

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Monday, November 30, 1987 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 87/11/30

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

## PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

## head: PRESENTING PETITIONS

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by 250 of 300 families in the Mirror area calling for the fair application of the extended flat rate calling program to the Mirror area, which would have the result of reducing to an extended flat rate calling rate the toll fee now charged between Mirror and Red Deer.

## head: NOTICES OF MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Recreation and Parks.

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I request permission to give oral notice of motion and would ask that all hon. members provide unanimous consent in order to deal with this motion today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Tell us what it is.

MR. WEISS: This is the first time I've had the opportunity to do so, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister, the courtesy of the House does require that the other members -- they're no doubt going to be enthusiastic about what the topic is, but at least the topic might be mentioned to the House.

MR. WEISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The topic would be, in generalities, with regards to the Grey Cup festivities that just took place. [applause] Thank you.

Be it resolved that the Assembly congratulate the Edmonton Eskimos' players, coaches, management, and support staff for their fine achievement in winning the Stanley Cup.

[laughter]

AN HON. MEMBER: That too; that's next.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I might be a little presumptuous in

assuming that; that's the next event that will take place. Of course, that would be their recent Grey Cup victory.

In moving the motion, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to salute the hard work, dedication, and team spirit which has carried the Eskimos to victory. While some of my colleagues who hail from a point south of here may feel their loyalties lie elsewhere -- and I'm looking forward, Mr. Russell -- nevertheless, I'd ask all members as proud Albertans to join me in supporting the motion now before the Assembly. [applause]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair takes it that there is indeed unanimous support of the House with respect to the Grey Cup victory.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Carried.

## head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 276**  
**Child Access Act**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 276, the Child Access Act.

There are perhaps as many as 50,000 parents, not to mention grandparents, in Alberta that have difficulty with access to children of marriages that have broken up, in spite of the court orders. Mr. Speaker, this Bill, if adopted, will provide an enforcement of an access provision whereby these parents in Alberta will have access to those very children.

[Leave granted; Bill 276 read a first time]

**Bill 241**  
**Consumer Advocate's Act**

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 241, the Consumer Advocate's Act.

This Bill would create the position of a consumer advocate of Alberta, whose role it would be to investigate any consumer complaint over which the Ombudsman does not have jurisdiction. This Bill would allow the Legislative Assembly to provide the consumer advocate with a fund of money to assist individuals or consumer groups with the preparation and presentation of submission at regulatory hearings. It would also allow the consumer advocate to investigate complaints of investors or depositors in financial institutions, and to commence legal proceedings on their behalf would be particularly helpful in situations such as the current Principal Group matter.

[Leave granted; Bill 241 read a first time]

## head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file the answer to Motion for a Return 206 and to table with the Legislative Assembly copies of the annual report 1986-87 of the Alberta Environmental Centre.

## head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce two groups today. First, the Greenfield school with some 54 students:

they're in the public gallery, grades 5 and 6 students from the constituency of Edmonton-Whitemud. They are accompanied by teachers Mrs. Joan Williams, Mr. David Taverner, parents Mrs. Juliet Evans, Mrs. Palmer, and Mrs. Joan Besler. I'd ask the students to rise and be recognized by the Assembly.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce a school from the constituency of Edmonton-Parkallen for my colleague the Hon. Neil Crawford. There are some 26 students. They're in the members' gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers Miss Ursula Buffi, Miss Louise Cooper, and parent Ms Sylvia Turner. I know Miss Buffi has made sure that these students are very aware of the operations of government, municipal, provincial, and federal. I ask them to stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, I wish to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, on behalf of my colleague from Edmonton-Highlands, 17 grade 10 students from Concordia high school who are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Keith Kruse. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly,

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased today to introduce 30 students from the Glenora elementary school in the Edmonton-Glenora constituency. They are accompanied by Mr. Ken Kirsch, a longtime and well-loved teacher at the school, and I would ask them to all rise and be welcomed by the Assembly.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislature, 11 people from Mirror in the constituency of Lacombe. They are led by Gary Cummings and are here in support of the petition that I just introduced concerning the extension of the extended flat rate calling program to the Mirror area. I would ask that they all rise at this time and receive the recognition of the Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair would like to point out a concern about the irregularity of introducing groups from other members' constituencies. The Chair has received a note of complaint with respect to this regard, and so perhaps the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark and myself could have some consultation about this practice.

#### head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

##### Free Trade

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Premier. The Premier has previously indicated to this Assembly that he would probably say no to any trade agreement that did not include the elimination of the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission special tax on Alberta gas sold in the U.S. market. I quote from April 10 where the Premier says:

... however it's finally agreed, it will eliminate tariffs, countervails that we have known, matters as FERC has put on our natural gas, matters about softwood lumber.

And he emphasized:

It will either eliminate those things or I don't think a trade agreement would really be effective and we would probably say no.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. The FERC decision stands. Why has he not said no to the Mulroney trade deal and done what he said he would do back in April?

