minister please advise this House of further agenda items that might be considered at that meeting?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I had issued an invitation to all my colleagues across Canada because I believed it was very important for the provincial ministers to share with one another initially their comments that have gone forward to the federal government by way of a bilateral process. The provincial ministers have not been privy to the end stands that have been taken by a number of provinces. We are at a stage, Mr. Speaker, where a number of provinces have responded. We are now seeking a date that will be more mutually acceptable. Next

week's date for most ministers had been too early in their estimation, and so we are seeking a somewhat later date and trying to develop a consensus there.

MRS. KOPER: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The minister has mentioned many times in this House and has been widely quoted as saying new day care initiatives will have to await the findings of the federal decisions and the bilateral discussions. Yet out there in the field there are constant rumours that operating allowances are going to be cut, effective as soon as three months' time. Could the minister please confirm or deny these rumours.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker. I suppose that it's a matter of human nature to develop, as information is shared, a somewhat different coloration to that information. I have tried very hard to make it clear publicly that we have had under review the operating allowance insofar as it applies to higher income families, because I think most hon. members have become aware that there is government funding flowing into day care centres that is unrelated to the amount of income that a family may enjoy. But, Mr. Speaker, those decisions are a ways down the road and I wouldn't see it would have any application until the fall. It's certainly not a general across-the-board cut. If you will, that would sweep in low-income families in terms of the consideration that's before us right now.

MRS. KOPER: A supplementary to the minister. Since December there has been a freeze, as well, placed on the provision of operating allowance for any new day care spaces. A few matters have come to my attention, and I wondered if she could report whether there have been any hardships in regard to this freeze.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the freeze on the expansion of spaces relates basically to, number one, the fairly large vacancy rate in a number of day care centres across the province, and also, secondly, the fact that we've got the day care program under review. It was my sense that in fairness to people coming forward they would understand that the program could change in terms of what is presently in place. Day care centres are certainly eligible for licensing provided that they match and provide the sort of information that shows they fit within the parameters of the present licensing process. As long as the spaces remain at a fairly high level of vacancy, we can entertain submissions in areas where that may not be occurring, but for the most part the vacancies are still there, and we believe families are being served. I could say, Mr. Speaker, that the family day home program is still operating and there has been no freeze there.

MRS. KOPER: My final question, Mr. Speaker. The federal task force report and the federal government itself seem very quiet, very silent, on the issue of providing cost sharing to private day care spaces in Canada. I wondered -- the minister had put forth a very strong stand on this in the past -- could she please report on any progress made in this important issue.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is accurate, I believe, in her reflection on the interesting way that a number of sections are worded within that task force report. Obviously, the report is just that: it is a task force report. We have not had any observations made by the federal Minister, Mr. Epp, in

terms of what it is that the federal government proposes to do with the report in whole or part.

The situation with respect to the stand in the province of Alberta is unchanged, and I've been making it very clear on all occasions that I have the opportunity that Alberta believes parents in this province ought to have the choice of the day care they believe most appropriate and, therefore, if the federal government is providing any funding, it should be delivered in an evenhanded way.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm still somewhat unclear. Does the minister then support the position taken by and the recommendations of the federal task force on child care that was recently tabled with two dissenting or two minority opinions? Albertans want to know where we stand in regard to that.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the federal report addresses many areas that have been spoken to by people right across Canada, and the specifics relate to some taxation measures among other things. That is the type of information and recommendations that certainly the province of Alberta will reflect upon when we see the end result of the federal minister's deliberations. We have been asking for the position of the federal minister for some time. We've made some very strong representations by the province of Alberta in terms of our parents here and our strong belief that they ought to be given a choice in the type of child care, whether we're speaking to institutional or home care. And on that basis, Mr. Speaker, we will be addressing the information and recommendations that finally come from the federal minister.

### Crude Oil Sales

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of Energy. Despite problems between oil-producing provinces and the federal government prior to 1985, Canadian crude did enjoy exclusive access to the Ontario refining market. Two developments threaten Alberta's traditional market: the first is a plan to connect Ontario with the gulf states, and the second is to reverse the flow in the Sarnia pipeline. Why did the minister endorse plans to connect Ontario refineries to the Gulf of Mexico?

DR. WEBBER: We didn't, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PASHAK: That's not the information that I have. You made an agreement with Saskatchewan and Quebec to support that.

In any event, the minister must be aware that Shell and Texaco are pushing to have the Sarnia-Montreal pipeline reversed. My question to the Minister of Energy is: what measures is the minister taking with the National Energy Board or the federal government to ensure that this doesn't happen?

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, we've had a considerable number of discussions with the Quebec minister of energy to go over the needs and the requirements of Quebec for the Sarnia-Montreal pipeline to stay in place. It was one of the items that was discussed at the end of January ministerial meeting with Quebec, supported by others, that they should be having that

line open. As I say, we supported that particular position. However, in the end it would be a decision of the National Energy Board, but we'll be taking all steps that we can possibly take to make sure that pipeline stays open.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the Minister of Energy. Will the minister inform the House if his department has an assessment that this pipeline reversal would have on Alberta's crude market share in Ontario?

DR. WEBBER: Yes, they do, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PASHAK: He could have provided the results; that would have been a help to some Albertans.

The elimination of prorationing on June 1 gives an advantage to larger companies with strong marketing sections. What protection for small and medium Alberta producers exists against the possibility of declining crude sales in Ontario?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I fail to see that as a supplementary to the original question, but the hon. member is wrong in his statement.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Energy. Does he have any figures or has his department supplied him with any figures as to how much product is coming into the Toronto area from the Montreal area resulting from Montreal's refineries handling cheap offshore crude?

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure those figures are available. I don't know them offhand. However, so as not to leave the impression that any of that crude will be coming other than by ship, obviously it's not coming through the Sarnia-Montreal pipeline.

MR. SPEAKER: Main question, the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark -- the Chair lost its eyesight for a while -- followed by the Member for Calgary North Hill.

### Credit Union Amalgamation

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 27 the Treasurer accused the board of directors of Edmonton Savings & Credit Union of wrongdoings and said the Credit Union Stabilization Corporation would press ahead with amalgamation. Since then the Treasurer has backed away from his accusations and then reasserted these accusations. No charges have been laid, and 1,000 members of Edmonton Savings have voted to give their board three months to review the proposed amalgamation. Since the amalgamation process is due to begin today, can the Treasurer tell the House if it is still his intent to push ahead with this forced amalgamation?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it is our intention to consolidate the savings unions in the Edmonton area similar to what is being done right across the province. The reason for that, of course, is to protect the interests of all credit union depositors in Alberta and to protect the credit movement itself. It is clear that the Edmonton central credit union has never said they were opposed to amalgamation. What they have said is that they would like to have adequate information to ensure that they can give proper representation to their members.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, it's not clear what the answer is to that particular question. Could...

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question.

MR. MITCHELL: I'm getting to that, thank you very much. Can the Treasurer indicate what legal authority he has to force an amalgamation of credit unions without the approval of the members -- and remember that the members are separate from the board of directors of that credit union, and they have stated that they don't want it to be amalgamated, recently, or at least that they want time -- in light of the two legal opinions received by the Edmonton Savings & Credit Union saying that no such authority exists to force that amalgamation?

MR. SPEAKER: With due respect, hon. member, the question is out of order. In question period one cannot, according to *Beauchesne*, request legal opinions, and the question is along that line. Supplementary question, hon. member.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I will rise on a point of order then at the end of question period. I've just asked if he has legal authority to do it.

MR. SPEAKER: Great, because we haven't had one for days.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you. It's clear, Mr. Speaker, that the Treasurer doesn't understand that my mother is in the gallery or he would be much less mean in answering these questions.

Does the Treasurer not feel that individual directors of the Credit Union Stabilization Corporation are operating in a conflict-of-interest position in this affair by forcing an amalgamation of Edmonton Savings & Credit Union with Capital City Credit Union, which they are currently managing?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a misunderstanding in the minds of the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark. [interjections] First of all, let me simply refresh his very short memory here, if in fact it's possible. What we have is a system which has gone through a terrible turmoil, a turmoil which has engendered an amazing amount of losses, well over \$300 million, perhaps more, in losses. Unfortunately, one of the entities which suffered largest losses was in fact the Edmonton central credit union, and that credit union's losses, the last time I looked, were of the order of \$93 million.

Mr. Speaker, when the province moved both to guarantee the deposits and to deal with the foreclosed real estate assets and to put in place a refinancing scheme of the order of \$300 million-plus, we had to take into consideration not just the responsibility of the government in terms of its exposure, which probably could be larger than \$300 million, but in fact we had at heart a genuine desire to ensure that these financial institutions maintained themselves. Without a question, we did not equivocate in our assistance. We moved quickly, we took firm hold of the problem, and we worked with the credit union movement itself to find a resolution of this problem. In a larger sense, that resolution is now complete. And in a larger sense, the members of the credit union movement accept the very clear statement and the very clear mandate which we have given to the credit union movement to ensure success.

We still have before us, Mr. Speaker, some additional work to do with respect to the Edmonton central credit union area. You must remember -- and it is a matter of fact -- that of those

credit unions in the Edmonton area with fairly significant losses, the only way to achieve success and to ensure long-term viability of this financial institution is to have a merger. Once again, what I say here is that at least eight of nine credit unions in this area have agreed to the merger in the Edmonton region. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the Edmonton central credit union itself has not said it's opposed to it. We are now working with that credit union, as recently as last night, to find ways to provide additional information to ensure that full responsibility to their members can be given by the board of directors. I've made that commitment to the board of directors of Edmonton central credit union, and I will stick to that.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, it's entirely unclear, many of the issues related to this amalgamation. We don't know whether the members are for or against. We do, but the minister doesn't seem to. He doesn't know where the board of directors stand. It seems that maybe they've changed their mind, or he thinks they have. The fact of the matter is that the minister is presenting a credit union stabilization Bill to this House this session. Would it not be wise for us to wait until such time as we get a chance to debate that Bill fully and openly in the Legislature? The stakes are too high for it to be forced through by this minister at this time.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, in fact the stakes are too high if we allow this to linger too long. There have been over \$300 million worth of losses. This province has moved in an unequivocal fashion. We are clear in our statement, clear in our mandate, and clear in our commitment to ensure that it works. I'm firm that it will.

