

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**Title: **Wednesday, November 25, 1987 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 87/11/25

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

**PRAYERS**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We give thanks to God for the rich heritage of this province as found in our people.

We pray that native-born Albertans and those who have come from other places may continue to work together to preserve and enlarge the precious heritage called Alberta.

Amen.

head: **PRESENTING PETITIONS**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I present a petition today on behalf of 57 investors in First Investors and Associated Investors of Canada who seek a reconvention of the Code inquiry such that the mandate of the inquiry is expanded to empower the inquiry to investigate government liability in the failure of these two companies.

head: **PRESENTING REPORTS BY  
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the report of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing in response to Government Motion 9 in relation to matters dealing with order and privileges of the Assembly.

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the response to Motion for a Return 209 and also reports that are required by statute, annual reports of various educational institutions.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of tabling the annual report for 1986-87 for the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of tabling the Alberta Library Board annual report ended March 31, 1987.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, 41 students from Lorelei elementary school in the Edmonton-

Glengarry constituency. They are accompanied today by four teachers: Mr. C. Ross, Miss Fortin, Mrs. Niskanen, and Mr. Luard. I would ask them to rise in the members' gallery and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, another group of investors in the Principal Group Ltd. If they would rise now, we'll greet them in the customary manner.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to present to you and to the members of the Assembly today, 54 students from Greenview school in the constituency of Edmonton-Mill Woods, which is only one block from my home actually, I'm very pleased to have with them their two teachers Mr. Don Briggs and Mr. Gerry Mittlestadt, as well as two student teachers Laurie Bawol and Cathy Wood. I'd ask them to now rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, 15 grades 6 to 12 students from the Agape Training Centre, which is located in the constituency of Edmonton-Beverly. They are joined by their teachers Mr. Dave Eifert and Fred Morck, who is also doubling today as the bus driver. Also joining the students is a parent Miss Arleigh Bekpedersen, Would they please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Red Deer-South.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, 14 special guests and friends of mine from sunny Red Deer. They are here with Branch 35 of the Red Deer Legion, I would mention, Mr. Speaker, that a number of these friends have given me some very sound and helpful advice over the years. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the warm reception of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: My goodness, all of Red Deer today. Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to single out a dynamic couple who are here today in the gallery and have been vitally involved in the research and publication of Alberta's most recent historical volume. *The Little Village That Grew* is the title of it, and it commemorates 75 years of the history of north Red Deer. Mr. and Mrs. Caton are with us here today. I'd like them to stand and be recognized for the good work that they were involved in there.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

MR. SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I beg leave for indulgence for half a moment.

Hon. members, yesterday the Chair, during the course of question period, was a bit concerned about the use of some of the terms that were used with regard to terms that were reflecting upon other members in this House. The Chair does not need to remind hon. members that the word "honourable" imports

many things. One of these things is the requirement that members address each other with respect and do not impute false or avowed motives. For this reason, I would caution all hon. members to use more care in the terms and phrases used in debate and adhere at all times to proper use of the English language, and I'll try to use it myself.

Yesterday was a bit more difficult for the Chair in that the leaders of two of the caucuses represented in the House were the individuals that were involved. So the Chair just gently admonishes the House that locker-room talk or colloquial insults neither enhance nor bring respect to the high office which every hon. member finds himself or herself in, and the Chair sincerely hopes that members will exercise greater care and show more respect for this Chamber when addressing each other in the future.

### Fiscal Policies

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the first question to the Provincial Treasurer. The Provincial Treasurer has finally admitted what the Official Opposition has been telling him since last March, that the budget revenues were underestimated, and this was probably deliberate in the 1987 budget.

Mr. Speaker, the government then went on an unprecedented tax gouging of average Albertans to over a billion dollars. My question to the Treasurer: is he now prepared to recognize the fact that he may have imposed too much in the way of taxes on average Albertans? I would remind him that we had tax hikes, new taxes, flat taxes, and surtaxes all in that budget.

MR. JOHNSTON: First of all, Mr. Speaker, let it be clear that I do resent the indication that we as a government attempted to mislead the people of Alberta. If those are in fact the words that the hon. Leader of the Opposition referred to, I would hope he would reconsider those, because there was no attempt at all to do just that. I don't think he intended that.

With respect to the fiscal plan which we put forward, it should be noted that we are very fortunate in this province to have had an oil revenue increase above what was forecast. This forecast, I think, was debated here. It's interesting to note there was not unanimity on behalf of the opposition members. One party said it was too high, and the other party said it was too low. We said it was \$17. Actually, for the first time we made an estimate as to what the actual forecast would be, and that forecast was very close, if my memory is right, to what the federal government used as well. But in this very difficult time, Mr. Speaker, of course it's hard to make a forecast and very difficult to take a risk which would have seen our deficit increase more than it had.

For that reason, we had to take some composite view which brought together an available amount of resources which we have in this province, including the oil and gas sales. We had to ask the people of Alberta to pay a bit more, in reference to the member's question, to still maintain the lowest tax regime in Canada with no sales tax and, at that same time, to maintain the highest expenditure of any province in Canada. I should note that notwithstanding that, the Conference Board of Canada has picked Alberta's economy to be the strongest in 1988, and that should be a matter of record in the context of our fiscal plan for 1987-88.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure average Albertans would be interested that a billion dollars is a bit of a tax grab, just a bit

My question then: in view of the comments from the minister that he recognizes that we are going to have more revenues, would he then do the proper and the correct thing and return that extra money to average Albertans so they could spend that money and create some employment in this province?

MR. JOHNSTON: Again, Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the Member for Edmonton-Norwood has been in the past six months, but clear evidence has been shown that the unemployment rate in this province is reducing to the lowest level we have seen for the last three to four years. That is as a result of the fiscal plan, and that clearly follows from the importance we have placed on manpower training and certainly the response of the private sector in terms of new capital formation in this province, committed, promised, and now under way. Revitalization is taking place as promised, Mr. Speaker, and new economic growth is ahead.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's the type of callous answer the unemployed in this province -- and there are thousands of them. Let's be crystal clear what this minister is saying. Is he saying that even though he gouged Albertans unfairly in the last budget, he's not prepared to give a tax discount to any Albertans at this particular time, that they're not going to do anything about this, Mr. Speaker?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, we're not in the tax discounting business. We're in the business of setting forth a reasonable plan for Albertans, one which takes consideration of the ability of this province to recover from the devastation of 1986 while maintaining a very equitable plan in terms of the expenditure profile, maintaining a profile which throws priority on education, on hospitals, on those people who are not able to pay for themselves, and on job creation.

Those are the key thrusts that were in that budget, Mr. Speaker, and it's important that they're put back and on the table right now, because it's the context in which we argue. It's the context which set forth the plan which has been accepted by the people of this province. In that context it's safe to say our plan is on point. We are moving ahead with this plan, and as I've further indicated, the private sector is responding to this kind of leadership.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, maybe his corporate friends tell him that but talk to average Albertans about what they've done.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask this Treasurer again: in view of the fact that there may be an extra half a billion dollars there, is he not prepared to lower taxes for average Albertans to stimulate the economy and perhaps create another 10,000 jobs? Is he not prepared to do this?

MR. JOHNSTON: There's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that this government will use every economic lever available to it. In terms of stimulating the economy, we're maintaining a very high profile expenditure -- some \$11 billion of expenditure is taking place in this province, a capital works project which is not matched anywhere in Canada on a per capita basis -- and at the same time maintaining the lowest level of taxation in this province. No sales tax, Mr. Speaker, as I've noted, but also a personal income tax regime which has taken more than 500,000 Albertans off the tax rolls. We have geared our tax regime to be targeted to those people who have less income, and that is the clear plan which we have put across. To say anything else is not

speaking the truth to the people of Alberta.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, to the Treasurer. Will he, at the very least then under these new circumstances, now undertake to redress the problems caused by cutbacks in education, health care, and so on that have created unemployment, that have caused serious difficulties for Albertans. Alberta institutions, and many of those who work in them?

MR. JOHNSTON: With respect, Mr. Speaker, it's very difficult to argue that there have been cutbacks in education or cutbacks in health or medicare. Both of those budgets, as has been debated here, have in fact expanded. We know there has been some need to deal with the deficit, and that's been at the heart of that.

I should say as well that we unfortunately had to collect one year's tax in the six-month period. That adjustment will take place on January 1, 1988, when in fact the annualized tax impact will work through the system, and there'll be an actual reduction in taxes as a result of that.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the federal government will introduce a ways and means Bill which will reflect their tax changes proposed for 1988, which as well will reduce the tax not only at the federal level but at the provincial level under the current regime.

So those are now working through, Mr. Speaker, but it should be noted that this economy is responding very well. The new capital formation and new investment intentions are very high, and unemployment, although there is still unemployment in this province, is moving in the right direction.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Provincial Treasurer for clarification. Could the minister indicate what would be the intended dispensation of that half a billion dollars? Would it be towards lowering of debt borrowing by the government of Alberta in the current fiscal year, or would it be carried over into the next fiscal year to be applied to various government programs?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, that's a very, very important point. Let's be clear on one thing. As all members know, the revenues of this province are a basket of revenues. It's not one item that's going to set in place the profits or losses or, if you like, the reduction of deficit. It's true that the oil prices are up and land sales are up as well, but we should note that gas sales are down in terms of the actual addition to revenues, and we do not have a very good number with respect to the corporate tax collections or, for that matter, the personal tax collections. Therefore, it's a bit premature to say that we're going to have some kind of a super reduction of the deficit.

But should that deficit be reduced, Mr. Speaker, then obviously the province will not have to go to the markets to the extent that we need to under our forecast, and therefore our borrowings would be down. Eventually, because this government has put forth a fiscal plan which shows how we will move between now and 1990-91, one which sets forth a policy to reduce the deficit and one which shows our intention to do just that, then of course we would, if we had any additional surpluses or any significant surpluses generated by other unforeseen revenues -- that would go to reducing the outstanding debt. That's been the commitment we've made, and I think generally those have been the suggestions given to us by the people of Alberta.

### Principal Group

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Principal fiasco, on Monday of this week and then again yesterday the Premier made reference to the government's expenditure of "millions and millions and millions of dollars" on behalf of the investors. Now, one recent special warrant gave \$2 million to the Code inquiry to conduct its investigation and another \$200,000, in my reading, to the Ombudsman to conduct his investigation, the total of which comes to \$2.2 million.

Now, I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer, as the keeper of the public purse: can he advise whether or not this \$2.2 million is the total amount referred to by the Premier this week in terms of the government's assistance to the investors in this matter, or is there more money -- and if there is, where? -- that is going to be expended in this regard?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the \$2.2 million is not all the money we anticipate spending on the Principal affair.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Sure, a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the Provincial Treasurer aware that the investors themselves are of the opinion that a public inquiry -- that is, conducted in the public, unlike the Ombudsman's inquiry, and able to reach conclusions about the government's negligence, unlike the Code inquiry -- is not only preferable but greatly preferable to either or both?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I think we have explained. I think it's reasonable that I can explain again, because it does take some repetition for the members of the opposition to understand the process here. This inquiry set up under the court and headed by Mr. Code is in fact a public inquiry, but where it does have additional strengths is in the fact that Mr. Code has to report back to the court. That should be known. So it is in fact unfair to say or to leave the impression that the Principal investigation will not be done in public. In fact, it will.

MS BARRETT: Well, a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I'll ask the Treasurer if he recalls in his previous capacities here in the Assembly the expenditure in 1981 on the Brennan inquiry of some \$214,000 -- that was a public inquiry -- and the most expensive one to date, the Cavanagh public inquiry into the child welfare system, conducted in 1980 at a cost of \$611,000. Does he recall those instances of those expenses?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I would be really stretching the credibility of the House and my own if I said I remember those expenditures. Of course I do not.

MS BARRETT: Well, a final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the Provincial Treasurer, in the best interests of properly spending Alberta taxpayers' dollars, now suggest to his colleagues in cabinet that the more efficient procedure to follow from here on in is to establish a proper, full, open public inquiry which is not limited in its scope of questioning or conclusions, which would give them twice the useful results at perhaps half

the cost?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, again only to clarify what in fact is the process. We would not want to leave any impression that this process is not one which is open and public, because of course we have made the point over and over again, and have made it just recently, that it is a public inquiry. As others have indicated, the investigator, Mr. Code, who has been appointed by the court and who must report publicly back to the court, has the right to subpoena witnesses, to call testimony, and to go back to the court itself to seek additional direction or to subpoena additional documents if necessary. All this is in the range of public inquiry. It will be done in a public way, but there will be an opportunity here for everyone to appear who wishes. As a matter of fact, today I just received word that I will be called to testify and to give the government's view on this.

With respect to the expenditures, Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear that because we wanted to get this process under way and because we were encouraged by the response from the contract holders themselves who wanted to get this process under way as well, we immediately put in place a \$2 million special warrant. Now, we don't intend that that's the total amount of money which will be used. We expect that more will be required. As the Premier has pointed out, because our commitment is so significant and so vast in terms of paying not just for the Code inquiry but paying for the special counsel and paying for the committee itself but also paying for part of the costs of liquidating those two companies, which will amount to millions of dollars and which essentially will go into the hands of the contract holders and the creditors themselves, that is a significant dollar commitment. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, those numbers are not now revealed to us because they haven't been calculated. When they are revealed and when they are there, we'll make those payments, and it will be a very significant cost to all Albertans.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you. To the minister. The Ombudsman has stated in his letter of October 16 that he has doubts with respect to the ability of Mr. Code to make conclusions with respect to the government's regulatory process. Is the minister aware of any basis for the Ombudsman's statement?

MR. SPEAKER: The difficulty is that the original line of questioning is with regard to costs. It's not a matter of the interpretation of regulations; therefore, the question shouldn't be answered.

Main question, leader of the Liberal caucus.

### Financial Industry

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, maybe before I get under way, I have a bit of a problem. As you probably will recall, yesterday . . . [interjection] The biggest problem is over there, I know. But as you probably recall, yesterday you ruled most of my questions out of order. Then at your request I sent you a written list of the questions, and last night you very kindly sent me the information that I could ask two of them. So I have two points. I'd like to ask those two which you had ruled out of order. I would like the Treasurer to answer those now; I can repeat them. Maybe also, Mr. Speaker, while we're at it, just a point of . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please in the whole House. The member is indeed raising a very important issue, because we haven't had a chance to engage in this process to allow how a written question which had been submitted to the Chair may then be reintroduced the next day. So it really isn't fair for other quarters of the House to be shouting down at this time, and I beg . . .