MR. GETTY: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, any trade agreement commencing on January 1, 1989, runs into the future; it isn't retroactive. We believe this trade agreement will in fact stop the very FERC decisions and others as referred to by the hon. Leader of the Opposition and in addition, of course, provide an incredible opportunity to Albertans to expand their horizons and the entire markets for their products.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it does not stop the FERC decision; that's very clear. Even the federal government has acknowledged this. My question to the Premier is simply this: in view of the fact that it doesn't stop any of these things, why again is he so enthusiastically supporting this package which could hurt Alberta? There's no doubt about it, Mr. Speaker.

MR. GETTY: He's not accurate again, Mr. Speaker. The matter of FERC rulings are under this trade agreement.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's such absolute nonsense; how that Premier can stand and say that. That's not true, and he knows it. Let me ask this question to the Premier: did he even raise this matter of the FERC decision at the First Ministers' Conference just concluded last week?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as I told the House last week, we have had some nine first ministers' meetings on trade. Through most of these I chaired the Premiers' portion of these trade negotiations. We know what's in the agreement, and the matter of FERC was raised constantly, and the matter of FERC is contained in this agreement.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it is not, and I quote Mr. Wilson who says, "This does not change any of those regulatory practices which have already been agreed to ..." That's from the federal minister. My question is: why did the Premier agree to support this trade deal without making it very clear that we would not support it without that FERC decision being removed right at the start?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, he has now confirmed my answer as being accurate. I said that this agreement deals from January 1 on and that FERC will be under this agreement and that it will be reviewed and that it will be considered before the dispute settlement agreement under this trade agreement. He's very inaccurate and does not know what he's talking about.

MR. TAYLOR: My supplementary is to the Premier, Mr. Speaker, also in line with this. He's probably aware that SEPAC, that's the small oil and gas producers, are not too happy about what he thinks is such a wonderful deal, in that they are going to be restricted to raising money in Canada. Otherwise, they will lose their identity as a Canadian company.

Now, could he tell us whether he's going to go to bat with the Prime Minister to change it so that small American companies, which now can arrange money on both sides of the border, will not have a competitive advantage over small Canadian oil companies which will only be allowed to raise money in Canada, otherwise they will lose their Canadian identification?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I've met with the SEPAC group; I've met with them often, and I believe that when the details of the agreement are fully spelled out, they are going to be in support of this agreement.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that one of the things that's so discouraging to many Albertans is that the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Liberal Party, despite the fact that this is a tremendous opportunity, a tremendous opportunity for Albertans, are so caught up in negative thinking and opposition they can't realize what's good for this province.

MR. TAYLOR: A point of order. I don't need some Uncle Tom telling me how to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. That's not a point of order. Second main question, Leader of the Opposition.

### **Financial Industry**

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. We're trying to get the facts; that's all we're trying to do. He doesn't seem to know, but I'd like to designate my question to the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1983 there circulated in the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs a discussion paper, and I have a question relating thereto for the Premier. In the discussion paper, which concerned deposit-taking institutions under provincial jurisdiction, it said:

The goal is to introduce reasonable and effective safeguards that would protect both the public interest and the stability of our financial institutions.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is: why in the four years that have elapsed since that discussion paper have the rules not been changed by one jot or tittle, to the great hurt of tens of thousands, I suggest, of Albertans?

MR. GETTY: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, having been sworn in on November 1, '85, I'm not able to go back in history and review discussion papers. However, the hon. member has drawn one to my attention; I would be pleased to take a look at it. Perhaps either the Provincial Treasurer or the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs may wish to respond to it after they've reviewed it.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, would not the Premier agree that the lapse is all the more remarkable having regard to the detailed proposals in that paper, both as to greater disclosure to the public and also as to more rigorous safeguards for the public?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't agree to that without doing some additional review. He's referring to just one paper that might be before the government. Obviously, there are a whole variety of options that would have to be considered.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, my next supplementary. Just to pay attention to only one of the proposals, would the Premier not agree that of a single proposal recommended in that paper, namely to put all deposit-taking provincial institutions under Canada Deposit Insurance, that change alone would have saved the woe of, as I say, tens of thousands of Albertans now?

MR. GETTY: It is a proposal that the hon. member is referring to, Mr. Speaker, but it certainly is not always possible to have every type of deposit covered by CDIC. Somebody ends up having to pay for that.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary.

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, my final supplementary is to the Treasurer. Why on earth, Mr. Speaker, cannot the public have access to the financial returns by these deposit-taking institutions filed pursuant to the Investment Contracts Act in the absence of a secrecy provision in the statute, as the Treasurer says we cannot. I remind him we asked for that in July of this year, and he replied in August, no, in respect of two of them.

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I know of no provision which would prevent an investor who is making a decision to invest in a particular institution from requesting that information from the company or from the Securities Commission. In the case of those investments which were exempt under the securities legislation, for example, it is assumed that if you invest more than \$100,000 -- if my memory is right, I think it's \$97,000 -- you would ask for that information and be provided by the Securities Commission. In all other cases it's normally provided by the companies themselves, the shareholders. If it's not provided, I as a shareholder or as an investor would certainly ask those questions.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Yes, Mr. Speaker, to the Provincial Treasurer. I was denied a copy of the audited financial statement of First Investors and Associated Investors by the acting superintendent of insurance of his department this summer. Why is it that under his regime neither investors nor members of the public could get copies of audited financial statements which were required by law to be filed with his department and in respect of which there was no secrecy provision in the legislation whatsoever? Why was this government administering this so as to keep basic financial information away from the public?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would imagine that if somebody wanted information of that sort, they would have gone to the company themselves. That's the normal process in these matters. Moreover, there was no request to my office. The normal communication between MLAs is between MLAs and cabinet ministers.