It's not as though, Mr. Speaker, we haven't taken time to examine this on a very real and objective and thorough basis. We have done very detailed analysis with the most comprehensive and competent people in Alberta to ensure that the cash flow scenarios, the business plans themselves, and the statement of consolidation reflect the democratic principles. Dealing with the personnel side has in fact been done. And to my mind and in my judgment and in the judgment of most people in the credit union movement, in fact it has been done with a clear concern for the credit union in this province, the clear mandate to ensure that credit unions continue. We're doing our part, unmatched in Canada, and we will continue with that process.

I would say that we would like to see the consolidation of Edmonton central credit union with the other credit union members in this Edmonton region to be in place by the end of this month so that they can get on with serving their members, get on with the ensuring that the financial institution is secure in this province, and to ensure the credit union movement is strengthened and continues to be viable and strong in the future.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Treasurer: in view of the fact that the Edmonton Savings & Credit Union has never said they were against amalgamation but rather were against the railroad tactics of the stabilization cor-

poration, will the Treasurer promise to have them back off and give the Edmonton Savings & Credit Union and the stabilization corporation more time to come to terms?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton Kingsway of course thought he would generate some political credit by attending the April 1 meeting of the Credit Union Central here in Edmonton. It was reported to me only that the membership yelled, shouted, and suggested that he sit down and shut up. Well, in thinking about it, on more than one occasion he should heed that advice.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order, Member for Edmonton Meadowlark, citing from *Beauchesne* or *Standing Orders* the complaint.

MR. MITCHELL: I would like to cite from *Beauchesne*, section 358, Mr. Speaker, please, concerning the question of not requesting a legal opinion from a minister. I agree with that citation. I'm just simply disagreeing that I was requesting a legal opinion. I was requesting whether he had got a legal opinion and therefore whether he was acting under any kind of authority. I believe that therefore my question should not have been ruled out of order, and I would simply like to make that point at this time. Thank you.

The minister is quick to recite *Beauchesne* and very slow to answer questions. It would be very nice if he would be quicker to answer questions.

MR. SPEAKER: That's another matter, hon. member. Now you're out of order.

Actually the hon. member should look further to citation 360(1), which deals with the issue as raised by the member. And I'm sure the member, when he has a bit more time to read the Blues as to exactly what was said, would understand why citation 360(1) takes effect, that it was indeed a point of order that the question not be asked in the form in which it was given to the House. Having said that, the Chair is also certain that the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark has sufficient creativity to come back and rephrase questions without violating the rules.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move that Question 183 and Motion for a Return 176 stand.

[Motion carried]

### head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

With respect to loan guarantees made by the Provincial Treasurer under the provisions of the Small Business Term Assistance Fund Act:

- (1) how many guarantees were made pursuant to section 12 of the Act between July 1, 1986, and March 31, 1987;
- (2) of those guarantees made, what was the average dollar value of the guarantees and what was the arithmetic mean dollar value of the guarantees;
- (3) what was the total dollar value of all guarantees made;

and

- (4) how many of those guarantees, if any, had been "activated" by virtue of default on the loan guarantees, and what was the total dollar value of all such "activated" guarantees?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm unable to respond to this question for a number of reasons. Under sub (2), I'm not sure what the hon. member intended when he said "the arithmetic mean dollar value." I'm not clear on the sense of the question, and there are other aspects to it that I'm not clear on. Because it's not possible to amend a written question, perhaps the hon. member might consider withdrawing the question and bringing it forward as a motion for a return.

192. Mr. Sigurdson asked the government the following question:

What amounts of money, other than money paid as a result of a contractual arrangement for the provision of goods and/or services by Gainers Inc. to the government or any agent of the government or of the Crown in right of Alberta have been paid to Gainers Inc. in the form of grants or other payments under any program operated by the government or any agent of the government or of the Crown in right of Alberta, and in each instance what was the program under which the money was paid out, how much money was paid out, and what was the purpose for which the money was paid out, between July 1, 1986, and March 31, 1987, inclusive?

[Question accepted]

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

- (1) In respect of the Credit Union Stabilization Corporation board of directors during the period April 1, 1986, to February 28, 1987, what are the names of all directors of the corporation, how many working days has each director been remunerated for, and what has been the total remuneration paid to each director?
- (2) In respect of the Credit Union Stabilization Corporation, how many Alberta credit unions are currently under supervision or under administration by the corporation, what are the names of these credit unions, and what were the estimated accumulated deficits of these credit unions as of March 31, 1987?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, in responding to Question 193, the government will refuse this question. First of all, it is not the policy of the government to provide the details with respect to remuneration paid either to directors or to employees of organizations or entities. In this case, the Credit Union Stabilization Corp. is essentially a group which is probably, although under our legislation, operating in an independent fashion.

Moreover, I should note that I would ask all hon. members, with respect to the dates they use in the questions or in motions for returns, that they at least be dates which we can effectively provide information where asked. In this case, March 31, 1987, is not a uniform or reasonable date with respect to the credit union system because their year-ends have to be October 31 of the years.

So for those reasons, Mr. Speaker, we cannot accept the question.



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

In respect of N. A. Properties Ltd., the new Crown corporation which will purchase and manage the real estate assets of Northwest Trust and Heritage trust, what are the names of the directors, what are the names and positions of all management personnel, and what is the remuneration of all management personnel and directors?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we can't accept this question because, as a matter of fact, N. A. Properties is not the new Crown corporation.

195. Mr. Younie asked the government the following question:

For every application at the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife or the Department of Energy and Natural Resources between April 1, 1985, and March 31, 1987, inclusive, for permission to spray a herbicide or herbicides in a forest area or forest areas and itemized for each such application, what was

- (1) the date of the application;
- (2) the date on which the application was received;
- (3) the name or names of the person or persons submitting the application;
- (4) the location of the area or areas in which permission to spray was sought;
- (5) the number of acres in each area proposed for spraying for which permission to spray was sought and the volume of spray to be applied per acre;
- (6) the dates during which the spraying for which permission was sought was to be undertaken;
- (7) the purpose of the spraying set out in the application;
- (8) the disposition of the application, whether it was approved, rejected, held over, or in some other way dealt with;
- (9) if the application was approved, any conditions attached to the approval other than those sought in the original application; and
- (10) the herbicide or herbicides the use of which was sought in the application?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the government would be pleased to accept Question 195, and the response will be provided by the Minister of the Environment.

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

In respect of the Treasurer's commitment to reconsider the 5 percent hotel room tax, *Alberta Hansard*, page 635:

- (1) when will the government announce details of changes to the tax or to its application,
- (2) will the tax be applied only to new bookings,
- (3) will the tax be delayed until after the 1988 Winter Olympics, and
- (4) will the tax be delayed until after the summer tourist season?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the government will not accept this question. Of course, because this question does reflect upon the fiscal policies of the government and in fact is an indirect way to challenge the so-called fiscal plan of the government with respect to the 5 percent hotel tax, we will not be able to accept that question.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the question indicates the future details of changes. I can't obviously accept that because it is such a subjective question that it would be impossible for us to answer it.

#### head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

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

[Debate adjourned April 9: Mrs. Hewes speaking]

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to speak in support of this motion for a return by my colleague from Edmonton Belmont.

Surely this motion constitutes a very simple request. He merely asked for information regarding 60,000 jobs that the Minister of Career Development and Employment claims credit for having created. I would like to begin by considering the importance of this request. The greatest problems that we're facing as a province today are the high levels of unemployment and the consequences of those high levels of unemployment for the people. Now, if the minister has indeed been directly or even indirectly responsible for creating 60,000 full-time new jobs, then in fact he is to be commended for this. It would be a remarkable achievement, and the minister may have this province pointed in the right direction. But on the other hand, if these jobs are only substitute jobs -- jobs, that is, that were created while other jobs were disappearing -- then this achievement may not be quite so great. That is why we must know a little more about the kinds of jobs that the minister is boasting of creating. All we ask for in this motion for a return are copies of those studies, reports, and other documents on the basis of which the hon. Minister of Career Development and Employment stated on March 6, 1987:

... that the job creation program that the Premier talked about just a minute ago created 60,000 full-time jobs in this province in 1986.

Well, we want to know just what kind of jobs were created.

Another question we think important is the extent to which these so-called full-time jobs are only temporary jobs. This is important because the kind of job a person has determines the quality of life a person has available to him or her, and in Alberta and in Canada we're not addressing this question in any systematic way.

I have here a copy of an interview that was conducted by the *Calgary Herald*, by one of their reporters. It deals with a registered nurse with a Bachelor of Science degree who works part-time as a receptionist at a walk-in medical clinic because she can't find full-time work. She says that she lives on faith and hope that something will turn up. She has almost exhausted her unemployment insurance. That wouldn't be too tragic if it was just one person -- well, maybe it would be tragic for that individual; it certainly would be -- but Dutka is only one of thousands of Albertans, most of them women, stuck in part-time jobs because full-time work is disappearing.

And just some statistics that I think are relevant here. In the decade between 1975 and 1985 part-time employment, defined as less than 30 hours a week, increased by 78 percent; while full-time jobs grew by only 15 percent. During the same period of time there has been a startling 300 percent increase in the number of people working part-time because they can't find full-time jobs. It's not just that these are part-time jobs; there are also lots of other problems associated with them. Many of the people that have these jobs support families now. There are no unions, so they are paid lower wages. And in addition to all of that, because our labour laws are weak in this regard, these workers do not receive the same protection rights and benefits as those that are guaranteed to full-time workers.