DR. BUCK: [Inaudible] ask his question.

MR. SPEAKER: Please, hon. member, you weren't here yesterday. Perhaps you could wait half a moment.

DR. BUCK: I can read.

MR. SPEAKER: Congratulations.

The process would be, hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, that if you have another topic that you want to bring up as your lead question today, you can do that, or you could refer back to the two questions out of the five submitted that are indeed in order, you can use those. It's your choice, but go.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I understand I can ask the two that were ruled out of order yesterday because you have now ruled them in order, then go on to my main question. [interjections] Wait a minute, now. Mr. Speaker, you're a man of the cloth, and if you will check into chapter 25 of the gospel of St. Matthew it says, "I was a stranger and you took me in."

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Hon. member, thank you for bringing to attention one of my many previous occupations.

The Chair has suggested that the member can proceed with a new line of questions, and when that is finished, the Chair will recognize the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon for the two questions out of the five that were indeed in order.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll raise it as a point of order at that time.

Mr. Speaker, this is of course to the popular man of the hour, the Provincial Treasurer. We are aware that over \$14 billion worth of financial institutions have failed in Alberta. In the course of these failures the government has committed from time to time over \$1 billion in support and bailouts yet has provided no leadership in assessing the causes for these failures or setting the stage for the future of Alberta's financial industry.

Now, to the Provincial Treasurer: could he please confirm that the government lost \$125 million in the CCB and Northland bank failures, \$85 million in the preferred share designed to support North West Trust, currently has \$635 million at risk in the credit unions, and has lost \$45 million in the Treasury Branches last year? Is that your sad record of management?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, obviously there are questions of fact with respect to where we stand on CCB or Northland or what our exposure may well be in terms of dollar amounts in any other financial institutions. In my view, Mr. Speaker, seeking your advice here, that would be an appropriate matter for the Order Paper.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, would the Treasurer at least explain why, in spite of this colossal record of losses to the people of Alberta and through the government to the people of Alberta, there has not been any positive legislation or design to develop

the financial industry in this province? Not one positive bit of legislation has arisen out of these huge losses to date.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I already gave some indication earlier on in this fall session that it was clearly our intention to bring forward legislation in the spring of 1988 which would reflect the contemporary issues of those questions involving financial institutions. More specifically we'll be dealing with the trust company legislation, and certainly we'll be dealing with the credit union legislation. But that was on our normal course of legislative programming for the Treasury Department, and we will obviously adhere to that schedule and will, wherever possible and to the best of our ability, reflect the recommendations flowing from the Code investigation.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, this is fantastic. It's hard to believe. Ever since Dial Mortgage's management scuttled off and hid in the Premier's office, these things have been going haywire in this province, and now he says he's thinking about it. Can you give us any suggestion what policies or ideas he's going to put forward that will ensure these things will not occur again in the future?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's that kind of centralist notion, where government intervention dictates to the private sector, that would only give that kind of assurance. What we've experienced here in Alberta, of course, has been a significant erosion of asset values, primarily because of real estate devaluations over the past period from 1983 through to 1986, primarily in '86, driven by oil prices. As a result of that, there has been a serious erosion in asset values, and that's caused the problem.

But the problem, Mr. Speaker, is not unique just to Alberta. It should be known that in Canada as well, the major banks have lost a significant amount of money. Only because of their larger capitalization and perhaps their larger aid have they been able to those sustain losses. At the same time, significant losses in the financial sector in the United States have occurred, particularly in Texas, particularly in the United States, where well over 200 banks have failed. So to argue that it's unique to Alberta is improper, to argue that we're doing nothing about it is wrong, and to argue that we're not concerned about it is certainly misleading.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, one injury, an accident; maybe two going under is an accident, but when you have nine to 10 institutions going under, there has to be something wrong with the government. Could the Treasurer, now that he's suggested they're coming forward with their new legislation, go this far: could he tell us how he could possibly come forward with new legislation without opening it up for public review or public hearings to hear what the people of Alberta would like to see in the type of financial industry they want to see designed in the future?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, to suggest that we have not had public input is again wrong, and it's the kind of misrepresentation that is commonly found from across the way from the Liberal Party. What we have been doing clearly -- one example only is with respect to the credit unions; we have circulated draft working papers with respect to how we expect to move with the credit union legislation. That has been received. It's been debated and considered and obviously will be reflected

in the legislation which is proposed here.

We're also bringing forth a series of recommendations which will be considered by the private sector as well, and that obviously will be reflected in our legislation. That's the common policy of this government. That's the way in which we operate. Right now, for example, there are two key pieces of legislation which are out for public debate: the labour Act and the School Act. You can see clearly that our intention, our plan, our commitment is to seek public input wherever possible, and we're doing that in a variety of ways.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary on this question, Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the supplementary to the Provincial Treasurer is this: given that the then Consumer and Corporate Affairs minister had a document prepared by her department on exactly this issue in 1983, can he explain why it is that the government waited for yet more collapses to occur before changing the regulations?

MR. JOHNSTON: Again, Mr. Speaker. I'm not too sure of authenticity of that statement, and therefore I can't comment on it. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair has recognized Edmonton-Highlands. With respect to yesterday's unfinished business. Westlock-Sturgeon, two questions: Principal.

MR. TAYLOR: Can I bring my point of order beside the question or do it at the end? [interjection] This has to do with when I bring the question period up. Okay, it's a point of order, then, we can take up at the end of question period?

MR. SPEAKER: Absolutely.

### **Principal Group** (continued)

MR. TAYLOR: Okay. The question for the Treasurer is: in a matter of public record, two months after the Treasurer decided to dissolve First and Associated Investors of Canada, the Principal Group mutual funds were sold for a net value of \$15 million. It's also true that the same mutual funds were valued at between 120 and 140 the previous year by a Wood Gundy prospectus approved by the Alberta Securities Commission. The first question as you have approved here -- and I'm going to read it so that there's no question of straying at all from your edict: did the Treasurer consider action on June 30 that might have preserved the value of these mutual funds and other elements of the Principal Group which could then have been made available to support the investments of First and Associated Investors?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm not at all comfortable with this question. I'm not trying to take away any of the responsibility of the House leader, but in looking at your comments on page 1983 with respect to these written questions, you have indicated that it would be appropriate, "to submit written questions for the Order Paper." Those are your words. I haven't seen them on the Order Paper. I stand corrected.

MR. SPEAKER: Provincial Treasurer, that was indeed the import of the first set of remarks that were made on Monday, but

in due course, as followed up later in the day yesterday, it was pointed out that the matter could be submitted in written form for examination by the Table officers as a second alternative approach. So one is to do it to the written question for the Order Paper; in that way there's no discussion. It lessens the amount of frustration about questions being moved, ruled in order or out of order in the course of question period. So yesterday we did indeed say that there were two routes: submission of questions to the Table officers, which indeed has been carried out, and the response was made. So perhaps the Provincial Treasurer could proceed on this question on that line, please, or if the member would like it reread, that could also be done because of this exchange. Could the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon just reread the question, please?

MR. TAYLOR: To the Treasurer. I've never seen him at a loss for words, and I'm almost as lost for words to be able to repeat it. Did the Treasurer consider action on June 30, 1987, that may have preserved the value of these mutual funds and other elements of the Principal Group which could then have been made available to support the investments of First and Associated Investors?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm not at all comfortable with that question, first of all because it would require some careful and perhaps extended explanation by me as to the relationship between the contract companies, and in fact not so much the mutual fund companies but the management company that owns the mutual fund companies. To make the kinds of suggestions which are being made here is, in fact, in error in my view. Therefore, I can only say that, with respect to the mutual fund company evaluations, their value is not a question of what they're marketed for; it's a question of what their assets are and equal to the number of shares that are outstanding. It's calculated every day, and that value is one which is the publicly recorded number.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I think the Treasurer blew it and he knew it. Will the Treasurer explain why he did not adopt the procedure utilized in the United States whereby government could have moved in and managed the financial corporation, thus sustaining its value and avoiding the loss to First and Associated Investors?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, again the connection between the mutual fund business and the contract companies is not in fact a direct connection. Again, I must be very careful here because I'm sure this will be the essence of the Code inquiry. In providing an explanation, I should say that what was at the heart here was the need to protect the integrity of that group, hoping that at some point it could be sold or the entity itself could be sold. That was the broad side of our policy, but at the same time we needed to balance it with the fact that the losses -- at the time, I made some public comments about my view of the losses. Those will now be calculated by the various receivers. Nonetheless, those losses will have to be borne by the citizens of Alberta, the general taxpayers of Alberta, and that was the balance between the two positions.

#### **Taxation of Farmers**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture, and I'd like to ask questions on behalf of an in-

vestor group in this province that are also producers: the farmers of the province of Alberta. The federal Finance minister has before him a proposal to impose a modified accrual system of accounting on the farmers of Alberta. We as farmers were not consulted about that proposal. My question to the minister is: was the minister consulted prior to the presentation of the June 18, 1987, white paper that was made available to Canadians?

MR. ELZINGA: No, Mr. Speaker, I was not consulted. The hon. Provincial Treasurer has also had discussions with the Minister of Finance, so he might wish to supplement this.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to taxation of farms and farmers, the government of Alberta has taken a very strong stand opposed to the recommendations in the white paper, arguing that to make these kinds of adjustments at this time, when the farming community is under some stress, would be inappropriate. Personally, I made a very strong argument to Mr. Wilson that the accrual accounting system, for example, is inappropriate, that the rules applied to start-up farmers are not good, and that the offset of losses against other income would in fact be very detrimental to the farming/agricultural sector. We have made a very strong case on that point.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary, then, to the Provincial Treasurer. Could the minister indicate whether that presentation was a written presentation, and has it been made public? I don't think the farmers of Alberta are too aware of that at this time.

MR. JOHNSTON: We have had some written correspondence with Mr. Wilson, but now that the parliamentary committee has made its recommendations available, I believe on November 16, we will make a formal presentation in written form to Mr. Wilson. That will be going in the next day or so.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. Could the minister indicate whether the minister will be personally making representation besides sending this missive or edict to Ottawa? Will it be on a personal basis, and would the minister undertake to report back to this House the success of that representation?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'd be glad to do that. First of all, on November 5 we made a very strong case with respect to the way in which the white paper was treating taxation of farmers. We'll now follow that up with a written position subsequent to the Blenkarn committee. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, I believe on December 10 I will again be meeting with Mr. Wilson to discuss this issue and will take the advice of my hon. colleague from Little Bow and make a very strong-pointed statement and then will report back to the Assembly at some appropriate time as to what his perceived response may have been.

MR. SPEAKER: Further supplementary?

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Provincial Treasurer. I'm glad that he read my press release describing what would certainly be a farmer's nightmare and an accountant's dream. I'm wondering -- along with those recommendations is something concerning a definition of a so-called hobby farmer. That often is young farmers who find it necessary to work off the farm in order to supplement their income. Is it this

government's intention to advance a more reasonable definition of that class of farmer, or are you prepared to not discriminate against farmers in any way in terms of federal and provincial income tax proposals?

MR. JOHNSTON: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that we don't take our lead from NDP press releases. We are far out in front of this issue; we have taken hold of this issue some time. In concert with the Minister of Agriculture and other members of our caucus, we have taken a strong position opposed to the policy of the federal government on this point, and we'll maintain that position.

But I do agree, though, on the principle of the hobby farmer. As I indicated in my opening comments, I object to the way in which that's being handled, because in the four-year period, for the start-up farmer in particular, it's difficult to measure into the fifth year as to that transition, and we would argue that the status quo should be maintained with respect to the farm tax rules, perhaps providing for larger tax loss offset against other income to allow for the off-farm opportunity to work to build up an equity and to maintain the family income. That's the general principles under which we're operating, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to go back to the original question to the Minister of Agriculture. Just in case the Mulroney government does not listen to our Premier and his cabinet here -- stranger things have happened -- and they do go ahead with the accrual system of taxing farmers -- in other words, taxing a farmer for what he has on the property -- could the Minister of Agriculture assure us that he will press to see legislation in place that we do not have federal income tax inspectors wandering around, invading the privacy of our farmers, assessing what they have in stock and inventory so that they can issue their tax notices?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, let me indicate to the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon and to members of the Chamber that if they're not aware, they should be aware that there was a standing parliamentary committee that was also looking into the recommendations by the Minister of Finance at the federal level. They have come forward with some recommendations that are similar to the ones that have just been advocated by our Provincial Treasurer, and we're hoping that the federal Finance minister will pay attention to his own caucus colleagues. We're going to make sure -- and I will underscore simply what our Provincial Treasurer has indicated. We're going to continue, as we always have done in the past, to make strong representations in favour of our farming population.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Olds-Didsbury, next main question, followed by Vegreville.

#### **Long-Term Care Facilities**

MR. BRASSARD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. There are a number of nursing homes with heavy care patients who should be in auxiliary hospitals. Is the minister willing to approve the conversion of nursing home beds to auxiliary beds?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, we've got about 20 requests or so from nursing homes across the province to convert beds to auxiliary hospital beds. We're not able to approve those re-

quests for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the funding levels required for auxiliary hospitals are about double that of nursing homes. Secondly, we currently have under way a long-term care committee report, which we believe will provide us with some new directions on how we fund both nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals. In the interim, however, we have announced some funding assistance for nursing homes with heavy care patients, wherein those who have patients assessed for auxiliary care that exceed 20 percent of the nursing home will received an additional \$19 per patient-day to assist them until the long-term care committee report is finalized and adopted by our government and until the patient classification system that's presently under way is completed.

MR. BRASSARD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister then give consideration to extending existing hospital facilities to accommodate auxiliary hospital care in areas where such care is not presently available, such as in the town of Sundre?