MR. SPEAKER: Main question, leader of the Liberal caucus.

### **Senate Appointment**

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the question is to the Premier. I welcome him back with his Ontario sultan. The vacant Senate seat exists in the province, Mr. Speaker, one that should be filled by an election which the Premier appears to be shelving or dodging about. Apparently, he can't understand that this is a rare opportunity, Mr. Premier, for you to look like a nation builder rather than somebody just trying to sell the country to the Americans. [interjections] Nevertheless, can the Premier guarantee . . . The natives are restless tonight, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier guarantee that he will not recommend a Senate appointment to the Prime Minister without some means of an election?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, obviously that guarantee can't be made. As I've told many people, and I'm sure I've said it in the House, we are looking at the possibilities and complexities, I

must admit as well, of having some type of an elected process in order to establish a list of nominees for the Senate. It isn't a simple thing, obviously, to try and come up with an elected process for an appointed body, but we are nevertheless looking at it.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Would he care to state his opinion on the former Deputy Premier's comment that on that list there should only be those that belong to the Conservative Party?

MR. GETTY: The former Deputy Premier: I guess he was referring to Dr. Hugh Homer. I thought it was an interesting thought.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Speaker, now the truth will out. Will the Premier consider setting a Senate election at the same time as the the next provincial election?

MR. GETTY: I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, in the course of the studying of the options and complexities, that'd be one thing to be looked at.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I can only think of the Premier's only word: you must seize the decision now; don't be a wimp. Are you ready to announce when there will be a Senate election?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want the Liberal Party, because of the position they've taken on free trade, to try and expand more of us into that select group that we acknowledge they are.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, is the Premier willing to send the would-be Conservative Senator from Westlock-Sturgeon to Ottawa before Christmas, complete with a no-trade contract?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd send him and try for another barrel of wine.

### **Free Trade** (continued)

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier, and it's with regards to a document that has been published by the government as of late on the Canada/U.S. free trade agreement. The document outlines very clearly the potential new jobs that may be available in Alberta and as well in Canada, according to the Economic Council of Canada. Could the Premier indicate whether any kind of statistic is available as to the number of persons that may be displaced in this process of the free trade implementation? I ask this question on the basis that a number of Albertans are saying to me that we've got to hear both sides of the argument, not just one side, and that information would be very valuable.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the whole idea of jobs and people being displaced, I think, is very theoretical because, frankly, what the trade arrangement does is provide opportunities. It provides opportunities for people and companies to expand their horizons into greater markets and greater growth for not only them but our children in the future. I believe that in Alberta we are so confident and able to compete with anyone that we can't

even see the full edges, if you like, or the horizons that we'll be able to reach for under this trade agreement. So I think any listing of numbers is not helpful in that regard.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Premier. I can't argue with the objectives of free trade and the potential benefits, but we do have to look at both sides when we're asking the people of the province to make a decision. The Prime Minister, in your discussions, and I understand this occurred last week, indicated that he would like to support what he calls an advisory council to assist the federal government in making this transition and to assist people that may be dislocated during this free trade implementation. Could the Premier indicate whether he or his government has considered the same kind of an advisory council or transitional committee to assist in working with dislocated workers?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there'd be no question as the trade agreement was signed and started to operate that we are prepared, along with the federal government -- and we've discussed this many times over the last 18 months -- to work and provide transitional assistance to any group of Albertans who require retraining or assistance in a different type of employment. It would be one of the matters that would be dealt with by our Minister of Career Development and Employment and other labour ministers.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Premier. Could he indicate at what point in time some of the assessments will take place in terms of the effect in our labour market and in our private-sector market so that at that point in time, when you know what the problem is and know where our deficiencies are or are not in government, we can react in terms of various programs, such as interim educational grant programs or the further utilization of our current employment programs? Where will the Premier see the government doing an assessment that has objective credibility?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member would know that the way he's described that is completely hypothetical because, obviously, there may well be in Alberta a capacity to handle any temporary problems created in any narrow part of our economy and not require any particular assistance. After all, the strength of this province is the people of this province, the people who are able to adapt and to develop within new opportunities. Now, we will obviously have to be alert to make sure, but that will come in the future. After January 1, 1989, we have an agreement with the federal government, and obviously we'd cooperate with any members of the Legislature, any members of industry, or labour to make sure that all of this assistance is available should it be required.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by the Leader of the Opposition, followed by Red Deer-North.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary is to the Minister of Career Development and Employment. From your many studies on free trade, which you have access to and we unfortunately don't, you must know where those jobs will be potentially lost. Has consultation occurred with these businesses and industries in order to put retraining opportunities in place so these people need not move out of province?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, as the Premier said, it's hypothetical that there will be job losses. I think it's important to understand that thousands of people every year change jobs. So if you are moving from one job to another, you must access training opportunities that are available to you. We expect that in the next decade there will be some 238,000 jobs created in Alberta, not including the 40,000 jobs that are anticipated through free trade. Obviously, with this type of job creation there is going to be a need for training, and every province in this country is involved in training to deal with movements from career to career.