Alberta, indeed like the rest of Canada, in fact all of North America, is experiencing something called deindustrialization. Factories all over Canada and North America are shutting down. Jobs are transferred to other countries where wages are considerably lower than they are here. In addition to job loss through transfers to other countries, the so-called cybernetic revolution has not created anywhere near the jobs that have been replaced by it.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

So we would like to know, Mr. Speaker, about the nature of these 60,000 jobs that the minister claims to have created. Most of the jobs that seem to be developing today involve either very monotonous, repetitive tasks -- they involve the simple entering of data into computers; people increasingly derive less and less satisfaction from their work even when they are able to find work. A fact associated with that that the Member for Banff-Cochrane might be interested in is that there is really a serious problem of alcoholism that's beginning to develop among women who work in these kinds of occupations. It's almost like they are chained to a machine with very little kind of human contact.

Mr. Speaker, the question of creation of 60,000 jobs is very important, especially for our young people as well as the single parent, who is usually a woman. Young people have the highest rates of unemployment in the country; approximately 17 percent of unemployment is of young adults. I can attest to the fact that many of these young people seem to have lost all hope. I taught at a community college for years, and often the only reason that these young people would come into college to further their education was the fact that they couldn't find full-time, meaningful jobs. And they were there and not particularly interested in their studies but there to perhaps justify, in a sense, the fact of their existence, in a way. It provided them with a way of saying to people when they asked the question: "What do you do?" "Well, I'm a student at a college." But often their attitude towards studies was one of neglect. They weren't interested; they were just there, in effect, to have a good time. They didn't seem to have the sense of responsibility associated with their age that people of other generations might have had.

Just as an aside, Freud, of course, is one of many who pointed out the significance of work for the meaning of life itself. So it's really a great tragedy that young people in our society cannot look forward to full-time, gainful, meaningful employment, for without that you can't have family life, and without family life you can't have community life, and we begin to get a breakdown of the whole structure of our society.

Mr. Speaker, this motion for a return is important, too, for what it tells us about the government's real job-creation

strategy. Now, I've heard the minister say on many occasions that it's not the government's responsibility to create jobs. Yet the government is the largest employer, either directly or indirectly, in the province. I think the minister the other day said that there were something like 35,000 civil servants. But in addition to that, you have all of the people employed in hospitals that are funded by the government, you have all of the teachers in the school system that are indirectly funded by the government, all of the college teachers, all of the university professors, and all of the people that work for municipal governments that are indirectly financed in one way or another by governments. So it's pretty clear that governments are the largest employer and therefore the largest source of job creation in the province.

No wonder that with the attitude this government takes to job creation it has failed to create jobs. Its attempts in this regard have been very, very unsuccessful, and we could look at some of their attempts, such as STEP. Are any new jobs created by that? They're certainly not full-time, permanent jobs, and my understanding is that a lot of those companies would be employing those people anyway in the summertime, and they just take advantage of taxpayers' dollars to improve their own profit position rather than actually create new jobs.

When it comes to the \$2 billion that the Premier said this province contributed to the oil industry last year in the form of grants and aids, how many new jobs were created out of that? I'd like the minister to tell us if any of those 60,000 jobs that he talked about were actually new, full-time jobs in the oil industry.

We do know that the government is capable of creating some jobs, though. It seems that a lot of cabinet ministers that didn't get re-elected and people that worked for the Conservative Party in past elections had no difficulty finding jobs with the government. But are those people all included in the 60,000-job category, Mr. Speaker? [interjections] Well now, are they included in the figure? I just want to know that; that's all.

It seems to me, however, that the government's greatest omission in this regard of producing jobs has to be its failure to diversify the economy. Perhaps the minister's answer to this motion for a return will provide us with some clue, some hint, as to why this government didn't diversify the economy when it had a chance. This explains perhaps why the government refuses to honour this relatively simply request for information.

Because what is the government's attitude towards diversification? Let's just look around the province. It's true that the government has built and helped build a number of petrochemical plants. It created some rather monstrous plants in the tar sands to extract heavy oil, and in doing so it did create jobs. We had a huge work force in this province for a while: the people that were engaged in constructing these plants, building the pipelines that connected the oil fields to refineries and this sort of thing.

But what happened when the construction came to an end? It's pretty obvious that most of these plants are extremely capital intensive. As I understand it, each job that's created in the energy industry required \$1.5 million worth of investment. At least that was one study that was done some five years ago. So what we've been doing is building these huge world-scale plants. I'm not saying that there's anything the matter with that, but it's not a job-creation strategy, because these plants do not have that many jobs associated with them.

MR. WEISS: The largest single employer in Alberta.

MR. PASHAK: I beg your pardon? The petrochemical industry? No, the government of Alberta is the largest single employer in the province of Alberta.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we need this information requested in this motion for a return so that the public can compare the government's strategy with what must be done in this province to create jobs. For example, I listened to figures presented by the Minister of Career Development and Employment with regard to jobs being lost in the goods-producing sector compared with jobs being created in the service sector. In the period covered by the minister in his remarks, some 78,000 jobs were lost in the goods-producing sector, while 73,000 jobs were created in the service sector.

But what is the nature of these jobs that are being created in the service sector? In some cases they're undoubtedly jobs that require highly educated, highly skilled people; doctors are a part of the service sector for example. But on the other hand, it seems to me that most of the jobs that are created in the service sector are jobs that require little in the way of education; you don't need much in the way of formal education to be a busboy or a waiter in a restaurant. When the minister was pressed to defend his job-creation strategy on another occasion, he said that -- and this seemed to be the only comfort he could provide the people of Alberta when it comes to the creation of jobs -- that was to support development of a tourist industry. Now, I'm not opposed to that, but if that's the only strategy the government side has, well, pity poor Albertans and their chances to get good jobs that pay well and require a degree of training and expertise to perform them. I think those are the kinds of jobs that we should be aiming at in this society.

Mr. Speaker, this government has no job-creation strategy, and therefore, as long as this government remains in power, Alberta is condemned to an increasing dependency on the service sector, with lower incomes, higher taxes, and a substantially lower standard of living. The real question is: what is to be done? Well, I think that's what we should look at. We can tell the minister how to diversify this economy. I can make some suggestions as to how we can make sure Albertans get their rightful return, for example, on nonrenewable energy resources. We're giving our energy away; we're giving our gas and oil away. We've seen a dramatic drop to the Treasury in terms of royalties from this sector of the economy, and we need that money to create jobs.

MR. YOUNG: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of order by the hon. minister.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has a motion which, it is correct, is expressed in a rather large manner, but the motion is being extended, in my view, much more largely in the hon. member's comments than even the largely written motion on the paper should permit. I would respectfully request that the hon. member maintain his comments in a somewhat more relevant manner to the motion before the House.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, may I respond to the point of order before I continue with my remarks?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair would observe that under section 23, which the Chair presumes the hon. minister is raising the point of order on -- that periodically the hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn mentions the figure

of 60,000 jobs, and on that basis it would appear to be within Motion for a Return 175.

Member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

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

Yes, I am concerned about... [interjections] Wait a minute, I'm getting so much advice here that I can't... [interjection] No, no. It's just...

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the job-creation strategy of the government, and in terms of finding out what that strategy is, we've put a simple question on the Order Paper asking the minister to tell us just how he created 60,000 jobs over the past year. What I was about to propose to the minister were some suggestions and an alternative strategy. Perhaps the reason why he won't tell us about those 60,000 jobs and how he created them is because he refuses to look at meaningful alternatives for job creation in this province.

I think the key to this clearly is that if we're going to have meaningful jobs created in the service sector in this economy, we either have to have industrial jobs, goods-producing jobs to match that or we're going to have to take a fair share from the energy resources in this province to create meaningful jobs. We could have the best educated population in the country here, we could have a very scientific community, we could have all of these things if we wanted to extract a better return from our gas and energy resources, and there's no reason why we can't do that.

I can think of all kinds of other things that we could have done to diversify the economy when we had an opportunity and demonstrate that we could have not just created 60,000 jobs but we could have had full employment in this province. We import something like 90 percent of the produce that we consume in this province. There was a remarkable experiment being conducted in Calgary until just recently in which a person using some kind of hydroponic technique was growing cucumbers. It was killed, but it could have gone on, and the government could have supported and encouraged that. We've got very productive land in Alberta; we've got great vast amounts of sunshine; we've got natural gas to heat these facilities. We could, if we wanted to bend our minds to it, produce most of the vegetables and crops like that that are consumed here in the province of Alberta.

There are other measures that we...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Order please. With respect, the motion for a return by the Member for Edmonton Belmont clearly spells out the request for the government to table copies of reports and of documents on the basis of... et cetera, et cetera. The Chair would appreciate, in addition to the reference to the 60,000 jobs, that periodically the hon. Member for Calgary Forest Lawn would advance the arguments as to why those reports should be brought forward to the House, and not alternative strategies for job creation.

Member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm just trying to find out from the minister -- and this motion for a return would help us to determine just why it is -- what the government's strategy first of all is for job creation and why it is that they haven't considered other job-creation strategies. I was merely trying to point out the range of job-creation strategies that were available out there, and I would like to see if the minister would, in terms of... [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Well, Mr. Speaker, since that line of discussion is ruled out of order, I think with that I'll have to turn this discussion over to one of my hon. colleagues.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, the assertion was made by the hon. minister that some 60,000 jobs had been created as a result of a certain program, and one of the things that even I as a new member of the House do very well understand is that when we assert things in this House, they must be true, to our knowledge. If we don't know about it, we can say words like "it is said that 60,000 jobs are created" or "alleged" or "we guess that 60,000 jobs are created." But when we say that 60,000 jobs are created, we go as if on oath to say that because that is the only way we in this Assembly can work. And I'm familiar with that concept as a lawyer, because if a lawyer in court personally states something as being his statement, he's in big trouble if it's untrue. He can say all he likes on the basis of submissions or repeating the assertions, however improbable, of witnesses in the case of course. But as for what comes from that lawyer, it must be true, and so in this House, Mr. Speaker, as I understand it.

What the hon. minister said was:

... that the job creation program that the Premier talked about just a minute ago created 60,000 full-time jobs in the province in 1986.