MR. M. MOORE: On an annual basis, Mr. Speaker, we do consider a request for new auxiliary hospitals and nursing homes throughout the province. My expectation is that the long-term care committee will be recommending to us that we move towards identifying both auxiliary hospitals and nursing homes as long-term care facilities at which either nursing home patients or auxiliary patients can be accommodated, particularly in smaller communities like Sundre. It would therefore be our intention in years to come to be looking at building long-term care facilities that would accommodate both levels of patients, both nursing home and auxiliary hospital.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, to the minister, on the patient classification and assessment pilot that the department is doing -- and we hope it will be completed soon. Is it true that the minister has indicated that even though it proves a better way of classifying patients at any level within the system, for budgetary reasons he will not fund that better way of classifying patients so they can be appropriately placed?

MR. M. MOORE: None of the hon. member's remarks are true.

MR. SPEAKER: Next main question, Vegreville, followed by Calgary-Buffalo, if there is time.

#### **Free Trade**

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Everyone is aware of just how serious a situation our grain farmers are facing, with prices being lower now than at any time since the 1930s. One of the many negative effects of Mulroney's trade deal will be the elimination of the two-price system for wheat. I'm wondering how this government can so enthusiastically support an agreement that will take \$300 million a year out of the nearly empty pockets of grain farmers.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we saw a news release come out from the New Democratic Party sometime ago indicating the hypocritical stance that we had taken. Well, this is the height of hypocrisy that we're hearing from the hon. Member for Vegreville, because if he isn't aware, he should be, that Charlie Mayer, the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, indicated he was going to see that that benefit was maintained for our wheat growers even though the two-price wheat system

itself was going to be changed as it relates to its present circumstance. But the actual cash injection was going to be maintained.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, we recognize the importance that agriculture does play in this province. If one examines what we consume as to what we produce and if we erect a barrier around this province, we have to get rid of 50 percent of our farming population, and surely that's not what the New Democratic Party is advocating.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, if it isn't broken, why fix it? What is the rationale for seeking to get rid of the import licence restrictions on wheat, oats, and barley that would undo the two-price system for wheat and be a direct loss of \$300 million, and then turn around and say you're going to give them \$300 million back? What is the motive here?

MR. ELZINGA: The motive, Mr. Speaker, is to make sure that we have direct access to our largest trading partner. We want to make sure, and the hon. member's . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. minister. The Chair will allow the minister to continue when there's a bit more chance for the rest of the people in the Assembly to hear what the answer is.

Minister of Agriculture.

MR. ELZINGA: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's obvious they don't want to hear the truth.

We want to make sure that we have continued and secured access to the U.S. markets which play such an instrumental part to this province, whereby we shipped close to \$400 million worth of agricultural products during the year of 1986 to the U.S. market. The hon. member is aware of the nontariff items they've introduced as it relates to the hog industry. We want to make sure that we continue to have access for our red meat industry. We feel overall -- as is the case with the major grain producers as it relates to their organizations: the Alberta Wheat Pool has suggested that they are supportive of this agreement, as has the United Grain Growers suggested they are supportive of it. So I'm somewhat confused by the statements of the hon. member.

MR. FOX: Well, Mr. Speaker, we'll deal with and dismiss the myth of guaranteed access in another question period, because that's certainly not the case. But we're talking about grain here, and I'm wondering . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, order please. Let us go to the supplementary question.

MR. FOX: I'm wondering if the minister can tell the Assembly if the limited opportunities for increased imports of wheat, oats, and barley into an already flooded U.S. market were the real reason for this part of the deal, or were the Conservatives merely bowing to pressure from millers and feedlot operators who want access to even cheaper grain than they already do?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as has been the tradition of the hon. member since I've been associated with him in the House, it's an actual distortion of the facts, which he's so good at doing, whereby as I indicated, the Alberta Wheat Pool, who are very instrumental in the grain production cycle within this province,

as has United Grain Growers -- they would contradict the statements by the hon. member, recognizing the importance of this agreement not only to our grain producers but to our red meat producers and, more importantly, to our further processing sector within the province.

MR. FOX: Can the minister tell us what this government's response was to action taken by the Americans only days after the deal was signed to offer extra import incentives to our traditional customers to take markets away from our grain farmers?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, that underscores the importance of having an agreement with the United States, whereby we do not have those hindrances to our traditional partners, because part of the agreement has been that they will not use extra incentives to undermine our traditional markets. [interjections] That's part of the agreement. That's why we want to have this agreement signed, and it's interesting to note that again this group across the way are attempting to hinder our agricultural sector within this province. If they want to have any type of understanding, all one has to do is look at the results in the Chinook by-election.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture in terms of clarification in regards to markets and the proposed free trade agreement as established by this document that was circulated by the government of Canada. Recent subsidized grain sales by the United States to traditional Canadian markets seem to be inconsistent with the preliminary text of this agreement, and I'd like to quote the section of the agreement that I believe is inconsistent, where it says:

Each Party has agreed to take into account the export interests of the other Party in the use of any export subsidy on agricultural goods exported to third countries . . .

and that's outside the continent,

. . . recognizing that such subsidies may have prejudicial effects on the export interests of the other party.

Now, my understanding is that because of the subsidies in the United States, it could have affected our Canadian grain sales. Could the minister indicate what assurances he has had that that won't happen and that under this agreement and under these terms the subsidies will not affect us in Canada?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, let me indicate that part of the reason why we are so supportive of the agreement is simply because of what has happened in the past with the subsidy war that has taken place between the U.S. and the European Economic Community, whereby it has had a disastrous impact on our Canadian farmers. Our Alberta farmers are not exempt from that, and they *do* recognize that that has caused the difficulties. We don't have the resources that both of those communities do have to offer support, even though we have been very forthcoming with our support, both at the federal and provincial levels.

I should share with the member, as I indicated to the hon. Member for Vegreville, that that is why we wish the agreement signed and concluded, so that those provisions will be recognized. They're written into the agreement so that we will have that assurance that they will not undermine our traditional markets.

MR. SPEAKER: Vermilion-Viking was recognized.

DR. WEST: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of



Agriculture, a supplemental. In view of the fact that the two-price system on milling grains only affected 5.5 percent of the production in Alberta and that it has been detrimental to the development of processing in this province because of the access to markets and the low population in western Canada, could you indicate if you are going to make overtures, if free trade goes ahead, to see that value-added processing will be accessed in the province in the breakfast cereals and milling-type industries in this province?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is aware, we placed an added emphasis on further market development and research development within the province as our third trust within the agricultural sector, and we're going to continue to do that, whether it be the cereal industry or the meat packing industry. We wish to see more jobs maintained within our province because we recognize the benefit it has, not only for the agricultural community but for all Albertans in general.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. The Chair would just make note of the fact that eight members were left wailing in the wings today.

There was one point of order raised during question period. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, it's with respect to being allowed to ask the questions the next day that have been submitted a day earlier in writing, provided they've been disallowed as what happened today. I thank you for the chance and the way you solved the problem for today, but it does set in motion a problem in the order of business of the House.

I would respectfully suggest that any questioner whose questions have been declared out of order on the day they asked the question and then later portions of it are declared in order should be at the top of the question period before the Leader of the Official Opposition or anyone asks, because otherwise those questions could be pre-empted by the questioners that come before. In other words, if you're not automatically the Leader of the Opposition, your questions could then be pre-empted by earlier questioners. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker -- and I would like you to think about it or rule on it -- that the questions that have been ruled out of order then subsequently ruled in order should move to the very top of the order in the question period so that they couldn't be pre-empted by someone else.

MR. SPEAKER: On this particular point of order.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, this would be rather an unusual process in British parliamentary democracy. If the Liberals want to be the Official Opposition, they'll have to earn it, not come at it sideways.

Mr. Speaker, this is an unusual position. I think you've been more than fair even allowing two extra questions, which took more. But to now say that they come ahead of our traditional procedures in this Legislature. I think is carrying it a little far.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, without getting into this particular debate very far but on the point of order, there is an expression being used in the exchanges here, and I would, when you rule, seek your clarification.

My understanding was that if a question in your opinion

touched upon the Principal affair in a doubtful manner, you were at that point not ruling it out of order but rather reserving judgment on it subject to receiving a written statement of the question, to which you would respond back. We're hearing here that questions were ruled out of order when I think that isn't technically quite the way I understand the ruling. So perhaps you would clarify that point as well. Mr. Speaker, when you render a decision upon the matter in debate between the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. SPEAKER: On this particular point of order.

MR. McEACHERN: Yes. Mr. Speaker. It would seem to me that far from being allowed two sets of questions, which is what happened today with the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, he should have to decide whether he wants to take those two questions which were left over from yesterday and add a couple to it and make that his series or else do another series.

MR. TAYLOR: Oh, come on; one of these years you'll smarten up too and take advantage of the rules.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, that's just exactly what you were trying to do, take advantage of the rule. He was more than fair to you, and you're not satisfied with it.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not a shouting match, hon. members.

MR. McEACHERN: You were more than fair to him, and he's complaining it wasn't fair enough, is what I'm saying.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Clover Bar, on the point of order.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I take umbrage also with your saying that I wasn't here. I can read, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the point that really I think we're discussing is your ruling the question in order or out of order, and once that decision was made, that it is in order, then the member carries on in his usual manner. And so really it doesn't mean that you get two questions or four questions. All you made the decision on is if it's in order or out of order, and then you have given the member permission to ask the question; therefore, he goes ahead in the normal procedure.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, if my mike goes off, I can see that . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, no. No. We have had irregular procedure in the House with respect to points of order. The usual practice is that the aggrieved members or other members who are giving advice to the Chair speak once and once only. It's not a situation for summing up. We deviated from that position on Monday because of the complicated issue, but this is much more of a procedural nature with regard to the operation of the House. The Chair also can cut the debate off at any time, because it's a matter of private advice from the members to the Chair basically, with other interested parties listening in.

Yesterday the Chair pointed out another way to be dealing with the matter. Other suggestions may well come forward. The Chair yesterday pointed out that there was an invitation to the House leaders of all political persuasions in the House to

meet together to reach consensus and then come and have discussion with the Chair. The Chair has not been advised of any such process at this time, and therefore the Chair has had to make the arrangements which were in place today, and it's obvious that it hasn't satisfied all members. But until some direction comes which shows consensus from all comers of the House, the Chair perforce will continue so that when questions have been submitted and the Chair has decided to reserve judgment, the present practice will continue, because the House was indeed very generous today to the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon to allow his initial set of questions and then to be able to carry on with the other questions, which had indeed been regarded as being in order.

And so it is appropriate to say that judgment was reserved and that some questions were in order and others were not. The Chair appreciates the fact that the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon did indeed supply the Chair with the questions so that the Table officers had a chance to properly vet what the process was.

Again, with respect to all members of the House, we know it's a difficult thing to try to assess properly the process; it does indeed take up more time of question period, and the Chair apologizes to hon. members. Nevertheless, it's one way that together we're able to work through a very difficult, contentious issue, if you will.

Finally, the Chair would point out to the hon. Member for Clover Bar that the Chair was in error to make any comment about the member's presence or absence in the House on any occasion, and the Chair apologizes. The Chair also apologized by note previously, in question period, and again the Chair did not at any time impute that the hon. member could not read -- not at all.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, just on a point of clarification, if I may.

MR. SPEAKER: I don't think there is such a thing, but let's say "point of order."

MR. MARTIN: A point of order, for clarification. What we're talking about specifically here, with this special procedure, is simply the Principal matter. It's not any other aspect of the House? Just for a point of clarification.

MR. SPEAKER: Absolutely, hon. Leader of the Opposition; indeed.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### head: GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

17. Mr. Getty proposed the following motion to the Assembly:  
BE IT RESOLVED THAT:  
WHEREAS the Constitution Act, 1982, came into force on April 17, 1982, following an agreement between Canada and all the provinces except Quebec;  
AND WHEREAS the government of Quebec has established a set of five proposals for constitutional change and has stated that amendments to give effect to those proposals would enable Quebec to resume a full role in the constitutional councils of Canada;  
AND WHEREAS the amendment proposed in the schedule hereto sets out the basis on which Quebec's five constitu-

tional proposals may be met;

AND WHEREAS the amendment proposed in the schedule hereto also recognizes the principle of the equality of all the provinces, provides new arrangements to foster greater harmony and co-operation between the government of Canada and the governments of the provinces, and requires that conferences be convened to consider important constitutional, economic, and other issues;

AND WHEREAS certain portions of the amendment proposed in the schedule hereto relate to matters referred to in section 41 of the Constitution Act, 1982;

AND WHEREAS section 41 of the Constitution Act, 1982, provides that an amendment to the Constitution of Canada may be made by proclamation issued by the Governor General under the Great Seal of Canada where so authorized by resolutions of the Senate and the House of Commons and of the Legislative Assembly of each province;

NOW THEREFORE the Legislative Assembly resolves that an amendment to the Constitution of Canada be authorized to be made by proclamation issued by Her Excellency the Governor General under the Great Seal of Canada in accordance with the schedule hereto.\*

Attendu:

que la Loi constitutionnelle de 1982 est entrée en vigueur le 17 avril 1982, à la suite d'un accord conclu entre le Canada et toutes les provinces, sauf le Québec;

que, selon le gouvernement du Québec, l'adoption de modifications visant à donner effet à ses cinq propositions de révision constitutionnelle permettrait au Québec de jouer pleinement de nouveau son rôle dans les instances constitutionnelles canadiennes;

que le projet de modification figurant en annexe présente les modalités d'un règlement relatif aux cinq propositions du Québec;

que le projet reconnaît le principe de l'égalité de toutes les provinces et prévoit, d'une part, de nouveaux arrangements propres à renforcer l'harmonie et la coopération entre le gouvernement du Canada et ceux des provinces, d'autre part la tenue de conférences consacrées à l'étude d'importantes questions constitutionnelles, économiques et autres;

que le projet porte en partie sur des questions visées à l'article 41 de la Loi constitutionnelle de 1982;

que cet article prévoit que la Constitution du Canada peut être modifiée par proclamation du gouverneur général sous le grand sceau du Canada, autorisée par des résolutions du Sénat, de la Chambre des communes et de l'assemblée législative de chaque province,

l'assemblée législative a résolu d'autoriser la modification de la Constitution du Canada par proclamation de Son Excellence le gouverneur général sous le grand sceau du Canada, en conformité avec l'annexe ci-jointe.\*

[Adjourned debate November 23: Mr. Martin]

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak on Resolution 17, dealing with the Constitutional Accord, let me first of all say that I believe this is one of the most important pieces of business this Assembly will ever deal with.