So it's not a unique situation, where you see people moving from one job to another, Mr. Speaker, so in the event that there are, across this country, areas where there are people being dislocated from their jobs, there are mechanisms in place. But certainly the job creation that will result far outweighs any displacement that may occur as a result of free trade.

MR. SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, followed by Red Deer-North.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. It's all right to see everything through rose-coloured glasses, but the Premier is well aware that most people do not know and they require more information. My question is: if it's so good -- we've asked before -- would the Premier table here in the Assembly the studies this government has on the possible job benefits and losses so that we can all make up our own minds?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can put anything on the Order Paper he likes, and then we'd deal with it. I might say that as I've traveled around Alberta lately -- and we've had a recent poll in Chinook where we talked about these things -- I found that the people of Alberta have really made up their minds. [interjections]

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They just can't handle good news.

My question is also to the minister of career development. In light of recent facts that show that in the gas industry alone an increase of 1 percent of U.S. market share means 7,500 more jobs, is his department gearing up now to be able to handle the employment demands that are going to be put on the employment sector in general?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, in this province we are going to be faced with some tremendous challenges in terms of dealing with not only free trade to this province but also the expansion of industry in this province. We have Champion Forest Products; we are looking at new initiatives in the heavy oil areas, in the oil sands, major construction plants, the magnesium plant at High River. We have tremendous challenges as a province to deal with the tremendous growth of the economy in this province, and I believe we're up to the challenge. We're watching it very closely. We do not want to get caught in a labour shortage in this province to match the diversification that's happening today.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Bow Valley, followed by the Member for Vegreville.

#### **Rural Private Telephone Lines**

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to

the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications, and it has to do with the party line conversion to private lines in Alberta over the next five years. Now, in a recent document it is noted that the ones towards the end of the five-year period will be eligible for a PLC-1 converter. It's only to last until their part of the community is converted to a full party line. Now, could the minister tell me at what stage of the five years they'll be eligible for those PLC-1s? Is it two years or three years from the end of the conversion period?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I can advise that the reason for the PLC-1 converter, which provides some improved or enhanced telephone service for party line subscribers -- the reason for proceeding with that program is because of the tremendous number of letters and requests we're getting for improved telephone service quickly; in other words, a great deal of support for the party line conversion program that's under way. That will take about five years. The intent is to provide approximately 40,000, primarily to the people in the last two years of the program so that they would get some enhanced service earlier than otherwise -- in fact, hopefully within the next eight months or so. That would be an effort to treat them as fairly as other rural telephone subscribers.

MR. MUSGROVE: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. When those people in the last two years get the PLC-1 converters to assist them with their party line system, will they then have to pay the charge for going on the party line?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, there is no charge to the people who will be getting the PLC-1 converters until the point in time at which they are converted to the enhanced service; that is, the total private line situation. There is no charge for the conversion as such. However, they will be able to purchase, should they wish, or rent different telephone equipment: answering devices for their telephones, cordless telephones, et cetera. That will be a personal responsibility, and it will require the jacking of those houses, which is a part of the basic program.

MR. MUSGROVE: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. If these people on these PLC-1 converters like the service they're getting from that service, is it permissible or even possible that they would decide to keep that service rather than converting to the full private line?

MR. YOUNG: No, Mr. Speaker, it is not. The converter will not be the property of the telephone subscriber, and the converter will in fact be removed as soon as their line is switched fully over to the private line.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. He well knows that we on this side of the House support most aspects of the program except the recent moves by the minister and AGT to make it compulsory. I'm wondering what this minister says to people in rural Alberta who are quite happy with party line service, who don't want private line service: that they in fact will have to pay the \$450 fee or lose their telephone because it's now made mandatory?

MR. YOUNG: Well, Mr. Speaker, one portion of the response to persons who have that concern is that the government or other Albertans, through the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, are already paying over 75 percent of the cost of providing those

lines to individual subscribers. Secondly, it is more economic and will save costs to the telephone company to have a standard level of service. I think those are the two leading responses I would give. I think in terms of economy it is important, since other Albertans are paying for the bulk of the cost, that other Albertans deserve to have it provided as efficiently and as economically as possible.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, neither of those two responses contemplates the problem of an individual family which simply cannot afford to buy the private line service. What remedy would the minister suggest he would have in place in that case?

MR. YOUNG: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, it's important to recognize that the subscriber at the point of conversion has the option of paying in one lump sum or paying on a monthly basis, and if the payments are on a monthly basis, the monthly charge is \$5 per month. The hon. members will know that because of the tariff imposed by the Public Utilities Board, the government is providing a rebate to all subscribers of \$110. That rebate itself is adequate to provide the monthly payments for two years if invested in the interim, and that would mean that the subscriber, however difficult their financial situation, has a period of time in which to arrange their budgetary situation. We all expect and hope that within a two-year time frame most individuals and most families will find they're able to either change budgeting or perhaps acquire an improved employment position and a better income position.