Now even so, Mr. Speaker, it happens from time to time that one in a fit of enthusiasm goes somewhat beyond what is really the case, but when one is called on it, one should in all honesty, if that is so, admit that one had misinterpreted some evidence or perhaps had embellished what was really there. But in this case there is no such explanation or confession. It is simply, so far, a refusal to produce the evidence, such as it is, and I do say with some disappointment that this should be so. We aren't talking about an unimportant matter; we're talking about the single most important matter in the life of the province at the present time, the creation of jobs. I simply say, with what authority a new member can, which isn't much admittedly, that it is owed to the House that the basis for this statement be put before it. Because once we see what the basis is for the statement, we can more easily decide further important questions such as: were the jobs in substitution for previously existing jobs, or did they in fact increase the total sum of employment? How long did they last, or were they purely temporary? Were they make-work projects? Did they fall into the class of temporary summer employment for example? That sort of thing. And day by day the confidence that we can expect statements from the minister or the government that are based on fact erodes. Was this just an opinion of the minister's, a guess -- or worse, Mr. Speaker?

And surely the way to set these doubts at rest is to produce the evidence, such as it is. We must presume that everything is true that comes from other members and especially from ministers talking about matters within their portfolio. We naturally, once there is an apparent refusal to concede to the request, raise in our minds suspicions we should not be entertaining, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to put it more directly than that. It's not necessary that there be a big study. We aren't supposing there is necessarily a large project that came up with this figure. It may be no more than inference from published statistics of Statistics Canada, for example, or, one presumes, figures within the department itself. But surely it's not asking too much to have whatever the evidence is produced. And the longer we go on

talking about it, I suppose, the bigger a deal it comes when it really shouldn't be a big deal at all, because, as I say, we are naturally entitled to expect an explanation for figures stated in an important matter like this -- or indeed in any matter, if necessary. But why we're dwelling on this one is because it is extremely important that we have the facts.

I have to admit, Mr. Speaker, that I'm a naturally trusting person, and when I hear these statements made, it shocks me if I must become suspicious. But perhaps there is not the foundation there that there ought to be, and I most earnestly ask the minister or whoever it is involved in the government to produce the evidence for what was asserted to be a very important job-creation program producing significant results. The government, after all, should be proud of the record. Surely they should produce the evidence on it.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I would request that we adjourn debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary McCall has... [interjection] Order please. . . . moved adjournment of Motion for a Return 175. Motions for adjournment are not debatable. All those in favour of the motion please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion is defeated.  
The hon. Member for Edmonton Calder.

MS MJOLSNES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona has so eloquently expressed, we are simply asking in this motion a very simple request. Motion 175 is simply asking that the Minister of Career Development and Employment be forthcoming with some studies, some documentation, or some kind of report to support what he has said . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Order. The minister of technology.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, there is not a little confusion about how five nays could defeat quite a few ayes. [interjections]

MR. WRIGHT: On that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: These points of order must be raised at the earliest opportunity, with respect, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister of Agriculture.

MR. ELZINGA: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. This is the earliest opportunity. I was under the impression, sir, that I heard you that the "ayes" had it.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: With respect, the Chair put the question, and the Chair said the motion failed.

Member for Edmonton Calder.

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We yell louder.

What this motion is saying, Mr. Speaker, is that we're simply asking for some support defending the statement that the Minister of Career Development and Employment made stating that 60,000 full-time jobs were created in 1986. There are many people in my constituency and I'm sure in other constituencies that would like to know where the minister has come up with this figure. My constituency office is constantly receiving calls asking us, "Well, what in the world is the government doing to create jobs?" And I don't think we can tell these people that the minister has stated that he has created 60,000 jobs, but in fact there is no proof, so that we'll just have to take his word for it. He has absolutely no evidence to back this statement up. I might state, too, that with unemployment rising in 1986, it's very difficult to just say to these people that in fact 60,000 jobs were created because the minister happens to claim that this is what has happened.

I know that a group of Metis people that I met with in the fall would certainly like to know where the Minister of Career Development and Employment got the figure of 60,000 jobs. These people were working under one of his programs. They were working for 17 weeks at \$5.00 an hour on that settlement. They were all laid off after expressing to the minister that they would love to maintain those jobs and continue working. Now are these people part of the 60,000 jobs that were created in 1986, or are they part of the numbers that fall into the unemployed category? These people would like to know how the minister, and on what basis, arrived at the figure of 60,000 jobs. Who are part of these figures? There certainly leaves a lot of unanswered questions when we're asking for this type of information and the minister is not forthcoming with it.

How about the unemployed single employables in this province that we have so heartlessly cut back their shelter allowance and their food allowance? Every day they go out searching for jobs, filling out job-search claims. Are these people part of the 60,000 jobs that were supposedly created in 1986? These people would certainly like to know. Because no matter how many job searches they fill out, day in and day out, they are having a lot of difficulty getting a job.

Surely we can expect this kind of information from the minister -- some type of proof, some type of documentation, some type of a report -- simply to back up his statement that 60,000 jobs were created. That the minister is not forthcoming with this kind of evidence to prove that 60,000 jobs were in fact created in 1986 causes a little bit of concern, because he not only stated that 60,000 jobs were created but that these jobs were in fact full-time jobs. He hasn't even said that they were part-time, so we're assuming that he must have some kind of documentation to back up...

MR. ORMAN: A point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Minister of Career Development and Employment.

MR. ORMAN: Pursuant to Standing Order 23(a), I rise because I believe the hon. members are belabouring under a misconception.

What we're talking about, Mr. Speaker, for their information, if they happen to read the Premier's remarks prior to my remarks, they will see, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, we have brought in the current year in which we are operating the largest job creation effort in history. The dollars that have been provided in public works, construction, highways, parks, dams, irrigation systems to municipalities...

Schools, roads -- it's the capital construction budget. I don't know what the mystery is on behalf of the opposition, but it's quite clear to me that when you spend in the area of \$2 billion on capital construction, you're going to create some jobs. So I don't know whether their research is inaccurate or what, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I don't believe the minister of career development is on a point of order. I believe it's a point of clarification under section 23(a). Section 23, for the benefit of members, is where a member who has already spoken once may speak again to clarify any point that in the perception of that hon. member may be misconstrued by hon. members in the debate.

The hon. Member for Edmonton Calder.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to conclude before I was interrupted. Is that possible now that you've confirmed the ruling?

I just want to say that what we're dealing with here is a matter of statistics that we deal with all the time. When the opposition trots out the rate of unemployment in this province, they're using Statistics Canada figures that relate to employment and unemployment, the same manner in which we determine through the capital construction budget, through Statistics Canada calculations in the main, and through monitoring of the department just what \$2 billion does. And if they happen to be driving through this province, they'll see capital works and they'll see people working. That's the reference, Mr. Speaker, and it's quite clear that it equals 60,000 jobs.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton Calder.

MS MJOLSNESS: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I think the point here is that a specific figure was used by the minister: 60,000 jobs. All we're asking in this motion is -- he has stated that figure -- some kind of proof. He doesn't seem to be very forthcoming with that type of information, and it's causing a lot of doubts on this side of the House as to where and why the minister would have come up with this figure of 60,000 jobs, because we come to the conclusion -- or some of us will anyways -- that perhaps the minister doesn't know exactly what is happening in the province in terms of employment and the creation of jobs. We're making plans to train a number of people through a work-for-welfare program we've heard quite a bit about, and yet there doesn't seem to be any proof that the minister knows exactly how many jobs have been created in 1986.

Now, in his refusal to answer Motion 175, he cited *Beauchesne* 390(2) on the basis of his refusing to come up with the information, and when I looked at *Beauchesne* and that section (2), it has a number of parts to that section: (a) to (p). Well, I couldn't help but notice 390(2)(b), where it states: "Papers, the release of which would be detrimental to the security of the State." I'm wondering if the minister thinks that if he addresses this motion in an honest way and comes up with some type of explanation as to where the 60,000 jobs figure came from, if he in fact cannot explain this, is he afraid that 145,000 Albertans that are out of work will storm the Legislature or will

storm his office?

Then I happened to glance down at where it says: "Papers reflecting on the personal competence or character of an individual." Well, that one -- if he's not forthcoming with the information -- sort of stands on its own.

Now, I know that the government is famous for throwing out figures, as the Minister of Social Services did with the job-finding clubs when she said that they had a success rate of 50 to 60 percent in placing unemployed people into jobs. She later stated that it was simply verbal information, that she had received this information. So perhaps the Minister for Career Development and Employment received this number by some other means than reports or some kind of documentation, and I would suggest that he could at least tell this Assembly where this figure came from. And if he cannot back it up with reports that we're asking for in this Motion 175, I think he should admit that too, because unemployment in this province is a very serious issue for many, many people. They will not take this lightly, and to throw out numbers like the minister has done is not a very responsible thing to do, unless he can back up what he's trying to say.

So I think that members of the Assembly, many of my constituents, the unemployed people in Alberta, have a right to know where the figure, 60,000 jobs that were created in 1986 -- where the minister received that figure.

Thank you.

MR. SHRAKE: Mr. Speaker, I think we've heard a lot of debate on this issue, and I think we are starting to repeat a little bit. I think with a half million dollar research budget, I don't know why they expect the cabinet ministers of the government to provide all of this information and this detail. I notice the hon. Minister of Recreation and Parks brought a stack of material almost two feet thick; it took three pages to haul it back the one day.

So, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Moved by the hon. Member for Calgary Millican that we adjourn debate on Motion for a Return 175. All in favour of the motion, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Motion carried.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Adair	Elzinga	Orman
Ady	Fischer	Osterman
Alger	Fjordbotten	Payne
Anderson	Getty	Pengelly
Betkowski	Heron	Reid
Bradley	Horsman	Russell
Brassard	Hyland	Schumacher
Campbell	Johnston	Shaben

Cassin	Koper	Shrake
Cherry	Kowalski	Sparrow
Clegg	McCoy	Stevens
Cripps	Mirosh	Stewart
Day	Moore, M.	Webber
Dinning	Moore, R.	Weiss
Downey	Musgreave	West
Drobot	Musgrove	Young
Elliott	Oldring	Zaruský

Against the motion:

Barrett	Laing	Piquette
Ewasiuk	Martin	Strong
Fox	McEachern	Taylor
Gibeault	Mitchell	Wright
Hawkesworth	Mjolsness	Younie
Hewes	Pashak	

Totals	Ayes - 51	Noes - 17
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[Motion carried]

178. On behalf of Mr. Sigurdson, Ms Barrett moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing those eight studies referred to by the hon. Minister of Career Development and Employment during the course of the Oral Question Period of March 23, 1987, *Hansard*, page 262, which he said "indicated that there is a net, negative effect on the level of employment by increasing the level of minimum wage."