MR. TAYLOR: That's why you're voting for it.

\*See pages 2004 11

MR. MARTIN: The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, I'm sure, just like he doesn't know whether he's for free trade or not -- we will find what our position is and be very clear, even to that member, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say in terms of the Constitution that any time you deal with any constitutional resolution, whether you believe it's good or bad, it's obviously a very important document that you're dealing with, whether it be in the Legislature here or in the House of Commons in Ottawa, because the Constitution deals with the rules and regulations under which a country governs its business. So ultimately this can end up, obviously, in the Supreme Court or anywhere else. It has direct implications for each and every citizen, not only in Alberta but, of course, throughout Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, specifically Resolution 17, the Constitution some people call the Meech Lake accord, but certainly the Constitutional Accord. Let me say, first of all, that the accord, in looking at it and analyzing it, is not as good as the proponents make it out to be. Whether the proponents be on that side of the House or anywhere else in Canada, it's not as good as everybody makes it out. But also, to be fair, it's not nearly as bad as the critics have made it to be. I think if we want to find the truth here about the accord, it's somewhere in the middle.

Now, as a result of this, Mr. Speaker -- and I'll give fair warning that we will be bringing in amendments and changes that we think could make this a better accord. I think it's a good beginning ground, and there's some good work done to bring this to the position it is now. But it seems to us rather ludicrous to say, "Well, it's so perfect now that we can't change it or shouldn't change it." So I would hope that people will take the amendments we're going to bring in and put some serious thought to them, because a Constitution should be the best that we can make it, not just sort of in the middle or we're sitting there saying, "Well, it's all or nothing, and we can't change it." If people believe there are changes that could be made to make it a better Constitution, it is our duty as legislators to change that particular document.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we will be bringing in these amendments which we believe, as I said, it is our duty to do. We believe honestly and sincerely that these amendments would make it a better Constitutional Accord without changing the fundamental direction of it. And I would say that if -- I'll be hypothetical here -- if they turn these amendments down, and I know the hon. Treasurer over there will look at them and seriously consider them and see the merit of them and probably vote with us on this one, but if it is turned down, if it is an all or nothing proposition, then I would suggest to all members, whichever political party they belong to, whichever side of the House they sit on, that they have to analyze the document as it is, the flawed document as it is. Do the positive aspects of it outweigh the negative? Or do the negative aspects outweigh the positive? And all of us then will have to make a decision about how we vote at that particular time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let us look at what I consider a couple of the very positive aspects of this particular Constitutional Accord. The major and best part of it -- the Premier alluded to it, and I agree with him on this matter -- is that it brought Quebec, if you like, into the constitutional family of Canada. To me this was an absolute necessity. And as I understood this Constitutional Accord, Mr. Speaker, its fundamental purpose was to bring Quebec into the constitutional family of Canada, and to the credit of the first ministers, they were able

to do this. That is a very positive growth, if you like, in terms of our country.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Now, Mr. Speaker, many people would argue that Quebec was already in the Constitution even though they didn't sign it. Well, in a strictly legalistic sense this is true; there's no doubt about that. They obviously had to abide, in a legal sense, by the Constitution. But constitutions are only good if people believe in them, if people right across the country believe in them. Obviously, we had one quarter of the population of the country that didn't sign this document; in other words, a quarter of our country that obviously did not believe in the 1982 Constitution. So even though in a legal sense they were a part of it, certainly there was no moral authority for the 1982 Constitution, at least in the province of Quebec.

And for those of us who say that it didn't matter whether Quebec joined or not, that the Constitution was there and Quebec was part of it, and that the idea that separation is a dead issue, the national sentiment is a dead issue in Quebec -- it is for the time being, Mr. Speaker; there's no doubt about that. But for those of us that care about this country, a unified country from Newfoundland to British Columbia that includes Quebec, let us not underestimate the nationalist sentiment that is still there in Quebec. It may not flare up again for four years or eight years or 12 years; we don't know. But I would guarantee that if they were not part of that Constitution and had not signed this Constitution, somewhere down the line some separatist outfit in Quebec, whatever its name, would use this as a rallying point, and it would be very, very dangerous for our country at that particular time. For those of us that underestimate it and say that separation is necessarily dead -- or the nationalist sentiment, if I can put it that way -- all one had to do is a couple of weeks ago look at the outflow and the pouring out of emotions at Mr. Lévesque's funeral to understand what a symbol that particular man was in that province, and if Quebec's aspirations weren't reached through this Constitution, I suggest again that that would be a rallying point at some point down the line.

So it was extremely important for me as an individual, as a Canadian, that Quebec be brought into the Constitution. And as I say, I think that was one of the most positive things that was done in this particular Constitution. What brought Quebec in, basically, is the distinct society clause. Again, Mr. Speaker, for those people who say that we're giving Quebec a distinct society that's going to affect the rest of us out in Alberta or British Columbia or Newfoundland or Prince Edward Island, this is nonsense. All it is is recognizing the reality of Canada. It does not affect the rest of us in any way. All it basically is doing, under a distinct society clause, is allowing Quebec to maintain and protect their own language and culture. It has no bearing for the rest of us, so I was glad that the first ministers recognized that. And, Mr. Speaker, I have to say I was glad our Premier recognized this, because I remember coming back from a convention the New Democrats held in Montreal, a federal convention, where we had said in part of that convention, and I quote:

The preamble to the Canadian Constitution recognizes the uniqueness of Quebec as the one province within which the majority culture and language is French.

And all of a sudden, Mr. Speaker, our Premier had some quotes. He even said in the Legislature -- he accused the New

Democrats of being prepared to sell off the position of other provinces. I think that's a disgraceful position dictated out of Ontario, not something the people of Alberta would ever support. He says that we already have the NDP agreeing to give special status to Quebec, and on and on. But, Mr. Speaker, I take it that was just basically politics at the particular time. It was encouraging to see the Premier's conversion and, as he said the other day, to recognize that Quebec is a distinct society and finally come on board with what we were saying at our convention that he was criticizing.

Mr. Speaker, the other positive aspect is one that for lack of a better term -- it's probably overused -- is "co-operative federalism." Now, there are those that would argue that they want a strong federal state to basically be the most powerful government in the province. I for one reject that notion, and I'll tell you why. It's because of the nature of our country. We are a huge country in area, the second biggest country in area in the world, but we have a relatively small population of a little over 25 million. So by the very nature of that, the geographical fact and the population fact of this country, we're going to have strong regions within our country. That's just the way it is. And to say that you can centralize power and have one dominant government, recognizing those facts, is just not the reality.

So we have to recognize the reality of what Canada is, and that is why what we mean by co-operative federalism is that there's relatively -- and perhaps people could argue that there should be three levels of strong government. At the municipal level -- and that's an argument that certainly could be made. At least, at the level that we know in Canada, there has to be a strong federal government to deal with the areas that fall into their domain. But there also has to be equally, as a partner -- not subordinate but equally, as a partner -- strong provincial governments to deal with the issues that fall into those areas. That is the reality of Canada.

If I may say so, Mr. Speaker, I believe this Constitutional Accord recognized that in a couple of fundamental ways that I believe in. People are arguing that we shouldn't have annual conferences -- I've heard them -- that the first ministers should not get together on a regular basis and discuss the issues that affect the country. Well, that's absolute nonsense. Of course they should be doing that, because they -- these two governments, as co-operative partners -- have to discuss the issues of the day because a lot of the issues fall into both areas. So the fact that now they've institutionalized the reality they have to meet I think is fundamentally good -- that we institutionalize those particular meetings.

That's not to say there can't be other aspects. Perhaps there should be a better way along with this. Mr. Speaker, to involve the public more, especially -- and I'll come to that -- dealing with constitutions. But I for one certainly support the idea of institutionalizing regular conferences between the two levels of government.

Mr. Speaker, the other area deals with co-operative federalism and makes sense. Now I'll come to the Senate; that makes no sense at all, the Senate that we have. But one of the things they said -- and there's been some criticism -- that I certainly support is the right of provinces to participate in the selection of Supreme Court judges. If Supreme Court judges . . . Let us say with the Charter of Rights -- we see what's happening in the United States now where they have a charter -- the Supreme Court is going to become more and more important. Judges are going to make more and more decisions that politicians used to make, so we have to recognize that they are a very

powerful institution. So if Supreme Court judges are going to be making decisions, as they do, in matters that affect both provincial and federal powers, and if they're going to make decisions that affect Canadians, federal citizens as well as provincial citizens, it is entirely legitimate and appropriate that the provinces play a role in the selection of Supreme Court judges. Mr. Speaker, I think that's an excellent recommendation. It's certainly one that has my support.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd probably be struck down if I stood at this desk and went on too long being positive, but there are some problems also with the accord. First of all, the major problem that I see, dealing with this accord, is that the process was offensive. I say that if you check with 90 or 95 percent of the public out there -- first of all, a lot of them don't care; they should, but that's the reality -- most of them are confused about what it means, some of them getting the Charter of Rights mixed up with the amending formula and all the rest of it. I don't blame the people, because I blame the process. We didn't take the time to even explain what's in it and take the necessary time to go through it with people. Something as basic as the Constitution the people should at least understand, even if they don't agree with all of it. And so when we hear people saying, "Well, I don't care," it's because there is that confusion. The time hasn't been spent, and they don't understand how important the Constitution is to people.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say that something as basic as a country's constitution should not be decided by 11 men behind closed doors, being pressured and meeting all night and coming out with an agreement. And then what is wrong is that after that they say: "It's such a perfect document that there can be no changes. We've decided at 4 o'clock in the morning or 5 o'clock in the morning or whenever it was that there can be no changes." Again, I say that's improper and, again, offensive in trying to determine something as basic as the Constitution.

As you're aware, when we sat in this Assembly the last time, Mr. Speaker, the Official Opposition and, in fairness, other opposition people, I think in both parties, suggested that we hold public hearings at least, that the government do this. I think that's a very small aspect of the process that this government could have done. What did the Premier opposite say? He said: "No, no; we'll listen to the MLAs as they go out. There's no need for public hearings." Now, Mr. Speaker, I just say that that is wrong. So we in the Official Opposition felt that we had no choice. We didn't want to do it. We didn't want to spend the time doing it or the money or whatever, but we felt we had no choice but to sponsor our own public hearings, and we did that. And I would like to thank the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona and the Member for Edmonton-Highlands for chairing that, and the other MLAs that were involved.

Mr. Speaker, just a little bit about the hearings, because I want to make some points arising from that. Our public hearings took place in the following centres: Grande Prairie, Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat. They commenced on September 16 and concluded on September 29. Of that, our committee received 106 submissions in person at these hearings. Most of them were supported -- people who had taken the time were supported by written briefs -- and there were an additional 25 written submissions, of course, as well as a large number of comments in the course of individual letters.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we do not pretend that our hearings were even close to an adequate substitution for government conducted, provincewide hearings. Nonetheless, to give you a flavour of the hearings, a lot of people came from the public.

There was a wide range of organizations, such as the Metis Association of Alberta, the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, the Triple E Senate committee, the association of Franco-Canadians from Alberta, various departments and associations from all the universities in Alberta except Athabasca. I wish my colleagues were here from the Liberal Party, because even the University of Calgary Liberal association appeared. Human rights advocates, the Canadian Federation of Students, the freedom of choice movement, Citizens for Public Justice, the Blackfoot Band and other Indian associations, the Canada West Foundation, the interchurch committee on the north, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the Chinese Canadian National Council, the Alberta Federation of Labour, several unions, the Alberta Teachers' Association: I could go on. So, Mr. Speaker, the point I'm trying to make is that there was a wide range of organizations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what was interesting was that regardless of the position in the political spectrum of those present, there was a large measure of agreement on the things that were wrong with the Constitutional Accord. Let me just summarize, if I may, the concerns. The majority of presentations expressed deep concern about the process. That was again their major complaint, and I've already alluded to that.

These concerns included, number one, the lack of consultation with the public prior to the drafting of the accord. Number two, the fact that 11 men have essentially decided what the Constitution is to be. Number three, the fact that the document was drafted overnight in an atmosphere of pressured negotiation rather than through careful deliberation, suggesting that all possible implications of the agreement were not considered, and I think that's become clear since, the great rush towards ratification precluding careful consideration of amendments. Number five, dealing with the federal hearings, the timing, where so little advance notice for submissions was given and during the summer when many groups and organizations are largely inactive, making it difficult to consult widely and meet deadlines for preparing briefs. Number six, the lack of federal hearings outside of Ottawa. Number seven, the open bias of the federal hearings. Number eight, the statements of officials of the federal and provincial governments that somehow amendments would not be entertained for fear this perfect, entire accord would fall apart. And finally, and I think specifically to the shame of the government opposite, the lack of public hearings on the part of the Alberta government. In summary, Mr. Speaker, the process has been perceived as being very, very undemocratic.

Mr. Speaker, just a couple of quotes from how people felt who came to these public hearings, to give you a flavour of what the government might have heard. For instance, the Ukrainian Canadian Committee stated:

However desirable the objectives of the accord may be, the Constitution is too important a document to be left just in the hands of an all-night meeting of 11 men. Constitutions should not be imposed upon the people but should evolve through a consensus of the people.

Mr. Speaker, the Calgary Status of Women Action Committee:

Our Alberta government seems to feel that once we have elected representatives, they are under no obligation to listen to us, although they do pride themselves on being an open government.

Mr. Speaker, Howard Palmer, historian at the University of Calgary, talking about his experience of dealing with this government. It was clear at this meeting -- it was a public forum supposedly held by the Conservatives in Calgary in Sep-

tember 10. He says:

It was clear at this meeting that the Tory MLAs hoped it would be a substitute for real public hearings. Five Tory MLAs bearing witness that the Meech Lake accord is good is hardly a public forum. People in the audience were simply told that if they didn't like Meech Lake or if they wanted public hearings, then they were either centralists or -- worse -- Liberals.

Then there was Andrew Bear Robe, on behalf of the Blackfoot chief and council, who said clearly:

If the deal is so good for Canada, surely it can withstand some public scrutiny.