MR. SPEAKER: Main question, Vegreville.

#### **Agricultural Concerns**

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all recognize that grain farmers in Alberta are facing a bleak winter indeed with prices in real terms being lower than any time since the 1930s, and it's generally agreed that a deficiency payment much larger than the one last year is required, not only to ensure the survival of many farm families in Alberta but to ensure the survival of many of the small communities that our farmers support.

My question to the minister is: since the Premier has publicly used a figure of \$1.6 billion for the payment and other governments and farms groups have recommended between \$2 billion and \$4 billion as being appropriate, I'm wondering if the minister will tell us what level of payment he is recommending at Wednesday's meeting of agriculture ministers in Ottawa.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to re-endorse -- there's only one individual that speaks for this government, and it's the Premier of our province, so the figure is \$1.6 billion. But in addition to that, I can share with the hon. member that we have been working very closely with our federal counterparts as it relates to the report that was tabled some time ago dealing with hail and crop insurance, whereby the recommendations that fell under our jurisdiction we have implemented, that we are negotiating with the federal government with the hope of having them accept a number of the worthwhile recommendations to provide a safety net for our grain producers within this province.

MR. FOX: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Recognizing that most farmers figure a payment ought to be triggered by the drop in grain prices rather than the drop in the popularity of the Mulroney government . . . [interjections] Now, this is important. Is

the minister insisting that all moneys from the deficiency payment be in the hands of farmers prior to spring seeding so that they can face the coming year with some sense of confidence?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as the Premier and the Premier of Saskatchewan have done in the past, they're going to push to attempt to have the money in the hands of the farmers as quickly as possible. We were gratified by the recent announcement by Charlie Mayer as it relates to a payment under the Western Grain Stabilization Act which again will inject millions of dollars into the pockets, which is very badly needed by our grain sector, as illustrated by the hon. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister recognizes that the western grain stabilization program is an insurance program that farmers themselves pay into. We're talking about something special here. I'm wondering: is this government prepared to stand up for our grain farmers by making a commitment to add provincial dollars to whatever level of support the federal government decides to come forward with?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I should just draw to the hon. member's attention, since this was raised by the western Premiers at their meeting in Humboldt, Saskatchewan, that we have very strongly taken the lead in requesting assistance for our grain farmers in this province and that we have been successful. It's taken a lot of meetings; we've been talking with the Prime Minister; we've had our ministers talking with ministers of the federal government. It was confirmed on Friday by the Prime Minister that such a payment will be coming out. It's hypothetical to say whether there is a need for the provincial government to get involved also, except to point out that this is a national deficiency payment that would be coming from the federal government. There has been no request, as there was not last year, for provincial input.

But I must say, Mr. Speaker, I think the federal government has moved with a billion dollars. We are requesting more, but I think all members should know that when you talk about government money, you are talking about one group of taxpayers assisting another group of taxpayers and that there has to be some balance to the extent that taxpayers can continue to come up with dollars. We think it's needed for our grain farmers, at least for another year of low prices, but there has to be some balance in the size of dollars that taxpayers can provide from one group to another.

MR. FOX: Is the Premier then saying that he's not prepared to make a commitment of provincial dollars to supplement the \$1.6 billion that he's recommending being paid from the federal government? Is that it?

MR. GETTY: Once again, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member isn't listening when I answer his question. In fact, what I said is that we have been successful. By representing our people in Alberta very forcefully and very strongly, we've been able to obtain a commitment to another deficiency payment. We've learned from last year that while there were good things about it, there were also some problems, and we'll be able, I think, to do some fine-tuning as to how those funds are dispersed. But in fact, this government is committed to the grain producers and all agricultural producers in our province because it is our number one priority in Alberta.

MR. R. SPEAKER: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, and it's with regards to the dispersing of the funds. Could the minister indicate whether there will be a special allocation again for the irrigation farmers that are in registered districts? In this formula is that still being considered?

MR. ELZINGA: We're going to have more of a clarification when we do meet in Ottawa on Wednesday of this week, but my understanding is that yes, there will be a special allocation for those irrigation farmers within the recognized districts.

As the hon. member is also aware, we had pushed for recognition of those individual farmers who practise irrigation and who are not presently in a district so that we would also take into account their increased productivity. But this is something we have pursued, and it's something that will be clarified more so when we do meet on Wednesday.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, this is a supplemental to the Premier. In his statement that he thinks he has been successful in getting the federal government to come up with a payment for the grain farmers, I was wondering if the Premier would care to enlighten the House if his government would go as far as to bring back the full amount of the fuel rebate for farmers, which would of course reduce their fuel costs by about 40 percent. Will he be doing that as one of the provincial prerogatives? Now that he has assured the House that that rebate does not bother the free trade agreement, now that he has assured the House that it's okay to go ahead, will he go ahead now and . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member, this is not paragraph after paragraph after paragraph, take your choice, multiple choice.