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, with respect to Motion 178, I also would reject that motion.

Simply put. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the hon. Member for Edmonton Belmont do the same as I did, go to the library and get the information, because that's where it's contained.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, this is another instance where statements are made in the Legislature by the minister, and we've asked him to document these statements. We would like to know on which basis these statements are made. Are they simply statements of fact, which is what the Member for Red Deer North wanted to know when asking a question of the minister under the previous motion for a return which was just adjourned a few minutes ago? We want to know facts. Is the minister making these things up? He says that this exists in the library. If they exist in the library, why would the minister not be prepared to bring them forward and lay them on the table? It begs the question: is it simply an opinion which the minister has or is it actual fact? [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Member for Calgary Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

He indicated that there is a net negative effect on the level of employment by increasing the level of minimum wage, and he apparently referred to eight studies. Is there anything wrong with producing that for the members of the Legislature to review and look at and see if they agree with those, see what the sources of those are? Are they credible sources? Are credible facts contained in those studies? And on what basis are they

making this conclusion? These are questions that the members of the Assembly would like to put to the minister to see whether he's basing these statements on something credible, on something that has a basis in fact and is defensible.

If he wants to simply indicate in his return where those eight studies can be found, which eight studies they are -- it may be that there are 50, 60, or several hundred studies that have been done throughout the world, throughout Alberta, throughout the country, that refer to the effect which the minimum wage has on the level of employment. If he would at least produce eight out of that group which supports his point of view, then we'll know which ones he's looking at, which authors they are, what universities they attended, if that, which institutes they worked for. At least we'd have some basis to evaluate his statement. But in the absence of facts, in the absence of studies, in the absence of even any indication from the minister where to go, we would have to assume that there are lots of studies that he doesn't know what he's talking about. All we're asking him to do is to produce some evidence for us on which he makes his statements.

There are lot of other statements, including this one, which the minister makes. He seems quite happy to make all kinds of assertions in this Legislature. We're only asking him to back those assertions up, tell us where he's getting his information, so that we can evaluate whether he's making sound policy judgments based on credible evidence, whether they're based on the opinion of the minister and nothing else, or whether they're based on some small handpicked selection of studies which don't have credibility or weight, or ought to be considered. And these are the kinds of questions the members of this Assembly have every right to ask the minister. [interjection] Well, we're not asking for anybody to do our research; we want to be assured that the minister has done his research. All we're asking him is to produce his research so that we can evaluate it. All we want to know is: what research has the minister himself done? He said that he's done it. We're asking him to tell us what it is that he has done on behalf of determining whether increasing the level of the minimum wage has a net negative effect on the level of employment. He's made this statement numerous times in the Legislature. We're simply asking him to show us on what basis he makes that conclusion. We don't believe it's a justifiable conclusion to reach.

There is a credibility gap here, Mr. Speaker, which we would ask the minister to fill by telling us what it is he's looked at, what studies have led him to make that assertion, so that we can evaluate it and see how correct he is and whether he's making a reasonable conclusion. We don't believe he is, and in the absence of his producing that evidence for the Legislature, we'll have to go on and continue to believe that he's made an incorrect conclusion, that the eight studies he referred to, whichever ones they might have been, must have been flawed. But then we haven't any evidence. We don't know which ones he's referring to, to actually look at them and see whether they're flawed and evaluate them on the basis on which those authors reached those conclusions. It might have been eight studies done by a college student for an undergraduate class one time. I don't know. It could have been done by some renowned and credible institute in this country or internationally. We don't know. So in the absence of that, what can we conclude? All we can conclude is that the minister was making some opinion known. Perhaps he was a bit enthusiastic in reaching this conclusion and maybe the eight studies were... Where did they come from? We just have no way of knowing.

He says, "Go to the library." Does he mean the Legislature Library? Does he mean the Edmonton Public Library? Where does he want us to go to find these studies?

ANHON. MEMBER: The Legislature Library right here. You just go out the door...

MR. HAWKESWORTH: The Legislature Library right downstairs, he says, but he won't give us any indication where in that library those studies can be found. And maybe they don't exist. That's the question we're wondering: whether he can produce the research which he himself presumably did leading up to the statement which he made in the Legislature. All we're asking him to do is produce those studies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, this information that's requested is readily available to all members of this Assembly. I suggest that we adjourn this debate. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair didn't hear the concluding remarks of the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury. Perhaps he could repeat them.

MR. BRASSARD: I move that we adjourn this debate, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, it's been moved by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury that debate be adjourned on Motion for a Return 178. Motions to adjourn are not debatable. All those in favour of the motion please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Motion is carried.

179. Mr. Taylor moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a list giving the location of every environmental waste dump that has been identified by the public in response to the government program to help eliminate landfill pollution.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of the Environment.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've actually been waiting for three weeks to have an opportunity to respond to the question put forward by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. I want to, on behalf of the government, accept the question and I also want to file the answer. By doing so, I would also like to addend the written information I'm going to be providing by just a few short comments with respect to the help eliminate landfill pollution program. I certainly hope, because of the importance of it and the importance of conveying some very important information, that I would probably need about four minutes, and if that clock runs out at 4:30, I will not be in a position basically to file the information that the government is prepared to do.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important just to outline the process that was followed in phase 1 of the help eliminate

landfill pollution program. This will be very, very brief. First of all, all the calls received by the help eliminate landfill pollution program team are logged on reporting sheets as they come in. In addition to that, the responses and the information that we have required and requested of both the public of Alberta and industry in Alberta can also be received by our pollution emergency response team, which is a team that's set up on a 24-hour-a-day basis, seven days a week, 52 weeks of the year. Any individual in the province of Alberta who wants to report any pollution-related item can simply turn to the inside front page of their telephone directory, and this information and this telephone number are in every phone book in the province of Alberta.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, when we did start to receive calls, the responses were then evaluated on the basis of the initial data received. In some cases the calls that came in were simply from an individual who said, "I worked for this particular firm in 1943 and I can remember something happening on that particular site." That call was taken, that information was input into our computer files, and then some follow-up was taken with respect to all the submissions we'd received. We received some 76 calls and went through the 76 calls that were identified. Sixty-one of them could be handled with and have been handled with a rather quick, direct response. There were calls basically from an individual who said, "Oh well, I want to report a whole series of skunks in a particular area." Okay, that clearly did not fit in with the response that we made to the public, but that individual came in and that was one of the 76 calls received. Sixty-one were dealt with, 15 remained, and 15 sites were identified with some possibility -- some possibility, and I really want to underline the word "possibility" -- that sometime in the past 50, 60, 70 years in the province of Alberta something might have happened. We then reviewed the 15, eliminated 11 as really not having much of a possible potential, and we're left with four that we viewed under the help eliminate landfill pollution program as being in a position to be potentially hazardous. But the operative word is "potentially."

The four were looked at. One was an oil site in the Fox Creek area that is identified as site 11 on the sheet of paper that I'm going to table with the Assembly this afternoon. Basically, it was looked at. It was an abandoned industrial landfill that was maintained by an oil company. The company in question was asked to submit a report to us. The company basically indicated in the report to Alberta Environment that no landfill existed at the described site. But because an individual in the province of Alberta had called and said that there was one there, we followed up through the waste management branch, followed up in writing to the company in question and asked them to review their records. And they basically came back and said that no landfill existed at the described site. Now having said that, we're going to go one step further, under phase 2 of the help eliminate landfill pollution program, and we're going to have an on-site evaluation to double-check and triple-check everything.

A second one was a scrap metal dealer location near Drumheller, and it's identified as site 7 on the information that I'm going to file this afternoon. The nature of the call came in and said that there was a scrapyard in poor condition that had had oil spills in the area. That matter was turned over to our waste management branch; an investigation had taken place. A check of the records of Alberta Environment also indicated that this matter had been previously investigated by Alberta Environment. Since that time, the local scrap metal dealer has had a

visitation, and I'm pleased to report that while at one time in the past the yard, although associated with this particular operation, was in poor condition -- I'm pleased to indicate now that there has been significant improvement with the location. And that should really resolve that matter, but we're going to continue to monitor it.

A third one that was identified was a refinery site which is identified as site 15 on the sheet of paper that I'm going to be tabling. It's a refinery site outside of the Edmonton area, in the Fort Saskatchewan area. The nature of the call indicated that landfilling activities had taken place in the past. We once again had an investigation done by the waste management branch. We've contacted the company in question. The company has indicated to us that they have no record -- no record, I repeat -- of any landfilling activities that have occurred in the past.

One of the of course troublesome aspects of any kind of a program of the type that we've had: when you appeal to the public for information or comments, there's always somebody out there who might want to even a score with somebody and might provide some faulty information. We have still, nevertheless, identified this site that's identified as site 15 on the sheet that I'm going to table as one that we're going to monitor during phase 2 of the pollution probe.

The fourth site is an old car body shop which is identified as site 9, which is on the outskirts of the city of Edmonton. I repeat: it's an old car body shop. It was identified by the caller as an abandoned industrial landfill. And we were aware that there was an old car body shop previously on the particular site, and we're going to follow up during phase 2 of the help eliminate landfill pollution program.

Mr. Speaker, of the 76 responses that we have received, 61 have been dealt with and basically turned over for other administration within Alberta Environment to deal with or resolve. Fifteen sites basically were then left. Eleven were basically viewed as not really having any potential of a hazardous situation. Four were considered potentially hazardous. I've dealt with the four potentially hazardous sites in the response that I've just given to Motion for a Return 179. And I want to make it very clear that at this point in time our review is that these sites pose no immediate hazard.