A number of individuals made similar comments. A member from Edmonton, David Apeval:

Be it clearly understood that the consensus needed should be from the Canadian people per se and not simply that of the provincial Premiers and the Prime Minister in exclusive terms.

It goes on and on and on, Mr. Speaker. That was the flavour of those public hearings. If the government wanted to listen, they would have found that out.

So as a result, the major flaw as I see it, the major one, the most important one, has to do with the process. So we will be recommending, Mr. Speaker, that comprehensive public hearings, both nationally and provincially, should be required for these and future amendments to the Constitution.

Let's look at other aspects of this accord, the amending formula, Mr. Speaker, that now requires unanimity for institutional changes. In talking to my colleagues, no witness at our hearings was able to supply us with an example of any other country with as rigid an amending formula as we are proposing. Even the witness from Canadian Studies at the University of Alberta told us that Australia has an amending formula similar to Canada's existing one. In Canada -- this is right now -- it is Parliament plus the Legislatures of two-thirds of the provinces containing at least 50 percent of the population. In Australia, similarly, it's Parliament plus a majority of the state legislators plus a majority of the electors in a majority of the states. It's interesting to note that of some 49 amendments attempted, only nine have passed in Australia.

The point I'm making is that our amending formula right now is a fairly strict one and a fairly rigid one, and to try to get unanimity, to say the least, is going to be difficult. I say that for all intents and purposes, with this unanimity we might as well write off the admission of new provinces. We've kissed Yukon and Northwest Territories good-bye as far as ever being new provinces. That's totally unfair, and I'll come to that in a minute.

As for the Senate -- this government likes to talk about the Senate, Mr. Speaker -- if the proposed method of appointing Senators goes through, there's bound to be at least one province unwilling to forego such a gravy train of provincial patronage. Also, it is highly unlikely that Quebec or Ontario will agree to changes making them equal to Prince Edward Island in Senate representation, Mr. Speaker. I say to this government that unanimity makes it almost impossible to change the patronage-dominated Senate we now have. They've made it almost impossible under this amending formula. I'll have more to say about the Senate later.

But as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, we'll be making a couple of recommendations. First of all, we will be recommending that there be no change to the amending formula in the present Constitution as it affects the formation of new provinces, again, specifically the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. It's totally unfair to change the rules of the game on them at this particular point. I think even this government or any other government

should recognize the unfairness of that and at least go back there on the amending formula for that.

The other recommendation we'll be making on this area, Mr. Speaker, is that the Constitution be amended to provide that Senate reform be made on the votes of Parliament and the Legislatures of two-thirds of the provinces comprising at least 50 percent of the population of Canada; in other words, to at least move back to where we were for Senate reform. Surely the government should agree to that. That would make it easier to get their Triple E Senate that they're talking about. So we'll be making that recommendation, and I know the hon. Treasurer will support us on that one, Mr. Speaker.

The other areas we want to look at, if I may qualify, are fairness to Canada's northern citizens. Besides making it almost impossible for them to become provinces, what we have done is this. The anomaly of Canadians living in the Territories being denied -- and they are being denied -- the opportunity available to other Canadians of serving on the Supreme Court of Canada and possibly in the Senate should be removed. Surely this is unfair. If you're a Canadian, you're a Canadian, and if there's a chance to be in the Senate or the Supreme Court, it shouldn't be by where you live, Mr. Speaker. But because the provinces have access to this and the Northwest Territories and the Yukon don't, basically they're left out in these very important areas that I've already talked about. So we will be proposing amendments to deal with this unfair situation, and there are ways to do that. I won't bore you with that now, Mr. Speaker.

The other area that is related but somewhat different because it affects the provinces also is fairness for aboriginal peoples. We would like to have recommended that the commitment to self-government be entrenched in the Constitution, but we were mindful of the objection of the Premier of Alberta, perhaps shared by others, that it would be unreasonable to include this without some idea of what self-government entails. Mr. Speaker, we think it's unusual, to say the least, that we didn't have to define -- dot all the i's, cross all the t's -- when it came to the distinct society of Quebec, but somehow we have to explain this for aboriginal peoples. So we would have said: what's good enough for Quebec should have been good enough also for the aboriginal people of our country.

Mr. Speaker, also we've agreed -- and I have no objections, as I've already pointed out -- to yearly discussions about Senate reform. Surely the least we could do at this particular time is have yearly conferences on aboriginal rights until this problem is solved. It's been festering there for hundreds of years. But we didn't do that. So to undo that wrong we will be bringing in recommendations dealing with yearly conferences on aboriginal rights, in particular self-government. Also, Mr. Speaker, we want to expand this process at these yearly conferences to ensure that the Prime Minister invites representatives of aboriginal peoples and territorial governments to participate in all matters that affect aboriginal rights. In the simple element of fairness, this is the very least we can do for aboriginal people.

Mr. Speaker, the other area I want to look into is fairness for women. Now, there's been a great deal of discussion about this matter, but clearly the women's groups that presented to us were unanimous in their concern that since the Charter of Rights has by decision of the Supreme Court of Canada been declared to be of equal rank with the Constitution, therefore the Constitution is not subject to it. We see now that the declaration of section 1 of the schedule to the accord is to be interpreted in a maimer consistent with the recognition of the French/English duality of Quebec and that Quebec constitutes within Canada a distinct

society. The concern, as this government should be aware, is that that may prevent legislation that overrides the equality of rights guaranteed by the Charter of Rights.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm aware there are differences of opinion on this particular matter. But I think from a women's groups perspective I would be concerned also. The suspicion is strengthened when we look at section 16 of the schedule to the accord, which sets out that nothing in section 1 is to affect aboriginal or multicultural rights. Now, the exclusion of other rights guaranteed by the Charter suggests, to them at least, that they're not protected.

Now, the Commons committee that met about this said basically they didn't have any worries, that the only reason they put aboriginal and multicultural rights in this section was, as I think they put it, out of an abundance of caution. Well, if it makes sense to have an abundance of caution in those two areas and those rights, surely it makes sense then to put in an abundance of caution dealing with sexual equality rights. Why pick two and not the other one? It would be a simple matter, Mr. Speaker. It wouldn't change the thrust of the accord at all just to add, out of an abundance of caution, those sections 28 and add, along with multicultural and aboriginal rights, sexual equality rights. It wouldn't change anything, and it would be very clear then, out of an abundance of caution. So we are going to propose that, obviously.

Mr. Speaker, there are other concerns that many presenters had about the opting-out proviso in this particular accord, in Resolution 17. Basically, the concern is that there could be a balkanizing of national programs and uneven service coast to coast for the same per capita expenditure. It has to do with the terms. I recognize clearly that we're in provincial jurisdiction here and the provinces have to have the final say, the opting-out part of it, but clearly what is at risk here, Mr. Speaker, is that some government -- it might be a conservative government -- if they brought in a day care program, would say, "We can opt out and take the money to build roads or whatever."

I know that's not what is meant by this Constitution. I don't think any of the governments meant that. But let's be clear, then, what we mean. All we're suggesting, instead of "national objectives," which is fuzzy, is that we substitute the words "meet national standards." Clearly, the province would still have the right to opt out if they don't want the money, but the money has to meet some sort of national standards. Mr. Speaker, that would be much clearer and make much more sense.

I talked about the Senate, and I'd like to come back a bit on it. Until Senate reform takes place, it is provided by subsection (2) of the accord that a Senator should be chosen from amongst persons whose names have been submitted by the government of the provinces to which the vacancy relates and are acceptable to the Privy Council. Mr. Speaker, I see the government toying with an election. That makes absolutely no sense at all. Are we going to spend millions of dollars to elect another Senator to sit there to vegetate with all the other Liberals and Conservatives? Surely we can spend our money in a better way than this.

Even if the government of Alberta has an election, one person's not going to make a difference. But what this does, Mr. Speaker, is effectively chop up the big pork barrel into 10 smaller ones of various sizes and may prove so attractive as a source of patronage to the provinces that they will never agree to Senate reform. This government wouldn't have to use the Agents General; they would actually have their own Senate then. And what we're saying is that this whole thing, the whole

Senate -- and even the federal Conservatives should agree with this after what they've gone through -- is useless, it's a waste of money. All it is is a rest home for Conservative and Liberal politicians. Mr. Speaker. Perhaps to encourage this not to happen we should begin to give thought just to abolishing it. Why not abolish the Senate right now and allow consequential amendments to be made to allow Parliament to make laws using the drug Act -- I don't agree with the drug Act. I agree with the House of Commons making those decisions on the vote of the House of Commons alone until meaningful Senate reform occurs. Why do we need them now? At least let's get on with starting the reform to abolish this useless organization right now and continue with it.

AN HON. MEMBER: Triple A.

MR. MARTIN: Yeah. Triple A -- abolish, abolish, abolish. Mr. Speaker.

If I may go on into a couple of other areas: the distinct society and the French/English duality. It's interesting. As you always do when you go on these public hearings on something like the French/English duality, we heard criticism from those that said these provisions -- the distinct society, for example, embodied in section 1 of the schedule -- gave too much power to Francophones and from those who said it didn't give enough. As I said, it may be that it's probably about right in that area. As usual, the former submissions -- and there weren't many, fortunately; one or two, as my colleague said -- were not very cogent. They were sort of the French-on-the-cornflakes-packets variety, which I think any reasonable people will not spend too much time worrying about. But the latter objections I think were more relevant, and these came from several groups concerned with the French culture and the French language. One of them was not Francophone; it was the Canadian Parents for French, Alberta chapter.

Now, Mr. Speaker, their principle objection was: well, it was the duty of the Legislature of Quebec to promote the distinct identity of Quebec referred to in section 1 of the schedule to the accord.

The existence of French-speaking Canadians, centred in Quebec but also present elsewhere in Canada, and English-speaking Canadians, concentrated outside Quebec but also [inside] Quebec, [was] a fundamental characteristic of Canada, which it was merely the duty of the government of Canada and the provincial governments of the Legislatures to preserve. There's a big difference in those two words, "promote" and "preserve." If the role of these governments, both the federal government and the provincial governments, is simply to preserve what is presently there, I say it is a bleak message to French-speaking Canadians outside Quebec. It's as if these Canadians have been abandoned. Perhaps it was meant that way. I don't believe it, but perhaps it was meant that way because it would be part of the province of Quebec; it could go on the other way to promote the welfare of the English-speaking minority in Quebec and be that sort of trade-off. I hope not. That's not the reality of this country as far as I'm concerned.

Mr. Speaker, if, as we believe it to be, the statement in section 1 of the schedule to the accord is true, that the duality of French and English in Canada is a fundamental characteristic of the country, then surely it should not only be to preserve from the Parliament of Canada; it should be to promote it. We will be suggesting this as a change -- rather than preserve, to promote -- and we'll be bringing this in as an amendment.

The last area I want to go through in the Constitutional Accord has to deal with multiculturalism. Some submissions were made to us, and I believe similar ones were made to the Commons committee, that the multicultural characteristic of Canada is not sufficiently recognized in the accord. Particularly, objection was taken to the French/English duality being the only fundamental characteristic of Canada that was recognized. Now, the constitutional committee, the Commons committee, certainly agree -- and we all do in this Legislature, I would hope -- with the vital importance of our multicultural heritage, but they indicated they were not concerned with the omission of multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristic of Canada. I think their argument was -- they indicated that section 2(1)(a) does not purport to offer a comprehensive definition of Canada. They said, and I quote:

It is an articulation of one of the fundamental characteristics of Canada. . .

They went on to say:

At first, ministers attempted to formulate a comprehensive definition that captured all the fundamental characteristics of Canada. They would have gone far beyond their agenda of dealing with amendments necessary to enable the government of Quebec to give its willing assent to the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, I just disagree totally with that analysis. What we are really saying is that the Constitution is for the English-speaking heritage in Canada. We have to be clearer than that. This is why a Constitution needs time. The Constitution is for all of us, not just for the French- and the English-speaking heritage in this country. We do not see why the addition of words that make plain what is admitted to be the case, even by the Commons committee and I expect by this government, but which are omitted because there was allegedly no time to put them in, should not now be made. We'll be recommending that we add the word "multicultural" before the word "Canada" where it last occurs. In other words, it would now read:

The recognition that the existence of French-speaking Canadians, centred in Quebec but also present elsewhere in Canada, and English-speaking Canadians, concentrated outside Quebec but also present in Quebec, constitutes a fundamental characteristic of a multicultural Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, surely this government can't disagree with that. What's wrong with putting that in the Constitution?

Let me say in conclusion that we do not believe that any of the amendments we intend to propose here to this Legislature offend any principle considered essential by the government of the province of Quebec. In other words, the main reason for that accord was the bringing in of Quebec. I've already indicated that I thought that was very important. I cannot see how any of these amendments would be offensive to the province of Quebec. I say to the government that we honestly believe that if they adopted the amendments we're going to be dealing with, we would have a much better Constitution. Surely that is the responsibility of all of us, not only in this Legislature but every Legislature and Parliament, to get the best possible Constitution we can. So I say that after, we believe, doing our job and listening to the people of Alberta, I now would like to bring in an omnibus amendment dealing with the recommendations I have previously mentioned in my discourse.

I have a number of these amendments here, and I think they've gone through Parliamentary Counsel. I could bore everybody and read IOIC(1) and all the rest of it, but I'm sure when you look at it, you'll understand that the constitutional changes I'm proposing one by one are basically the recommendations I mentioned in my previous discourse. They are technical be-

cause they have to be, by the nature of this agreement, but rest assured they deal with the matters that I . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Order please. The Chair hesitates to interrupt the hon. leader. Perhaps the pages could distribute these amendments to those members who are seated, first; and secondly, perhaps, hon. leader, a 60-second pause while members receive it before you continue.