MR. GETTY: I only say, Mr. Speaker, that the government of Alberta will continue to provide, that the farmers and ranchers in this province have the lowest input costs in North America.

MR. HYLAND: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture. I wonder if he is proposing any changes to the grain stabilization plan whereby those who haven't been in the stabilization plan for a number of years but would like to enroll because of the recent payout, a number of years -- is he considering any proposals to the federal minister on changes so that people could enroll and get the benefit of the plan?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I believe it was November 16, at which time our Associate Minister of Agriculture was in Ottawa meeting with both Charlie Mayer and John Wise, whereby she did carry on discussions as it related to the proposals in the hail and crop insurance review report directly related to revenue insurance or cost production insurance, which in turn would involve discussion as it related to the western grain stabilization account.

I should point out, too, contrary to what the hon. Member for Vegreville indicated, that there is presently a \$1.5 billion deficit in that account that has been put forward by the federal government, acknowledging that it is one where there are contributions by the farmers. Presently it is in a deficit position, and we're hopeful that at sometime in the future that can be altered with the escalation of grain prices.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, followed

by Red Deer-South, followed by Edmonton-Calder, followed by Wainwright.

### Telephone Services

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta Government Telephones utilizes the extended flat rate calling program to help residents of rural communities which need to be in regular contact with larger service centres. To be eligible for a flat rate the community must lie within a 40-mile radius of the larger centre, yet many communities which meet this criterion do not receive the flat rate. To the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications: will the minister please explain to this Assembly why Mirror, Alberta, a community 30 miles from Red Deer, does not receive EFRC to this important centre while Trochu, which is farther away, does receive a flat rate to Red Deer?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I have entertained a considerable number of discussions on the particular matter of the community of Mirror and the extended flat rate telephone service. The hon. Member for Lacombe has discussed it at length with me and, in fact, has brought folks from Lacombe to see me from time to time. The result of that was the extension of flat rate between Mirror and Lacombe, which is the county seat and also the seat for the school board and, I believe, is also the location of hospital services. That decision has been taken.

The fact is that there are a large number of communities that could access other communities within the radius of 40 miles or 65 kilometers, and it is simply not possible, for technical reasons firstly -- and technical reasons can be solved with money -- but for monetary reasons secondly to provide all of the different connections that could be extended through flat rate at the present time. The decision was taken that in the case of Mirror it was important that they be able to relate to their county seat, and that was the reason for the service which they will enjoy,

MR. MITCHELL: A supplementary to the minister. Will he justify to this House his decision to provide EFRC between Mirror and Lacombe when in fact Red Deer is Mirror's major trading partner and the only criteria he has mentioned in his assessment of Lacombe has been the area to which Mirror would be able to phone without toll? Those criteria do not affect fundamental economic necessities such as phoning farm implements dealers, phoning people responsible . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. We're not going long distance; we're going for an hour and a half on the question.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, to elaborate on what I've already indicated, there are many parents with children in the school system who need to make contact to the location of the headquarters for the school system and also for the county, and that was the first consideration. That gets us to the original consideration that was foremost when that program -- not when it was implemented, because there's a long history to that, but in recent years that has been the foremost justification for it,

Mr. Speaker, I would also point out that to tie smaller communities to exchanges with large numbers of subscribers carries with it the potential for a considerable future cost for extended flat rate. It is not correct to assume that extended flat rate is free; it is definitely not free. There is a flat rate charge, and that

charge is being reassessed now in some instances because of the cost burden that is gradually being imposed on the total telephone system because of the extension of flat rates.

MR. MITCHELL: Will the minister please explain why he simply doesn't extend the program for Mirror to both Lacombe and Red Deer? Is cost an issue? That seems unlikely given that it wasn't an issue in extending that service to residents of Trochu.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I've already indicated that there are many communities that would like service either to other business centres or other communities on other telephone exchanges. They cannot all be accommodated. There is a total cost to the system overall, and in some instances there is also a technical problem until the exchanges are modernized with digital equipment. I may point out that there are occasions when the provision of extended flat rate actually multiplies the number of calls by six times between telephone exchanges, and that has a very great bearing on the capacity of the exchange switches.

MR. MITCHELL: It seems the minister is indicating that cost is an important issue, but the flip side of that is that some residents of this province are being asked to subsidize unfairly the telephone service to other residents. Could the minister please comment on whether or not he believes this to be fair, particularly in the case such as Mirror versus Trochu when Mirror is closer to Red Deer than Trochu is.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, there are, regrettably, a large number of communities that all want extended flat rate calling to someplace else. Also, it is a fact that in many instances there is a substantial division within the community about which centre it is they most want to call. The current program of extended flat rate requires that everybody within that particular exchange pays. It is my hope that we can examine some alternatives so that they would be subscriber sensitive -- in other words, sensitive to the choice of the subscriber -- and that the choice of the majority would not be inflicted quite as much on the minority, as is the case currently with some of the exchanges.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Lacombe.