Now, phase 2 of the help eliminate landfill pollution program will see us develop and carry out action plans to confirm the existence of the abandoned sites -- the four basic that I've talked about -- to determine an action plan at each of the sites and assess the work required to deal with each of these. And if phase 2 turns up a problem, we'll then go into phase 3, which will be the actual follow-up of the work identified to ensure completion of proper cleanup, disposal, and reclamation.

Mr. Speaker, we have accepted the question, and I'm pleased to file with the Legislative Assembly the appropriate numbers of copies in the response for Motion for a Return 179. Members will see that there are 15 land descriptions that are identified in the particular sheet; also, the nearest city or town has been identified, and I've also included a map that shows the various points in the province of Alberta where that might be.

But it's important, Mr. Speaker, because of the interests of this particular help eliminate landfill pollution program that I make those points and have those points in *Hansard* of the province, because at this point in time there's absolutely no concern for anybody.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.



[Motion carried]

196. On behalf of Mr. Younie, Ms Barrett moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all applications for permission to spray a herbicide or herbicides in a forest area or forest areas received at the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife and the Department of Energy and Natural Resources between April 1, 1985, and March 31, 1987, inclusive.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government. Motion for a Return 196 is absolutely redundant. Earlier this afternoon the government accepted Question 195, which is much more explicit and would provide a great deal more information that is being requested than 196. All 196 would require us to do is simply xerox the same short, précis form of the material that's been requested in Question 195 that the government has already accepted.

I would now ask members to simply reject 196 as being totally redundant.

[Motion lost]

198. Mr. Mitchell moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all contracts, agreements, leases, and letters of commitment that have been entered into between:

- (1) the government of Alberta, government of Alberta departments, government of Alberta Crown corporations, or any of their agents, and
- (2) Olympia & York concerning the leasing of space in the Olympia & York building development proposed for Jasper Avenue between 101st Street and 102nd Street in Edmonton.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I'd like to make it clear to the hon. member and share with all members of the House that we are in the process of leasing approximately six million square feet of space throughout the province. That six million square feet of space is covered by somewhere in the neighbourhood of 800 different leases. In the community that we're working in out there in the real world, lease documents are treated as confidential, and hence I am rejecting the question.

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

MS BARRETT: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me that government intention to reject this motion betrays what's really gone on between this government and certain contractors, one of whom was the Conservative campaign manager in the last election. Now, it is public knowledge that Les . . .

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of order, hon. minister?

MR. ISLEY: The motion for a return is dealing with the relationship between the government and Olympia & York only.

MS BARRETT: Well, that's fair enough, Mr. Speaker. It's true; the motion does address the Olympia & York issue. On

the other hand, that's the company which will be constructing the property on premises, on property as arranged for purchase by a certain person who's known to be a well-connected Conservative.

Now, the minister has explained, so-called, his reason for not wanting to provide the information to the Assembly. As I recall, last week that very minister said "Yes, I can confirm the deal is done," and "No, I'm not going to tell you how much we're going to pay for the property," and "No, I'm not going to tell you what the range of that lease price is." It seems to me that if the negotiations are already done, and if the deal is signed and sealed, and if, as the minister contends, the negotiations will not be subject to any fluctuation until after phase 1 is built, as in when phase 2 starts -- that's when the Alberta taxpayers are really going to get socked, I suspect -- then what has this minister got to lose by revealing the terms and conditions of the lease?

This minister has defended his right to go through any kind of process that he deems worthy, that he deems honourable, that he deems appropriate, despite the importance, particularly in terms of public perception, of going into open tendering processes. He says, "We can't do that, not once we've decided where it is that we want to construct, where we want to move our offices to." But of course not; of course, that's just the point, Mr. Speaker. If you want to purchase or lease space in downtown Edmonton, you can put out a tender to a number of office buildings and their managers and let them compete naturally in the race to get your business. Nothing in the world, as far as I know, directs this government to locate office space on Jasper Avenue and 101st Street, the most expensive land in all of Edmonton. I don't remember that being an election issue.

What is it that this minister is trying to hide? Why is it that he won't give us that information? Is he afraid that the building owners, who currently have office space vacancy rates between 17 and 20 percent, will scream blue murder when they find out how the taxpayers' dollars are going to be used to support the construction of a building with which this government intends to occupy three-quarters of its space on the untendered process? Isn't that the reason this minister doesn't want to give it to us, Mr. Speaker? I suspect that's true. I suspect it is further true that all the little Tory connections are going to become available in this whole little game as perpetrated by the minister.

Now, I'd like to point out something that this government wants to talk about all the time, and that is freedom of information, how important it is that the electorate really know what's going on. "Yes siree, and how them other parties, by God -- jeez, they do things behind closed doors that no one would believe; make your hair just curl." Right? Well, I can think of a government that historically and consistently spent way more time behind closed doors in cabinet pursuing orders in council than was spent in this Assembly defending its budget on an annual basis, given that we've only got 25 days to do that, Mr. Speaker. If this government is so concerned . . . [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Order please. The Chair is considering, and would refer hon. members to *Beauchesne*, citation 390(2)(e), (g), and (n). The Chair is reviewing that at the moment relating to the release of information between government and other people that may be construed as confidential. The Chair is considering that at this moment and simply raises that for the benefit of the hon. members and the Member for Edmonton Highlands.

Member for Edmonton Highlands.

MSBARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That makes this debate even more interesting, because if in fact it was the government's intention to cite *Beauchesne* 390(2), which by the way refers to, in section (d):

Papers, the release of which might be detrimental to the future conduct of federal-provincial relations or the relations of provinces *inter se*

and in (e):

Papers containing information, the release of which could allow or result in direct personal financial gain or loss by a person or a group of persons.

or any other citation, it in fact proves what I've been speculating about, Mr. Speaker, that if in fact this information becomes public, every citizen in the province is going to hit the roof. They'll be demanding an election. And they won't be doing it by nice little notices that they signed from little adverts in the daily newspapers, by God. They'll be standing outside the doors asking: "What's going on? Where's the patronage heading in this province?" That's what they'll want to know. So if the government would like to defend its position of closed door, so-called democracy on the basis of *Beauchesne* citation 390, let 'em.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the motion for information, it's just absolutely astounding that any minister would deny to the House and through the House to the public of Alberta a contract that he has made on behalf of the taxpayer that he admits may run for 10, maybe 15 years. The minister, by his own admission, of course, says that the government leases six million square feet of office space. If we would take the minister's conclusion in this particular case to its ultimate conclusion -- ultimate nonsensical conclusion, I might add -- it means six million square feet a year. At even \$10 a square foot, that's \$60 million a year that this minister could be handing out to friends, associates, acquaintances, broken down Tories and whatever else of the taxpayers' money without any effort to have to reveal it to the Legislature.

It just staggers the imagination that he could argue that somehow or another that is jeopardized. This is a signed contract. I'll agree, Mr. Speaker, if he was negotiating a contract, it may not be wise to reveal what has been done, but this is something committed -- signed in blood, hopefully, even if it's Tory blood or blue blood. The point is that it's a contract that the citizens of Alberta will have to pay for for the number of years ahead regardless of whether they win re-election or not, and it's highly doubtful that they will.

But the point is this, Mr. Speaker: he has taken it upon himself to probably thumb his nose, you might say, at one of the most ancient rights in a democracy, and that is for the citizens to have a right to know what their government has contracted them out to do, what their government has put on the books. We have a budget speech. We set so many days apart for debate. We do all kinds of things, we in the Liberal Party, and in order to bring this government maybe to some sort of conclusion -- or we'll be launching a suit if they don't come across with how they handle the \$110 million they've got pocketed away.

A hundred and ten million by the minister of career development in sports funds comes to small-time potatoes when you realize that if this minister gets away with what he can do, renting property all around without referring to anyone, without being any way, shape, or form accountable to the people of Alberta... I would suspect that the minister may think he's being cute, and the people alongside him may say: "Oh well, move

adjournment. Whatever it is, we'll hold it. We'll go vote for it." But they will pay and pay and pay again in the next election, Mr. Speaker, for having thumbed their nose at the taxpayers of Alberta and said: "It doesn't matter. I am going to keep it quiet. I don't care what they think."

Thank you.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Speaker, this issue, this motion for a return, begs a lot of questions which the minister and the government could very easily at this point take the opportunity provided to them to answer. They've chosen not to, and maybe for good reason, because obviously they know something that the rest of us don't know, and they want to keep that knowledge confidential, private, and behind closed doors.

I find that interesting, Mr. Speaker. We've had motions for returns on the Order Paper many times in the few months that I've been a member of this Assembly. The ones most particularly of interest to me had to do with the financial arrangements surrounding Mount Allan and Nakiska resort. After some public pressure last summer the government accepted that motion for a return. Indeed, to his credit, the minister of recreation some time ago released those leases to this Assembly. Now, the question is: why is this one any different than that particular lease which was released only a few weeks ago in this Assembly? And previous to my term in this Assembly I'm also aware of the release of the lease affecting the Kananaskis golf course. Now, what would be different in this instance from those two as well?

The notion that a lease is, per se, somehow confidential and therefore not to be released -- Mr. Speaker, we have lots of precedents in this Assembly that are quite contrary to that particular position. Precedents have been set numerous times in which leases have been released to this Assembly, and no evidence or argument has been entered into the debate today by the minister responsible that would in any way, shape, or form give us any indication why this instance is any different than previous instances and previous precedents when a motion for a return was introduced.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, that it would be worth taking a little bit of time this afternoon to ask a few of the pertinent questions that people in the public are asking about this particular deal. If the minister chooses not to answer them, that's up to him. Because he well knows the kind of feeling there is in the financial community, the development community, and the real estate community in this city about the way this deal was handled. He knows there are an awful lot of people very angry about the way his department and his government handled this particular lease.