The amendment is in order. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, as I said, the amendment is technical in nature. But just to summarize again, I said it's covering the recommendations. These changes, amendments, deal with, number 1, I mentioned public hearings; number 2, deleting unanimity required for creation of new provinces; number 3, deleting the unanimity requirement for Senate reform; number 4, allow territorial government nominees for the Senate; number 5, allow territorial government nominees for the Supreme Court; also aboriginal peoples to get consideration of self-government and attend conferences; the women's equality rights; the opting out and spending power; the Canadian Parliament to promote linguistic duality; and finally, Canada recognized to be multicultural. Those are the amendments that are in there, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Speaking to the amendment, the hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. "Awake, my country, the hour is great with change!" Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, poet and writer in *An Ode for the Canadian Confederacy*. "Awake, my country, the hour is great with change!" Mr. Speaker, it was written in 1882, but it could just as easily have been Meech Lake, 1987. I'm sure it would be just as appropriate in the years ahead as our country continues to grow and evolve. Lowell Murray put it very well in the *Globe and Mail* when he said, and I quote:

The hallmark of a living Constitution is that it should slowly but surely evolve to integrate the best of what a democratic people has learned about itself and the values it wishes its institutions to embody.

Mr. Speaker, we are a young nation, a hundred years young, but already we are a great nation and already we are making our mark in the world. We're a young nation that's been abundantly blessed. The freedoms we enjoy as a people and our natural resources are the envy of the world, and we have so much potential, so much opportunity, so many untapped resources, so much room to grow and to mature and to come into our own. The Meech Lake accord is a big step in that direction, and I wouldn't want to see it tampered or changed or amended as proposed.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

I listened this afternoon to what the leader of the NDPs had to say about the proposed constitutional changes. I even took the time to read the recommendations on the Constitutional Act filed by the NDPs in the Legislature earlier this week. I must say, though, Mr. Speaker, that the leader of NDPs never ceases to disappoint me and, I'm sure, all Albertans overall. Time and time and time again the Leader of the Opposition is prepared to sell out Albertans, to forego Albertans' interests so that he can toe the party line with Ed Broadbent. The common

thread of his comments this afternoon, the common thread of their recommendations, and I quote from the report as I saw it throughout:

Consequently, we're prepared to stay with the recommendations of the NDP minority of the committee.

Yes, Ed. Yes, Ed. Yes, Ed. Me too, Ed. Me too. When is the leader of the NDPs going to realize that Ed Broadbent represents Oshawa and that centralist Canadian thinking, and that he represents Edmonton-Norwood and Albertans, and it isn't always appropriate to just follow the cue. Yes, Ed. Yes, Eddy.

I know how we voted, Mr. Leader. We're talking about your proposed amendments that you're falling right in line with. And it's not bad enough that he's busy listening to Ed Broadbent. The NDP leader is also busy dancing to the tune of people like Bob White and Shirley Carr or card-carrying communists like Dave Werlin. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition must be a heck of a puppet the way he puts on his masterful performances for all those masters. But when is the leader of the NDP going to dance to his own tune and start thinking of what's good for Alberta and Albertans and quit cowering to the likes of Ed Broadbent? Ed Broadbent can't speak for Alberta. Ed Broadbent doesn't speak for Albertans and he never will.

Mr. Speaker, I listen to the leader . . . [interjections]

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Hon. members, during the debate by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I think the House was quite quiet and listened attentively, and I would expect hon. members to give the same courtesy to the Member for Red Deer-South.

The Member for Red Deer-South.

MR. SIGURDSON: With due respect, Mr. Speaker, when the hon. Leader of the Opposition gave his speech . . .

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Red Deer-South has the floor.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. When the hon. Leader of the Opposition gave his speech, he did not cast aspersions on other members that are outside or inside this Assembly, and that member has done it. He's invited certain exchange from this side of the House.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't realize what a thin skin the Leader of the Opposition had, that a humble backbencher could get to him this way, but I'll try not to be too harsh on him.

MR. MARTIN: You're humble; you're right about that. You've got lots to be humble about.

MR. OLDRING: Henny Penny is really having a tough time in the House this afternoon.

But, Mr. Speaker, I listened to him this afternoon. I listened to him very closely, and of course one of his amendments is dealing with the process. He critiqued it and he talked about it being too rushed. He talked about it being held behind closed doors. He talked about a lack of public input. He talked about a need for public hearings. He talked about constituents that didn't have an opportunity for their say.

I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, that just isn't accurate. The Meech Lake accord didn't just happen. It wasn't just the result of a 19-hour meeting, and it wasn't just rammed through the House



of Commons. These discussions have been going on for a great number of years, and I want to quote. I always hesitate to quote a Liberal, but I will in this instance. It's the Hon. J.W. Pickersgill, federal Liberal cabinet minister.

All these things have been discussed for 60 years, ever since we got recognition of our sovereignty in the conference of 1926. This is really the final stage, if it is the final stage, as I hope it will be, to complete that task.

These discussions have been going on for a long time, Mr. Speaker. They were continued in 1982 when the government of the day failed miserably, I think, in getting consensus of the first ministers. The discussions were going on back during the 1984 federal election. They were made public through the Edmonton Declaration here in our own city when the first ministers got together under the capable direction and leadership of our Premier. It was discussed at the first ministers' meeting in Vancouver in 1986. Mr. Speaker, it wasn't just a 19-hour closed-door meeting that produced the Meech Lake accord; it was years of negotiations and discussions evolving over time that allowed the accord to be completed in a 19-hour meeting.

Now, the process didn't stop there, for now the accord has to be ratified, and not just by 11 first ministers but by the House of Commons and 10 Legislative Assemblies, clearly, Mr. Speaker, allowing for ample discussion and public input and public debate. Each province is dealing with it in their own appropriate way. In Alberta our own Premier tabled the constitutional amendments in this Assembly on June 17, 1987. We didn't table them and vote on them. We tabled them, put them over for a later session for discussion, to allow ample time for public input, for public discussion. I know the Premier made it very clear in our caucus that he expected all of us to participate, that he expected all of us to go back to our constituencies to hold public meetings on the accord, to participate in forums, to discuss it at town hall meetings, and generally to make sure that all of our constituents had full opportunity for public input. We did that, Mr. Speaker, and I know that in our caucus we held over 100 such meetings. I know that the Attorney General alone attended over 15 such meetings. The Associate Minister of Agriculture I know held 12 such meetings. The Member for Cypress-Redcliff next to me held three such meetings. I personally attended three such meetings.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying is that we got out there, and we really went to the constituents with this one, to the grass roots, and we talked to them about Meech Lake and they to us. There was a total opportunity for input, but we didn't have to do it with the fanfare of the Liberals or the NDPs or [inaudible] patting ourselves on the back, "Look at me; look at what I'm doing." We just plain and simply went about doing our jobs of efficiently and effectively meeting with our constituents on an important matter to all Albertans and to Canada. Hundreds of meetings.

Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP is proposing a motion to change the amending formula. You have to ask yourselves why. Why change the amending formula? It's obvious from their perspective; it gives too much power to the provinces. Ed told them that. Oh yes, Ed; we're with you 100 percent on this one; we don't want you centralists losing any of your control. Don't worry, Ed. We won't let Alberta escape your grip. Tell Oshawa everything is fine with Ray and the boys. It's those other guys, Ed. It's those other guys, the ones Albertans keep electing. They don't seem to understand the importance of centralist thinking, the importance of centralist power. Don't worry, Ed. We'll speak for you here. Hi to Bob and Shirley.

Mr. Speaker, I understand why the centralists don't like the amending formula, and I think that J.F. Conway put it very well in an article in the *Calgary Herald* on May 13, 1987. He talks about what Mulroney and the Premiers have brought us from Meech Lake, and I quote:

Quebec is distinct and special, but so are the other nine provinces. Quebec has a veto on important matters, but so does every other province. Quebec can have a say about immigration, but so can every other province. Quebec can opt out of shared programs with compensation, but so can every other province. Quebec can have a say on Supreme Court justices, but so can every other province. Quebec can have a say on Senate appointments, but so can every other province.

Equality and fairness, Mr. Premier, that's what we're really talking about, and that's what they seem to fail to understand on that side of the House. They're so wrapped up in that centralist thinking that they fail to see the importance of this to Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, the amending formula is a winner to Albertans. It's a made-in-Alberta formula. It's a formula former Premier Lougheed strived for in 1982. It's a victory for eight of the provinces at least, but really it's a victory for all provinces and for all of Canada. It's a breath of fresh air, Mr. Speaker, and it will make Canada stronger. It's fair and it's just and it makes all the provinces equal.

Mr. Speaker, I notice again that the Leader of the Official Opposition wants to change the amending formula as it relates to Senate reform. Again you have to ask yourselves why, and I think that again the answer is obvious: he wants to leave control to the centralists. He wants to toe party line. He's not thinking of Alberta. And let's think about that. Publicly Alberta's position on Senate reform is very clear: we want a Triple E Senate. Now, on the record, British Columbia and Saskatchewan seem prepared to support that concept. But to date they're the only ones. They're the only other two provinces that seem to be in tune with that kind of thinking. And if you look at the existing formula and what we have now under the existing Constitution, guess what? Ontario effectively has a veto, and only Ontario.

On the other hand, under this existing formula we could very well see Senate reform. It's certainly a possibility under the existing formula, but the likelihood of it being anything close to Triple E or the likelihood of it being anything close to favorable to Alberta I think is zero. Really what we could get is something shoved down our throats, and it would be just too bad.

On the other hand, under the new formula we can stand up for ourselves and we're not going to be bullied by central Canada. And all provinces -- not just Ontario, but all provinces -- will have that veto. Fairness and equality for all the provinces: that's something that Meech Lake accord does for us, Mr. Speaker. Now, again I listen to the Official Leader of the Opposition, along with all the other doomsayers and naysayers, claiming that unanimity isn't possible, there's no way we can have unanimity. Mr. Speaker, I know eleven first ministers and the Meech Lake accord say that's wrong. It's dead wrong, for there are pages and pages and pages of unanimity.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, our Premier went to Meech Lake with three objectives for Alberta and for Albertans. One, of course, was to bring Quebec into Confederation as a full partner. I think all Canadians agree that there was a major flaw in the Constitution Act of 1982. Trudeau had left out 25 percent of the Canadian population. Some 6 million to 7 million Canadians were no longer a part of Confederation. Our Premier wanted Quebec in,

but he wanted them in on an equal basis, as an equal partner. And that leads to the second objective, and that was equality of partnership for all 10 provinces. Our Premier recognized that for Confederation to work and to succeed we all had to be treated fairly and equally, and anything less than that would not be acceptable to Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, our Premier's third objective was the entrenchment of Senate reform in the Constitution. Now, as some of you will recall, the critics and commentators of the day held absolutely no hope -- no hope -- for even being able to discuss the Senate reform. In fact, it was even suggested that our Premier was only muddying the waters by bringing up Senate reform, and that there was, again, absolutely no chance that it would even be considered. And of course, Mr. Speaker, not only did our Premier make sure it was discussed, it is now entrenched in the Constitution. Every year now, every year at every first ministers' meeting, Senate reform will be discussed until a meaningful alternative is found, and it will be an alternative that Albertans can agree to.

Mr. Speaker, I want to share with you some quotes from a Triple E Bulletin published back in May of 1987. This is put out by the Canadian Committee for a Triple E Senate. The author of this particular article is David Elton, an executive committee member. I quote:

While the Meech Lake accord did not make a Triple E Senate a reality, it all but guarantees that Senate reform will actually take place.

And further on in the article I quote again:

Two months ago those of us advocating Senate reform were voices crying in the wilderness. Our voices have now not only been heard, but we've also been listened to.

I think that speaks very highly of the accomplishment that our Premier was able to make at those Meech Lake discussions as it relates to Senate reform.

Mr. Speaker, our Premier clearly met all three objectives, and in doing so provided a tremendous service to this country. History will record the role our Premier played, the leadership he gave as chairman of the first ministers, the strength that he brought to the table on Alberta's behalf. History will record the role of our Premier, and it will be kind to him.

Mr. Speaker, the accord may not be perfect from the perspective that more could have been done. The NDPs have brought in some interesting amendments, most that I can't agree with. The ones that I feel strongest about I've spoken to already. But if we wait for perfection, we risk undoing what has already been achieved, what has already been accomplished.

I once heard politics described as the art of the possible combined with the art of compromise. The Constitution Act of 1982 has compromise in it. The Meech Lake accord has compromise in it. But the compromise is overshadowed by some very real and some very meaningful progress in this nation, progress that will strengthen our country and bring Confederation together once again, progress that represents fairness and equality. We will no longer have two classes of provinces in Canada; we'll have 10 equal partners.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude where I began, for Sir Charles Roberts said it so well. "Awake, my country, the hour is great with change!"

Thank you.

[Two members rose]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. I believe the hon. leader of the Liberal Party caught the Chair's eye.

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

This is certainly a topic that I'm sure nearly every member of the House will want to speak on over the next while. One of the problems: it's going to test the most clever and most facile of politicians to come out and tell you all what is wrong with the accord and how this should be done and that should be done and then promptly turn around and vote for it. I think this is one of the things that has come home and one of the things that we in the political life of this province have not seen probably in the last couple of generations and probably will not foresee for some time to come: really a document or accord or treaty, or whatever you want to call it, being brought into the Legislature with the fact that you have to take it holus-bolus, no amendments allowed, otherwise it will not fly.

Now, that I found very annoying. The Liberal Party, like the other opposition party, was around the province in hearings this summer, and one of the things that came through very loud and clear, one of the facts that was driven home to us time and time again, was that the people were angry at not having an opportunity to put input or debate into the Meech Lake accord. I'm not saying that everybody was angry. It certainly was not the topic in every coffee house, but those that are interested in our political future, those that are interested in the type of society we're going to design for the next 50 to 100 years wanted to have something to say. Yet this was an agreement that was hammered out by 10 leaders of all political parties long into the night and then brought back, and it was said: "You cannot break these tablets. Here are the 10 commandments. We've brought them down from the mount and you either take it or you shall be forever cast forward into the desert, and there'll be no hope for you, no restitution." Pardon me for borrowing some of the language from the hon. Member for Red Deer-North, but he was looking at it, so I thought I wanted to bring some brimstone and fire down into his section there. [interjection] That's right.