MR. R. MOORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: on the question of other services subsidizing the flat rate billing provided this past fall, have there been any increases in charges in other areas to cover these services that are now provided to, let's say, Red Deer to Lacombe?

MR. SPEAKER: Might we have unanimous consent of the House to complete this series of questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Minister.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, if I understand the question, there have not been additional charges to other areas to compensate for extended flat rate. However, I have to indicate to hon. members that there is an internal review being done by Alberta Government Telephones as to the cost to their system for the extended flat rate, and that does have some potential significance in the future. It may well be that the system will need some modification to be, as I indicated earlier, more consumer sensi-

tive and choice sensitive in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister. Given his previous sympathy for local measured service and his government's general support for user fees of all kinds, can the minister tell the House today what policy direction he's giving to AGT in regards to extended flat rate calling? Can we expect an enhancement of extended flat rate calling for the benefit of small communities like Mirror, or is his policy direction to contract that service and extract more fees from Albertans around the province?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, apart from a trite observation that there are very few free goods in the world and telephone service is not one of them, I can indicate that . . . [interjections] That's right, and this is the point I'm coming to: with lower rates it is quite obvious that there is a great deal more telephoning that goes on, especially in the long distance category. Accordingly, we currently are having some work done on the possibility that lower rates would increase the amount of calling, once we have new switching gear in place, to the point that lower rates times more numbers of calls will yield at least as much income, if not more, to the telephone company than at present. If that would work, then we may be able to have a system which is consumer sensitive and choice sensitive, and the person who makes a lot of calls, even though not paying so much per call, will be paying for the enhancement of the system.

MR. SPEAKER: Additional supplementaries? The time for question period has expired.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: Might we revert briefly to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: First, the Member for St. Albert, followed by the Member for Calgary-Millican.

### head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. STRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a group of 52 students from Albert Lacombe school in the beautiful community of St. Albert. These students are accompanied by three teachers Mr. Ken Kordyback, Mr. Brent Andressen, and Ms Sonia Layton, as well as one parent Mrs. Robitaille. They are seated in the public galleries. I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SHRAKE: Mr. Speaker, I'm very honoured today to have with us a group of Chinese elderly citizens from the Chinese Elderly Citizens Association in Calgary. They're seated in the members' gallery. I hope you will bear with me; I would like to say a few words -- just a greeting, just a short greeting -- to them in Chinese, as many of them have immigrated to this country.



[remarks in Chinese]

Hi, Friends. How are you? Good greetings. I wish you good health, prosperity, and happiness. Thank you, thank you. [as submitted]

Could we give them a warm welcome to the Legislature?

head: **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

17. Moved by Mr. Getty:

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 constitutional 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'ar-

ticle 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.\*

Amendment moved by Mr. Martin:

(1) in section 1, in the proposed section 2 of the Constitution Act, 1867,

(a) in subsection (1)(a), by adding "a multicultural" after "a fundamental characteristic of", and

(b) in subsection (2), by striking out "the Parliament of Canada and" and substituting "the Parliament of Canada to preserve and promote and the role of";

(2) in section 2, by adding "or territory" after "the government of the province";

(3) in section 6,

(a) in proposed section 101C.(1) of the Constitution Act, 1987,

(i) by adding "and territory" after "the government of each province",

(ii) by adding "or territory" after "the bar of that province", and

(b) in proposed section 101C.(4) of the said Act, by adding "or territory" after "the government of a province";

(4) in section 7, in proposed section 106A.(1) of the Constitution Act, 1867, by striking out "is compatible with the national objectives" and substituting "meets national standards";

(5) in section 9, in proposed section 41 of the Constitution Act, 1982, by striking out clauses (b), (c), and (i);

(6) in section 13,

(a) in proposed section 50.(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982, by adding the following after clause (b):

"(b.1) Aboriginal people's rights, including the right to self-government," and

(b) by adding the following after the proposed section 50.(2) of the said Act:

"50.(3) The Governor General in Council shall issue invitations to bona fide organizations of aboriginal people and to the territorial governments to send representatives to participate in the discussions held pursuant to section 50.(2)(b.1).";

(7) in section 16, by striking out "25 or 27" and substituting "25, 27 or 28"; and

(8) by adding the following after section 16:

"16.1 Where an amendment is proposed to the Constitution Act, 1867, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, or the Constitution Act, 1982, neither the House of Commons nor any provincial legislature shall approve or disapprove the proposal until it has held public hearings on the matter."