Let's just have a little look at what's going on in this particular city at this particular time and why people are so concerned about this particular deal. First of all, Mr. Speaker, we have to take a look at what kind of real estate office development is presently taking place in downtown Edmonton. Right now under construction is the Canada Place development. That's going to be 90 percent leased to the federal government. It's going to contain almost 900,000 square feet of office development and will be completed in about a year's time. So all of a sudden the federal government, by occupying 90 percent of that amount, is going to free up somewhere in the order of 750,000 to 800,000 square feet of office space in this market in this city in one year's time. At the present time in Edmonton the class A vacancy rate is somewhere in the order of 20 percent. On the basis of a 20 percent office rate, people are looking at coming onto the market in a year's time another 875,000 square feet; of that, about 600,000 in 1988.

If you look at the amount of space coming onto the market, then you have to compare it to what is the annual absorption rate in that same market. I'm informed by well-placed sources in the development community that in Edmonton somewhere in the order of 150,000 to 200,000 square feet of absorption rate is what you would expect each year in this particular market. If you just look at Canada Place, you see that that represents somewhere in the order of three-years' supply. That's coming onto a market that already has a high vacancy rate.

First of all, for those who own buildings in this city, they see what's happening by the decision to proceed with Canada Place and what that might mean to them and the rental rates that they would be able to achieve in leases that they hold now or are about to conclude. So in looking at the economics of this particular deal that the provincial government has signed, the question as to what the provincial government is paying or has signed or committed to in that particular lease is quite germane to our particular question this afternoon. It might tell us why this provincial minister is unprepared to make this lease available to the public at this particular time.

The people in the development business will tell you that in order to justify starting a new building at this particular time with, if you include land value, approximately \$100 per square foot to build a new office development, they would have to achieve somewhere in the order of \$17 a square foot rental rate in order to justify that particular project. So the question is whether the minister has signed a lease that commits the province when it takes possession of this particular office space, whether he's paying that particular lease rate.

If you were to take a look at what's going to become available in a year or two when the federal government moves into Canada Place, releasing 500,000 or so square feet of office development, he may, if he were to look at today's rental rates, be in a position to pay anywhere between \$7 to perhaps \$12 or \$13 a square foot. Mr. Speaker, if that's the case, the minister may well have committed this government to paying a premium double what he could get if he were to go out in today's marketplace and lease office space. And that is what the public wants to know first of all. For 400,000 square feet, if he's going to be paying a premium of double what he could get in today's market, then obviously he has not acted in the best interests of the taxpaying public who have to foot the bill for that. And when you look at that in relationship to a 400,000-square-foot office development, the dollar figures over the period of the lease could be very, very high indeed.

But, Mr. Speaker, the minister doesn't want to tell us that, because it may reflect... Well, I don't know. He won't say this himself, but I could perhaps surmise that under *Beauchesne*, citation 390(2)(f), papers which are excluded from having to be filed in this Legislature include "papers reflecting on the personal competence or character of an individual." It might well be that if we saw that lease, it might well reflect on the character and the ability of the minister to conclude a deal which is in the public interest for the taxpayers of this province.

Now, this deal is further complicated by some other factors. The government has in place a reasonably strict tendering process. The reason it's somewhat strict is in order to maintain integrity in the system of acquiring office development and office space for the government. This deal did not follow that process, and the question then becomes: why? And it comes back, Mr. Speaker, to the question as to why Olympia & York would invest in an office development in this particular market in this city at this particular time. If you look, as I said earlier,

at the absorption rate in the Edmonton market -- around 200,000 square feet a year. When you look at Canada Place coming on stream and add to it the 400,000 square feet which this government has tied into for the Olympia & York development, that represents at least five years' supply of office development in the Edmonton market. What that means is that not only does it represent five years' supply at the ongoing annual absorption rate you could expect in Edmonton, but at the end of that five-year period we'd still have a 20 percent vacancy rate, which is what exists at this particular time in this city in this market.

So one has to ask the question: in that kind of market why would Olympia & York, first of all, buy this land and, secondly, proceed with this particular development? It would then beg the question: what is the chronology of events leading up to this deal being signed? These are germane questions to this particular deal; these are questions the public is asking and to which so far this minister has given no clear, comprehensive response. So one can only surmise on the basis on which this deal proceeded.

First of all, the land would have to be assembled. And that was undertaken by a particular individual to which reference has been made a number of times in this Assembly in the past few weeks. You can't have a development unless you've got the land assembled on which that development would proceed. So obviously the first event that would occur in the chronology of events would be that the land would have to be assembled into one developable parcel.

The second, and this is the most important: no development group would undertake this kind of development unless there was a commitment from a group to lease that particular space. I come back to the marketplace. In today's market in this city with the vacancy rate and the lease rates that presently exist no one would undertake this kind of development unless the person assembling the land would have had at least a tentative agreement from a main tenant in that particular development. So the question is: when did the individual assembling the land get that commitment from the provincial government? Was it from the minister? Was he the person who had the authority to give that undertaking, or did that rest with the Premier? That would be an interesting question for someone on the government side to give us the answer. That is a very crucial question, Mr. Speaker, to which the public deserves an answer.

Mr. Speaker, once the tentative commitment was given, then the individual could proceed to take the land which had been assembled -- the tentative commitment from a tenant -- and proceed to meet with various developers to get the commitment to proceed with the development. Then it would make sense for that individual to see whether some development group would proceed with the development.

Finally, once that development group had made that final commitment, then and only then could the development group meet with the minister to sign on the bottom line as to the details of that particular lease.

The minister earlier this afternoon said that the questions which had been raised by my hon. colleague were not germane to the issue; the only thing germane was the agreement, the lease between Olympia & York developers and the government of Alberta. Mr. Speaker, there was much more that went on behind the scenes before this lease could be signed between those two parties, and those questions are what are on the minds of many people in this city and in this province today, as the minister well knows. Until he comes forward, or somebody who is in a position to know what the details and the chronology of those

events were comes forward to tell the public, there are going to continue to be a lot of very angry people very concerned about the way this government handles its business dealings and there will continue to be a lot of questions about the propriety of this particular lease.

Now, the minister may today decide that he is not going to make that lease public. That's very unfortunate not only for the public but for this government, because until those details are made public, this information and these questions are going to continue to be asked in this particular province by a lot of people, to the damage of the perceived integrity of the way this government proceeds with assembling land and signing leases. So while the minister may decide that he's going to hide behind the provisions of *Beauchesne*, there are some things that he cannot hide behind, and that is public perception and public attitude towards the way this government does business. If he wants to control the damage that's being done to his public relations and the image of his government, he would be well advised to come clean and release the details of this lease to this Assembly and to the public.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PIQUETTE: I also, Mr. Speaker, would like to speak on the order of the Assembly to issue for a return showing a copy of all contracts, agreements, leases, and letters of commitment that have been entered into between the government of Alberta and this department and Olympia & York and all the issues concerning the leasing of space in the Olympia & York building development proposed for Jasper Avenue between 101st and 102nd in Edmonton.

The government, the minister, by refusing to table this information, this lease that he so proudly announced would create jobs in the city of Edmonton -- which is part, from what he indicated, a job creation program -- has also broken a precedent that happened in my own constituency of Athabasca-Lac La Biche. In a statement that he made in answer to the Official Opposition, he indicated that the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche was encouraging him to do such a thing, which is in terms of the private sector, in order to get some of these government buildings built. However, in the Athabasca-Lac La Biche constituency for the social service building I was given by the minister a copy of the bids that were entered into by the successful bidders and the unsuccessful bidders for that building in Lac La Biche. So in that case where the government made a good deal and it had an open tender, or it had disclosed to my constituents questions that they had asked me, the minister released those documents and made them public. I basically applauded him on that. And the company that did win the bid was a very definite low bid in today's marketplace. They were able to build the social services building in Lac La Biche and provide to the government a very low per square footage lease to the government.

Now, if this minister was so proud of releasing this document to me, then why is he also not following the same example here in this situation? The situation is identical except in the fact that he didn't have open tender. I guess that's what he's afraid of releasing to the public, that this was a prior agreement that the minister or the Premier had agreed to prior to perhaps the election being called. We don't know; we are speculating here.

There appears to be a lot of incomplete information here. It appeared the land assembly was started a few hours or a few days after the provincial election. Now, there are too many interconnected people here who supported the Conservative

Party during the leadership bid of the Premier and also the whole provincial campaign in terms of donations to the Conservative Party, to bring forth into the public's mind about the whole propriety of this agreement. I really don't think the minister is answering for himself I think he's really being ordered by perhaps the Premier here to not release the documentation, the lease agreement, because the party might be too ashamed of some of the backroom dealing that was occurring by the public works department.

So this whole idea here of accountability -- this government has prided itself that it has been a business government, that it's been able to tackle issues in a very businesslike attitude, that it has kept at arm's length away from such thing as Vencap, for example, where the minister today indicated that we don't want to be interfering in terms of small business equity or how loans are given out to small businesses in Alberta. But on the other hand, here we have a situation where the government has entered into private negotiation with a private firm, at the exclusion of all others, which is not at all what the minister of economic development indicated today that he was doing with his department.

So I raise on behalf of my constituency and the people of Alberta a very grave concern. I think the credibility of all political parties is at stake when there's not freedom of information, when ministers try to play behind closed doors, when a taxpayer's money appears to be the private domain of a minister who says, "I speak on behalf of everybody," without considering that if they are speaking on behalf of everybody, then everyone needs to have the same information that he has in his department.

So I would urge this government, if they want to retain any kind of credibility with the public that there's nothing to be ashamed of, there's no backroom deal, that the minister table the lease agreement that has been entered with Olympia & York the same way that he did in the Lac La Biche area when he tabled to me the lease agreement and the successful bidder and the per square footage agreement that he had entered into with Jactar development of Sherwood Park to build a government building for the Social Services department in the region of Lac La Biche.

So I don't think that is unreasonable. It's a very logical kind of precedent that's been done by other ministers; for example, the Minister of Recreation and Parks. I'd like to compliment him. He originally refused to table the necessary information but relented, saw the logic of the Official Opposition, that these were agreements that the public wanted to know how much return we were getting for money invested as taxpayers. And now we have another minister, which I really don't think -- if I know the minister personally, I think the order is coming from above somewhere, and I think he's squirming in his seat right now wondering how in the world he can get out of this situation here and maintain his own credibility in his own riding and maintain the credibility of the party without any moral support.