But the point is, Mr. Speaker, that we're given very little opportunity, and they've been given very little opportunity, to debate it. I think that a lot of this was due, possibly -- and I know the people over there blame the Trudeau government, blame the past Liberals for what's happened. And in this case they're probably right. The very fact that there is a public consciousness out there, the very fact that individual rights and individuals themselves count more than government, count more than what the legislators are, is something that we did when we brought back our Constitution and put in forever the Charter of Rights. I believe it may be subliminal in some ways, it may be that it is almost imperceptible, but the public has taken onto themselves the feeling -- and the proper feeling -- that they are supreme and not Parliament, that there is a basic right that they cannot go against individuals, that the individual cannot be transgressed on. That his rights go far beyond what our country or what our Constitution might put in writing or what any legislative body did.

So consequently we have today, in the 1980s in Alberta, and I think in many areas of Canada, a type of thinking, a type of feeling amongst vox populi, if you want to call it, amongst the body politic, that will not buy the idea that 10 men -- good and true they may be or they may not be -- can sit down and in a corner carve out something. We might say we've come full circle and gone back to the Magna Carta. In other words, we want to have input. They're saying, "We want to have input into the final process." And to use the argument, the very specious one at that, "We had to have Quebec in; Quebec wasn't going to come in" -- it has to be one of the weakest. Because at the time

the Edmonton accord was fashioned here, as at the last time I looked -- at that time and the last time I looked -- the Premier of Quebec was a Liberal, is a Liberal, and probably always will be.

I sat down; we had talks with him. The Edmonton accord was being fashioned out, and nowhere did I detect the idea that you heard all through western Canada: that they were going to pick up their marbles and go home if they didn't get in. Quebec knew that the Constitution prior to that had not been adopted because they chose not to get in. And for those of you that do not remember your history that well, Mr. Lévesque was Premier. Do you think there was any possibility that any Constitution would have been accepted at that time? No. So consequently, for anybody to go on a guilt trip in western Canada because Quebec was not into the Constitution is foolish and is used now as a red herring to say, "Well, if we didn't sign the Meech Lake deal, we would have lost Quebec and everything would have gone down the drain."

Now, I know I differ with my national party, and I can tell you this, that our caucus has the courage to differ with their national party. I'm going to challenge my friends on the left to see whether they've got the courage to differ with their national party when it comes to the interests of Albertans. But I want to see how it's going to turn out. It's easy to put out all sorts of resolutions and amendments that you know will go down the drain and then say, "Oh well, I tried my best; I'm going to vote for it anyhow." I'm going to challenge them to see what they can do on these amendments. But let's take . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: We'll see where you stand later.

MR. TAYLOR: I was glad to see it would wake them up a little bit, Mr. Speaker, because there's nothing worse than to have only the government side sleeping.

While I get back to taking the Premier's speech bit by bit, in the November 23 *Hansard*, the first quote was that:

... provinces in the making of constitutional amendments and to result in constitutional amendments that gave a balancing of power, a greater decentralization . . .

Well, this is what concerns me, Mr. Speaker. They talk about the power of the centre, the power of eastern Canada, but the point is that we want the regions -- a proper Constitution should have the regions represented in Ottawa, not out through the various regions. One of the ideas behind redoing the Constitution, sure, was to get more power for the maritimes and for the west and ultimately the north, which we quite conveniently forget at times -- as a matter of fact, it was forgotten in this Constitution. We talk about the arrogance of Ottawa forgetting Edmonton, and Edmonton of all people had the arrogance to forget Dawson City and Inuvik. So let's not go throwing brickbats at how much Ottawa forgets when we didn't have the intelligence to remember there were people less populated than we that were waiting to get their chance to come in the Constitution.

But the point is that the idea is not to have the power in Inuvik, Dawson City, Whitehorse, Edmonton, and Halifax, but to have those regions down on the national stage in Ottawa where debate can take place every day that the House is sitting, where a debate can take place in front of the cameras, in front of the media, and where there is a give-and-take and the resolutions are debated properly and voted on; not this type of system which begs for a system of having 10 nabobs, 10 sheikhs, or whatever you want to call it, sit down once or twice a year and try to divvy up the power in Canada.

I don't think our Fathers of Confederation ever at any time

thought that the regional power was to be represented by the Premiers. I know it takes a great movement of faith by the regional Premiers. It takes a great deal of faith by the House of Commons, the people elected at large, to give up some of their power to a third part of a troika, an elected Senate. But this is what we have to do: a Triple E, elected Senate. Now, I don't know, Mr. Speaker, whether the government over there is really Machiavellian. If I hadn't been elected here a couple of years ago and hadn't sat across from them from time to time, I might have had reason to believe they are Machiavellian, and that they really wanted to deep-six the Senate and pretend that they were making giant strides forward in decentralizing the government of Canada when, in reality, they are trying to grab onto, for the Premiers, the power to take place by putting in an impossible amendment to the Constitution for it to get an elected Senate. I don't really think they're that bad. Actually, they're quite nice at times when you meet them individually and take them as a group.

Instead, I have to take the other course: that they are well-meaning but foolish, and that they did not know what they were doing when they put in the Constitution the two things, and settle for this: one, that it was going to be a subject of discussion every time they met. It would rank somewhere between the Lord's prayer and their coffee time. It would come on and probably be repeated and used with about the same amount of diligence that we hear the Lord's prayer starting out a meeting. So the idea that would be on the top of the agenda, that something would be accomplished, is foolish.

Mr. Speaker, for many years I have been privileged to work in the Middle East, particularly with Israel. One of the great books of the Middle East, which Moslems, Christians, and Jews adhere to, is the announcement that there will be a coming of the Messiah sometime, and if you bring it up on the agenda and think about it enough, that Messiah will come. Well, I suspect that putting this onto the agenda for future constitutional meetings will accomplish and speed up the coming of the elected Senate just as much as putting it in the Old Testament speeded up the second coming of the Messiah.

Now, let's go on a bit and look at one of the other elements he said. Mr. Speaker, the Premier mentioned that he "wanted to ensure that we would have Senate reform in our Constitution." Well, that's the second part. Somehow or other, the doctrine of unanimity . . . And this is what's intriguing. You would have to go back maybe to the Middle Ages, to the Council of Trent or some of the ancient Christian churches' doctrines or jesuitical arguments, where they used to disappear back into their own minds somehow or another to come up with a doctrine. The doctrine of unanimity was going to accomplish this elected Senate; this somehow or another was going to protect Alberta.

The only reason, Mr. Speaker, I can think for their doctrine of unanimity -- to give them the most kindness I can in their purposes of what thinking the so-called illegitimate fathers of the new Confederation have put together -- is that they actually thought, and our Premier is one of the proponents of this, that it would protect them. What they don't seem to realize is that the doctrine of unanimity is nothing more -- nothing less, if you want to put it forward -- than an ironclad system to make sure that the status quo stays. Think of it in your own life. Think of it in your own business. If you needed unanimous approval of everyone around you before something could move, it would mean nothing would move. And if you were a fat cat, if you were sitting on top of the hill, naturally the doctrine of unanimity is a very good one indeed. But to argue that it protects you is

absolute nonsense.

What it does is freeze forever in time -- you might go so far as it almost fossilizes our Constitution, because it freezes forever the opportunity of changing that Constitution, and particularly the part . . . I know the part of the seven out of 10 applies in many areas, but the amendment or the reform of the Senate depended on unanimity.

So what we've ended up with, Mr. Speaker is a Constitution that not only does not do what we want -- in other words, get an elected, effective, and equal Triple E Senate, decentralize power but not out to the different capitals, decentralize power in another House down there -- it ends up freezing forever the power of Quebec, freezing forever the power of Ontario, because there's no way that they're going to give up anything under the power of unanimity, freezing forever that the Yukon will stay where it is.

This is not the type of country we want. A real Constitution, admittedly not flesh and blood, should be the flesh and blood and bones of a country over the next 100 years. It shouldn't be able to be changed by mob rule. But on the other hand, change should be possible when a vast majority of its citizens decide that now they have to adapt for the next part of the next half century ahead. But instead, what we did was freeze ourselves in perpetuity with the doctrine of unanimity, which would, I think, make it impossible to make any change.

Now, the Premier did pride himself on the fact that there's a possibility of an election for a person or persons who might be submitted to the federal government. Well, we heard about that lately, and I noticed the hon. minister that put forward the idea that the elections might be too expensive is very disappointed, in a way. As a matter of fact, I don't know of any election in a democracy that is not expensive. But we've long since learned that if you abolish elections, you might save expense of elections, but you do it at the price of freedom, not at the price of dollars. So to have a member of the government come out and say, "Well, we can't elect Senators; it might be a little expensive," is absolutely ridiculous.

MR. YOUNIE: So is electing a Senator.

MR. TAYLOR: There's a little wit and wisdom over there. I thought I'd lost my friends on the left, if you could call it that today, when I tried to get in front of them in question period. But I was glad to see them back, smiling once again with me there. Now, I'm going to have to go back again, Mr. Speaker, and put the boots to the government again, I'm afraid.

This is the idea that they want to enshrine the principle of first ministers' conferences on an annual basis. Now, if there's ever an insidious method of pulling this country apart, it will have to be the first ministers, be they Liberal -- the royal jelly does funny things to people -- Conservative, NDP, WCC, or whatever they are, that can sit down and decide what Canada is going to do without public debate, without the television cameras around, without the newspaper operators. I know many people don't like the media, but they're still the eyes and ears and method of getting it out to the public. I notice all the ministers on other side nodding their heads, Mr. Speaker. Luckily, there's no -- oh, there are media up in the gallery here too. But it's fair game to pick on the media. Imperfect as they are, they are still the only way that the public perceives what is going on in the governmental process. So to try to circumvent this at their First Ministers' Conference, turn it into a sort of club, a fraternity -- we'll all gel together and pal each other on

the back, or the rump; nowadays you never know which you're supposed to do -- and come out of that and say, "Rah, rah, rah, we've got the country operating," has to be a travesty of putting together a Constitution.

No, Mr. Speaker. I know other members will have much more and go into much more depth than I have. They will touch other parts of Constitution that deal with women's rights. They will deal with aboriginal rights. They will be dealing with allowing in territories and with Supreme Court Those are all items that could be amended. But as a provincial party we did a lot of soul-searching before we decided we were voting against the Meech Lake accord unless the doctrine of unanimity is removed. That has to be removed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please, hon. leader. The Chair hesitates to interrupt such an eloquent speech, but we're dealing with an amendment proposed by Leader of the Official Opposition. Could the hon. leader come back to the amendment before us and not Motion 17? [interjections]

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I thought somebody had a point of order here.

Mr. Speaker, I've been trying to figure out the amendment. It covers such a broad section of territory. That's why I took the liberty to go across the fact of the other areas. As you mentioned, territory is mentioned in the amendment, so I was taking a note of speaking on it. Multicultural, which is also mentioned in the amendment, and national standards . . . Opting out: I haven't got there, and I don't intend to speak on it now. Actually, there's no problem with the NDP amendments. They're good. I think we'll vote for them.

All I'm trying to say is that they won't have the guts to vote against the ultimate when all these amendments are turned down. I defy you. They will run; they will hide; they will disappear. They will not have the courage, after these amendments are voted down, to get out and vote against the main amendment. They'll say: "Well, we tried. What can you do? You can lead a Tory to water, but you can't make him think." All the other comments they make -- they've got all the headlines across the province, the wonderful things they're going to do. Then they will pull the blankets up over their heads and worry about the bogeyman getting them and vote for it in the long run.

So I challenge them: take on Broadbent; take on the west. You want to represent Alberta? You want to be the Official Opposition? Take them on, and vote for the amendments, but vote against the main point.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think I've stirred things up enough. May I end? Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Minister of Environment.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In 1987 I think all of us as members of this esteemed Assembly should be very, very proud and humbled by the fact that we're able to participate in an open, democratic discussion with respect to a constitutional amendment in the history of our country.

When Canada was created in 1867, it came about as a result of many, many decades of confrontation with respect to a variety of territories in northern part of the North American continent. In 1867, 120 years ago, Canada became created as a country. The years went by. Amendments were few and far between to the Constitution of Canada, but Newfoundland

joined this Confederation as the last participant in 1949, and from that time on until 1982 there really were no significant changes to our Constitution. An amendment did occur in 1982, and it ignored one large province in our country, the province of Quebec.

Now, in 1987, I feel very proud, as one of 83 elected representatives in the province of Alberta, that I'm able to stand in this Assembly and participate in a part of the history of Canada, part of the tradition of our country which affords free, democratic participation. I might also point out that that right afforded to me as a member of this Assembly is also afforded to all of my colleagues in this Assembly. Quite frankly, the debate with respect to this particular resolution and the amendment, and the other amendments that might follow it, will extend much beyond 42 or 43 or 44 hours, recognizing that each member has at least 30 minutes available to him to participate in this debate.

On June 3 of this year 10 Canadian Premiers and one Canadian Prime Minister affixed their signatures to an accord called the 1987 Constitutional Accord. I think it's remarkable as well that in a country with such diversity and differences as we have in the country of Canada, Premiers of 10 different provinces representing four basic political parties -- the Progressive Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party, the Liberal Party, and the Social Credit Party -- along with the leader of our country could come together and affix their signatures to a document that will become historical in terms of what is afforded to the provinces and the various regions and to the basic people of this country.

Seven months ago, in late April, as the provincial and federal delegations met at Meech Lake -- I think we all have to go back and put it in the context which existed at that time -- I think there was a fair degree of public and press skepticism across the country of Canada that in fact such diverse interests as those represented by the Prime Minister and the 10 Premiers could actually come together and formalize those differences into a document of agreement. We, of course, in the province of Alberta were very, very anxious that Quebec would re-enter a Canadian Confederation in a constitutional way, in a legal way, and in every aspect of involvement. We also were very concerned about the principle of equality of the various provinces. Of course, as we know, our Premier, Premier Getty, was determined to gain national commitment to the necessity for senatorial reform.

I think it's also very important, Mr. Speaker, that I reiterate what I said just a minute or two ago, that the time afforded a great deal of skepticism that it would even be possible that these diverse groups of people could come together and do it. And weren't we all surprised, but also very happy as Canadians, I think -- and I know we're very happy as Albertans -- that in fact a consensus could be reached, a commitment could be made? While it may have been to the dismay of centralists and separatists and others who had hoped that Canada could not survive as a country, I think that to all of those who are Canadians and strongly believe in the identification of a country called Canada and in the freedoms that are afforded to all us as Canadian citizens, we're very, very proud that in fact that did happen.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that it's important to recognize that this matter just did not come about as a matter of 11 or 12 hours. Certainly the history of our country which goes before that the history which led up to it in terms of the number of meetings that were held prior to that, afforded great debate in the country of Canada with respect to a whole series of matters with respect

to what was finally agreed to. We can recall, I think, as Albertans, as Canadians, that there were a number of conditions that Quebec had afforded to it, and earlier speakers have alerted the Assembly to a number of those conditions as well.