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

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise to make a few comments about Motion 198. It's merely asking the government to put forward documentation showing an agreement they entered into. The minister rightly pointed out that actually there's some information needed that isn't really asked for in the resolution exactly. It seems to me that we need to

know, Mr. Minister, who was the person who helped Mr. Mabbott to assemble that land for sale to Olympia & York. Olympia & York did not get involved until quite a number of parcels of land were in fact assembled by one individual, that individual, of course, having the aid of Mabbott. He was the pipeline to the government to get the assurance about the leasing agreement.

Mr. Speaker, this government has gone one time too many to the well, if you like, of giving favours to their own friends. The businessmen of the downtown in Edmonton are very upset. BOMA is very upset. They've sent many letters to the minister and to the Premier and copies to me indicating that they're very upset, asking all kinds of questions about this deal for many months now. The minister knows that, and he has not had good answers for them.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has indicated that the lease agreement has a lower and upper limit on it. Yet he won't tell us what those lower and upper limits are. He spends government money as if the people in this Assembly had no right to know what those terms or agreements say. He has claimed that this is a job-creation project; I submit that it's a capital formation project for one of his friends.

As to the government not releasing information because it's a private contract, we all know that's nonsense. Once an organization enters into an agreement with the government, that's public information or should be public information. There is no reason in the world to assume that a government can enter into such a thing as a private contract. The government is using taxpayers' money. Taxpayers' money has to be accounted for, and we should know exactly what is going on with that government money.

This minister has even broken his own tendering processes. He's stood here and run through what his tendering processes are over and over again and refused to answer what he's doing in this deal, and we know from what he has said now that he broke his own tendering procedures. So, Mr. Speaker, I don't think this minister has a leg to stand on. He should release the documents.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I would just like to say one or two words with regard to this request. What concerns me about the refusal of the request is the precedent we set in terms of contracts between government and some private agency, and where the funds of government will be used by the private agency for a certain purpose in order to -- they're certainly going to rent space. But we are making a commitment of payment out of on-going operating funds of the government of Alberta. And when we make commitments like that here in this Legislature on behalf of the general public of Alberta, then we as legislators should know what that commitment is and what the details of that commitment are so that we know whether it is a good arrangement with our public funds or not.

By the government refusing this, they could use this kind of example to refuse other contracts that are between the government and the private sector. And I have said over and over again in this Legislature that any time anyone in the private sector, whether corporate or individuals, receives one dollar, even a fraction of a cent, from public funds, that should be totally exposed and made public through this medium, the Legislature; no question. The arguments that I have heard up to this point in time in terms of job creation, that argument has nothing to do with the issue at hand, public information, one bit. It should not even enter into the discussion that's before us, because something that may be wrong, and I'm not saying it is wrong,

shouldn't be diverted into an argument about job creation, which may be a good argument. It's great to create jobs. Let's keep the focus on what we're talking about here today.

I would think that the minister, if making a good arrangement for the government on behalf of the people with Olympia & York, would gladly table that arrangement in the Legislature and boast about the good deal that he made on behalf of the people of Alberta, not boast about the 4,000 jobs that tries to divert our attention, but boast about the fact that he made a good deal: he's got the cheapest arrangement possible, he's saving money for the taxpayers, and he had to do it now to get that good deal for us in a couple of years. But I'd have to say very clearly that I'm not convinced of that at the present time. A shadow lies over the minister and lies, in turn, over the government because of handling it in this manner; no question about it.

Before the vote comes on this particular issue, as a minister, take it back to cabinet and take it back to your colleagues in caucus and reconsider the position you have taken on the matter, because once the debate is closed by the mover of the motion and we vote, and you vote against it, that sets precedent, seals the matter, and the government has to live with the implications of that decision. I would certainly recommend that they reconsider that and reconsider the fact that they are establishing a precedent that's not a good one for any legislators, any Legislature. And whether it is the Conservative government, the Liberal government, the NDP or Representative government in this province, we should not set precedents where information is kept from the people.

So, Mr. Speaker, in my debate I just ask the minister to reconsider the decisions that have been made to this point.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I think it's fairly clear from question period where I stand on this particular issue, and there have been some very good points made here today that I think the minister should take heed of. I think, as the Member for Little Bow says, if we wanted a government to commit hari-kari, just keep doing the things that this government is doing.

Mr. Speaker, the sad part of all this, though, when these types of things come up and we don't see an open tendering process: it's not just this provincial government; it's all of us in public life. It just adds, if I may say, Mr. Speaker, to the cynicism that people have for all politicians regardless of their stripe. And we as politicians are kidding ourselves if we do not think that this is running rampant in Alberta and in Canada at this particular time. And this is what they expect. Behind closed doors, politicians make decisions to help themselves with their friends: this is precisely what it looks like. It certainly looks like this to us. If this wasn't the case, then I would expect that this information, as the Member for Little Bow, would be laid out and they would justify it and tell us that we're all wrong and prove that we're all wrong. But because they are not prepared to do this, then we have to question it.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

The other thing I say, Mr. Speaker, is that during this time there seems to have been an unusual hurry to get this together. As I pointed out last week in question period, this started a week after the election of the Assembly, and by July one particular individual had most of the property together. The minister says, "Oh yeah, but all sorts of other developers were there." We can't find out who they are, and when we're talking to people in the downtown business area, other developers, they don't seem

to know anything about it. So that's why this type of information is absolutely crucial in terms of deciding whether this is a good deal or not.

We find out for example, too, that this is 400,000 square feet probably of the best office space that will be around in Edmonton. At the same time, we're buying the federal building, for another 200,000 square feet, but the minister says we'll need this. Well, that's another aspect of it. I don't think most taxpayers and most Edmontonians believe that at this particular time.

But the other thing that makes it bad, Mr. Speaker, if we don't know the information on this: this is a time when the Provincial Treasurer is taking over a billion dollars away from ordinary people; the government is going across the province telling people that we have to restrain ourselves, that we're spending too much money. At the same time, we're making secret deals for space that we probably don't need. And I say to the government: when they refuse to do this, it's you that's going to pay the political price for these types of behind-the-scene deals. Tendering is an extremely important part of the integrity of any government, and this government better move towards open tendering. And I'll tell you this, Mr. Speaker, that in our conversations with people -- and they have been good, card-carrying Conservatives. Mind you, I use the terms "good" and "card-carrying Conservative" rather loosely. But they are sick and tired of this, and these are people that have talked to us about this particular issue.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are two issues here. One, why we've been advocating a code of ethics in the way government does business; the government says, "Oh no, we don't need it; we don't need it." Well, I'll tell you, the people of Alberta think we need it. The other one is the freedom of information that's been alluded to. And I say to this government and I say as directly as I can that both those are important issues, and if you don't think that the average person thinks they're important, you're just not listening.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a funny thing that happens, though, when governments become closed and they don't want to give out the information to people. You know, a funny thing happens. [interjections] Look at them; they're getting annoyed. This is what happens to governments: inevitably the truth does come out, because enough people become sick and tired of closed government that eventually the truth comes out. And if I was this minister, with all the people downtown that are as upset as they are, I would be very concerned, because eventually the truth is going to come out in this matter, even if the government doesn't want to give us the truth, Mr. Speaker.

I say in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that I'm extremely disappointed but not surprised that they're not prepared to give us this information. And I say again to the minister that I don't know who is responsible for this, who's responsible for the deal and who's responsible for saying that we can't have the information on this, and we're dealing with a significant amount of taxpayers' money. But the truth will come out eventually, even if the government tries to close it. There's much more out there than the government is aware of. So in conclusion, as I say, it doesn't surprise me, but it shows that this government is unprepared to deal with the public in an open, aboveboard way, and that's too bad for all of us, but it's especially too bad for this government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what more can be

added to heap the abuse that this government deserves on this matter any more, but in terms of the representative for the downtown centre, someone who had their own campaign office in the block between 101st and 102nd streets in downtown Edmonton, I've come to know the business community and the people who live and work in downtown Edmonton. And the number of people that work for the provincial government and who see the priorities of this government being so hypocritical in terms of their edifice complex, an edifice complex which is nothing but build more and more and more buildings and spend more and more money on maintaining those buildings . . . We have the minister of hospitals now backtracking on hospitals, wanting less and less beds for Albertans after the previous hospitals minister had spent so many millions of Albertans' dollars on hospitals and hospital beds in this province. When is this minister going to get straight the fact that Albertans don't want any more money spent on buildings and office space. They're downsizing the government. Let's spend money on people, on people services and people programs.

Mr. Speaker, I must say in all honesty how I so welcome this, as we've said, that this is going to more than anything else deliver the kinds of votes that are going to solidify at least my seat in this city, as well as the seats of other New Democrats and other people around this province who are fed up with this kind of government and this kind of mismanagement of dollars it spends. I would just ask the minister if he can just keep on. Keep on, Mr. Minister, because it's going to help in the further bankruptcy as we've seen with the Mulroney Tories, the Mulroney government: the hypocrisy, the waste, the patronage, the misallocation, and plummeting through the polls. It's going to be a wonderful day when this minister continues, with his Conservative counterparts, to send this government through the floor of the polls and has what's really going to show the true colours of this government's real priorities.

The lease agreement is all we ask for. The lease agreement, Mr. Speaker, an honest request, as has been stated over and over again: open government, honesty in government, a sense of fairness for all people, and that's what . . .

MR. NELSON: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to refer to *Beauchesne*, 320. Mr. Speaker, the member has been using the term "hypocrisy" and what have you, and under *Beauchesne* "hypocritical" is unparliamentary discussion. I would suggest . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Unfortunately, hon. Member for Calgary McCall, since 1958 it has been regarded as being parliamentary.

The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, as the Assembly is not to sit tonight, I move the Assembly adjourn until tomorrow at 2:30, and the hon. Member for Edmonton Centre did indeed adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: The first of the two motions before us: Member for Edmonton Centre to adjourn debate. Those in favour please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

The second motion as delivered by the hon. Government House Leader: all those in favour please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

[At 5:29 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