We recall as well that in the city of Edmonton only a year and some-odd months ago when the Premier of the province of Alberta hosted the other Premiers and the country of Canada, an Edmonton Declaration was issued. It came out of the capital city of the province that we're all very proud to represent. That declaration, the Edmonton Declaration, was discussed once again. A First Ministers' Conference was held in Vancouver in November 1986, only one year ago.

We can all remember as well, Mr. Speaker, that we've had considerable debate in our country with respect to the definition of the words "distinct society," and what it meant and how it was arrived at. We've also had great debate over the concepts of federal spending power over many years.

I think it's important to recognize that from time of the Edmonton Declaration some 16 months ago to the time that we stand here in this Assembly on this day in November 1987, there has been great debate afforded to many Canadians across the country. Some Legislatures have led to public hearings within their own Legislatures. Others have already endorsed the amendment and passed resolutions within their own Parliaments to arrive at that. Of course, we know that a major committee of both the Canadian House of Commons and the Canadian Senate has already reviewed this, and I intend to come back to that matter in a few minutes from now.

But what was it, Mr. Speaker, that we really arrived at in 1987? I grew up in northeastern Alberta. It was a rural area, small-town Alberta. As I grew up in this province, I can remember the debates that occurred over the last four decades. I can remember the debates that occurred in other parts of the country of Canada as well and the debates that occurred in Quebec during the 1970s that basically said: "Gee, we're all part of this country, yet we don't really feel a part of this country. There's something missing from this. We're not all equal; we don't have the same access to power. Somehow we're dominated out of a central spot on the map called Ottawa." I suppose in the imaginations of a lot of other people Ottawa is replaced by the city of Toronto and everything it stands for. We've always felt that we weren't really an equal, effective part of Canada. Somehow we felt that we were different and because we lived in the west, we weren't equal as well. One of the fundamental aspects of the 1987 agreement, fundamental because it's the first time in the history of Canada: it clearly indicates that all provinces in this country are, in fact, equal. And all provinces in this country are equal because all provinces basically have a veto for the first time.

Now, let's just go back 130 years. It was provinces, it was territories, it was regions of this country that created a country. It was not a country that created provinces. Four parts, four regions of the northern part of the North American continent came together to create a country. Canada was created by provinces and not vice versa. Yet in the history of this country, for the last 120 years, the general feeling has been that basically Canada is really something quite different than the provinces. Mr. Speaker, we must never forget that in the unique aspect of the Canadian Confederation and the Canadian democracy, it is the provinces that have created Canada, and it is the provinces that came together to give a central government certain authorities.

Now, many historians might look at this and, in fact, have written things that basically would give their view of Canadian

history quite different than that, but I don't know how anybody can debate the fact that four regions of this country came together to cede from themselves something into a national authority, a national power, a national capital. And because they couldn't even agree -- they were so suspicious of one another in terms of what they were ceding -- they found some absurd spot on the Ottawa River and gave it a name and called it a national capital.

But I'm a proud Canadian. That doesn't take anything away from the fact that I can also be a very, very proud and determined provincial Canadian and a provincial Albertan. Finally now, in 1987, as an Albertan I am now an equal to all other Canadians for first time in history of Canada, quite clearly, without precedent. It gives us, all provinces, an opportunity and a chance to basically evoke a veto if we are not happy.

Please remember, Mr. Speaker, that it wasn't very many years ago -- in fact, it was only about seven years ago, on a very dark day of October 1980. Some of us who were in this Assembly at that time can recall having to stand up and being told then about a new policy, a national policy, which would now be inducted upon the people of Alberta, called the national energy program. It's important that I recall that event because I represented the constituency of Barrhead at that time. Because of that little initiative that was supported by people in other parts of country, I saw the depopulation of one major town in the constituency I represented by some 35 percent within a matter of six months after that program was brought in. That that type of initiative cannot take place in the future is the result of the accord of 1987. We now have a veto. We can stop it, should it ever come again. That rape and pillage of our province is not possible to be allowed to happen again in the future of our history. Because of that veto power I feel more comfortable about the future of my children now than I ever have in the past 20 years living in this country of Canada.

It's important as well, Mr. Speaker, that we reiterate and look back at some of the other major factors that were arrived at in this 1987 Constitutional Accord. It has to be repeated again that one of the long-term objectives of the province of Alberta, of government of Alberta, of the people of Alberta, is to have an opportunity to meet on a regular schedule of events on matters dealing with the economy. We have now entrenched in this document annual first ministers' conferences on the economy. That has been a fundamental position that Alberta has put forward for a great number of years. Recall, Mr. Speaker, that a debate occurred in Regina in February 1985 that such an event would happen. It has now become entrenched. It's important, because when we talk about provinces, we have to talk about the context of them being equal, elected, and effective. When all of the 10 Premiers . . .

MR. TAYLOR: Point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, they're supposed to be speaking to amendment. I know he didn't get a chance to rewrite his speech that he's reading, but he's not speaking to the amendment. He's wandering all over place and, in fact, reading a speech that had been prepared for him a couple days ago, before these amendments were put in.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On point of order, the Chair is

well aware of *Beauchesne* 299; and will take the advice of the hon. leader of the Liberal Party. Perhaps the hon. minister could periodically refer to the amendment before the Assembly during his discussion.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

I initiated my discussion this afternoon by indicating that I was participating on amendment to the motion. I listened very carefully to the words uttered by the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. I recall that the hon. member stood up and just started to talk and it was only towards the end of his speech that he had to be reminded that in fact it was with respect to an amendment. I think it's very important that we recognize in the whole context of what has happened with respect to the document signed on June 3 that it is historic in the country of Canada. What I'm attempting to do is put it into historical perspective, recognizing that constitutions are not entrenched in stone; they do change. Our basic Constitution was made in 1867. I've talked about other amendments that have gone through, right to the concept that we're talking about now in 1987. The point I want to make is that to those individuals who have already spoken this afternoon, who basically come forward and say, "Well, we need to change the document of June 3 because it is entrenched in stone." for them to suggest that it's not possible to ever change our Constitution in the future -- the point that I want to make is that they're wrong, in my humble opinion.

The amendment that is being put forward this afternoon basically would take out of context a process that has been under way for the last several years, a process that now is arrived at, where 10 different Premiers in this country, representing four different political parties, representing 10 different regions in this country -- and throw into that a Prime Minister that represents the whole country. How remarkable it is that these individuals can get together, come forward with an amendment. I've already pointed out, if Member for Westlock-Sturgeon had been listening, that several Legislatures in this country have already debated the resolution, have already approved it. Now, basically, if we take a look at an amendment at this point in time, in essence what we're doing is unraveling the process.

Now, notwithstanding any of the merit points in the arguments made with respect to the amendment -- there are some very good points and some very good arguments that have been made with respect to the amendment. I've said nothing negative about the speech given by Leader of the Opposition. As a matter of fact, I've praised his ability to stand up in this Assembly and take advantage of his democratic right to participate as he sees it and as he should see it, and I sincerely hope that all other members of this Assembly will participate in this debate this afternoon as well. Mr. Speaker, what is important is to recognize that what we're going to do in 1987, and hopefully have approved in law within a matter of months, is set forward one additional storey to Canadian Confederation. We're going to advance our society in very dramatic ways.

I think it's important as well to make a number of comments with respect to, perhaps, misconceptions that have already been raised by my colleagues. I don't say they were intended, deliberate misconceptions, but perhaps just misinterpretations simply because of their unavailability to perhaps spend as much time as they might want to with respect to that.

Please note as well, Mr. Speaker, that we have already had major public hearings that were chaired, a joint committee of the Canadian House of Commons and the Canadian Senate that ba-

sically went through the accord a number of months ago. They heard a number of witnesses; they received a number of submissions -- in fact, some 80 witnesses and nearly 300 written submissions. Those were dealt with at that committee. That committee also reported. I want to just quote from two statements issued by the joint House of Commons/Canadian Senate committee with respect to it. They first of all indicated that:

The 1987 Constitutional Accord represents a reasonable and workable package.

and concluded with the statement:

The joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons is therefore pleased to recommend to the Senate and the House of Commons adoption of the 1987 Constitutional Accord.

Now, I think that all members who will be participating in this debate today, tomorrow, in subsequent weeks, into the months of January, February, and March, and as long as it takes us to conclude the debate on this very important matter undoubtedly will bring forward comments from witnesses that appeared before them or comments from individuals who have made statements with respect to it. I tried to point out earlier that this is not a matter that simply was evolved by 11 people in 11 hours at a mysterious place called Meech Lake. The debate has gone on for many, many years, for many, many months. All individual members have had an opportunity and, quite frankly, have had a responsibility to consult with not only their constituents but the people of Alberta on this extremely important matter. How some individuals might come forward and say, "Well gee, what we really need is a committee to do it," I think is regrettable.

I'm a member of this Assembly. I worked very hard in 1979 to get elected. Well, really it wasn't that hard considering the opposition at the time, and it was certainly a lot less difficult in 1982. But because of that effort and because of that commitment not only to my constituents but to the people of Alberta, I feel it is very important that I had taken the time, I had taken the commitment, to speak not only to my constituents but to as many people in the province of Alberta directly, one on one, to ask them what they thought about the Meech Lake accord. I'm very pleased to respond and report, Mr. Speaker, not only to you but to my colleagues and to all of the people of Alberta that, quite frankly, I think the vast majority of the citizens of this province greatly support what our Premier, Premier Getty, our Attorney General and the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Horsman, and the members of the government caucus were able to bring to this great matter of national Constitutional reform in 1987. I have no doubt whatsoever that my constituents will be very pleased to know that their M.L.A. took the time to consult with them, took the time to stand in the Alberta Legislative Assembly, and took the time to present their thoughts to his colleagues in this particular esteemed Assembly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what is regrettable in all of this is that the statement was made by one of the earlier speakers this afternoon -- not the member from Red Deer, I might add -- that basically it was the process that was offensive, and we've got to have more public hearings, and we've got to have a committee. Well, I'm an elected person. It is my responsibility to represent my constituents. I really don't feel that I should have to cede my responsibilities, after having earned the right to speak on behalf of my constituents, to a committee of the Assembly to go out and hear from the people of Alberta what the people of Alberta have said about this accord. I believe that is the feeling of most members of the caucus that I'm a member of. We believe very

strongly that it is our responsibility to speak with people, to meet with people, to go one on one with people, to work very hard in attempting to understand directly what people are all about. It is not our view that we have to have a committee so that we can go off and do something else.

I suppose if we were members of the Liberal Party or the leader of the Liberal Party, we would have gone to Chinook for 30 days and tried to stir up an interest with respect to that party in a by-election. My only comment on that is that if I owned a horse and my horse had come that far back in the race, gee, I'm sure what I would've done was fired the jockey and put the horse out to pasture. When I see where the Liberal Party was, it's just about that far back.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that there are some Liberals in the history of Canada who've really believed in Canada and understood that people had to come together and work together. It's because of a harmony and it's because of a give-and-take and it's because of a commitment to one another that we could work for the betterment of this country. There are Premiers like that, and in this context we can look at the signatures of those individuals who affixed their names to the document signed on June 3. I see Bourassa of the province de Québec. Now, he believed in this document; he is a Liberal. I see David Peterson of Ontario. He's affixed his signature to this; he's a Liberal. He believes in Canada. I see Mr. Ghiz, the Premier of Prince Edward Island; he's a Liberal. He attached his signature to this. And of course, to repeat once again, there are other Premiers across the country who have also affixed their signatures to the document, including, I note in looking at this, the Premier of Manitoba, the Hon. Howard Pawley. All of them, Mr. Speaker, believe in Canada and also believe that a Constitution is not something that you simply arrive at on a given day and it remains etched in stone for the next thousands and hundreds of thousands of years.

We all know that the history of this country has said, "Let us move from one step to the next for the general improvement of the population of our country." We have done that, beginning in 1867. We have now arrived in 1987. We've got, I think, a very significant document, a very important document. Undoubtedly in the years to come it will evolve and it will change again, because the flexibility is allowed in it for all Canadians, and it's part, in fact, of the Canadian tradition to come together as much as possible. Of course, we now have entrenched in the Constitution a recognition that those meetings will have to occur on an annual basis.

Mr. Speaker, my forefathers came to this country around the turn of the century, and they came from a part of Europe that had disappeared. It was forced to disappear from the map of Europe. They came essentially from Poland, what is known as Poland today, and at that time... [interjection] It disappeared. Napoleon had done his best to ensure that Poland had disappeared from the map of Europe, and it was not restored, of course, till 1918. One of the traditions I've always been taught is that we work very hard, we have a strong commitment to what we believe in, we listen to others. We recognize that the way we resolve matters is through debate, and we attempt to compromise as much as possible. The accord of June 3, 1987, is a compromise, a compromise of 10 Canadian Premiers and one Canadian Prime Minister for the benefit, I think, of all Canadians. It makes all Albertans for the first time in the history of this country equal participants in the country of Canada. In addition to that, it gives us as provincial rightists a veto on aspects of the future that we might disagree with.

I think it would be sad, in fact, if we were to jeopardize the process by accepting amendments at this point in time, recognizing that 11 signatures have already been affixed to the document. Several Legislatures in the country have already approved the resolution, and there is a great expectation, quite frankly, that Canadians want to see this accord in place and in place as quickly as possible. So I'm proud to participate in this debate. I think it's significant I'm going to ask all of my colleagues to turn down the amendment, not because they're not good arguments necessarily but because of the process that is important.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the attentiveness afforded to me by you and other members of this Assembly, save, of course, for the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon who simply

doesn't understand that good manners and courtesy are still part of the human tradition.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WRIGHT: I beg leave to adjourn debate, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion to adjourn the debate please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed please say no. Carried.

[At 5:30 p.m. the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]