(1) dans l'article 1; dans l'article 2 proposé de la Loi constitutionnelle de 1867,

(a) au paragraphe (1)(a), en ajoutant "d'un multicul-

\*See pages 2004-11

- turel" après "une caractéristique fondamentale," et
- (b) au paragraphe (2), en rayant "le Parlement du Canada et" et en le remplaçant par "le Parlement du Canada à le rôle de préserver et de promouvoir et";
  - (2) dans l'article 2; en ajoutant "ou du territoire" après "le gouvernement de la province";
  - (3) dans l'article 6;
    - (a) au paragraphe 101C.(1) proposé de la Loi constitutionnelle de 1867,
      - (i) en ajoutant "et territoire" après "le gouvernement de chaque province",
      - (ii) en ajoutant "ou territoire" après "au barreau de cette province", et
    - (b) au paragraphe 101C.(4) proposé de ladite Loi en ajoutant "ou territoire" après "le gouvernement d'une autre province";
  - (4) dans l'article 7; au paragraphe 106A.(1) proposé de la Loi constitutionnelle de 1867, en rayant "compatible avec les objectifs nationaux" et en le remplaçant par "qui va à la rencontre des normes nationales";
  - (5) dans l'article 9; à l'article 41 proposé de la Loi constitutionnelle de 1982, en rayant les alinéas (b), (c), et (i);
  - (6) dans l'article 13;
    - (a) au paragraphe 50.(2) proposé de la Loi constitutionnelle de 1982, en ajoutant le suivant après l'alinéa (b):  
 "(b.1) Les droits des peuples autochtones, y compris le droit à l'autonomie," et
    - (b) en ajoutant le suivant après le paragraphe 50.(2) proposé de ladite Loi:  
 "50.(3) Le gouverneur général en conseil adressera aux organisations de bonne foi du peuple autochtone ainsi qu'aux gouvernements territoriaux, une invitation à envoyer des représentants pour participer aux discussions tenues en vertu de l'alinéa 50.(2)(b.1).";
  - (7) dans l'article 16, en rayant "25 ou 27" et en le remplaçant par "25, 27 ou 28"; et
  - (8) en ajoutant le suivant après l'article 16.  
 "16.1 Là où une modification est proposée à la Loi constitutionnelle de 1867, à la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés, ou à la Loi constitutionnelle de 1982, ni la Chambre des Communes ni une législature provinciale quelconque n'approuvera ou ne désapprouvera de la proposition tant qu'elle n'aura pas tenu des audiences publiques sur cette question."

[Adjourned debate November 25: Mr. Wright]

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendment to the Constitution that is commonly known as the Meech Lake accord, although that's not accurate, is indeed a good step forward. It's important to have the province of Quebec agreed with the Constitution, although it isn't necessary legally, because they are bound by it. But people who agree with the rules that govern them are always better governed than those who disagree with those rules. So it is plain that we all as citizens of Canada appreciate the essence of that accord.

What we on this side seek to do in this amendment, Mr. Speaker, is to make it better, and nothing we do in this attempt is inconsistent with the thrust of the accord or, we believe,

would not be agreeable to the government of the province of Quebec. Most of the matters are matters in the category of amendment out of abundance of caution because of misinterpretations that could be made -- reasonably, we think -- and others are simply matters which perhaps in the hurry with which the accord was put together were overlooked.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has dealt with this in some detail, so I needn't repeat what he has said. But, Mr. Speaker, the first section in the amendment proposed deals with the multicultural fact of Canada. It is true that the report of the parliamentary committee says that the fundamental characteristic of Canada that they speak of in section 1 of the accord is simply "a" fundamental characteristic and not "the" fundamental characteristic, so there could be many fundamental characteristics. I suppose there's a logical limit to the number of fundamental characteristics of anything, but they point out correctly that this is only one.

All the same, it is so important when one is speaking of the duality of French and English always to put it in the context of the mosaic view of Canada that it should be stated in the Constitution when you are speaking about that duality. And it's such a very simple amendment that it is hard to see why it can be disagreed with. It's hard to see on two accounts, Mr. Speaker. The first is because it's obviously true and sensible. The second is that it's obviously, I would submit, something that the province of Quebec could not possibly disagree with, and certainly none of the other provinces, because the object of this exercise is to bring in the province of Quebec as a willing signatory, and so they are the element that has chiefly to be considered in weighing the merits of the proposals in the accord.

So simply adding "a multicultural" in subsection (1)(a) of the Constitution Act so that the section reads:

that this English/French duality will be a fundamental characteristic in a multicultural Canada,

I submit is something that hon. members should agree with.

I was intrigued by some of the earlier debate from members on the government side who were saying, "Well, gosh, I agree with many of the things here, but we've been told and we understand that the thing has to be passed now, that we can't mess around with it, and these good things we must leave to be done after the accord is passed and after the Constitution is amended, because we must have faith in the process." Well, this really reduces the debate we are undergoing to a sham, because if there is no point -- if it's just impractical to make any amendment -- then what are we doing here? Are we simply canvassing ideas for an amendment to the Constitution at a future time? No. That would be to stultify the proceedings, Mr. Speaker. So I really think that line of argument is specious. We have a year and a half still, I think. Someone can correct me on that; I'm not quite sure of the exact period, but it's a long time before this has to be passed. It could even be longer than that. [interjection] How long?

AN HON. MEMBER: It's up to three years.

MR. WRIGHT: Three years from a point in this year, I'm told. So within that time, surely the various provinces, through their first ministers and through others, can get together and make such improvements, largely in the category of dotting i's and crossing t's, as are warranted, and this is certainly one of them.

The next section in the amendment, Mr. Speaker, is "adding 'or territory' after 'the government of a province.'" That is in section 2, which deals with the right to nominate to the Senate.

Now, in the report that we drew up following the public hearings we conducted round about the province, the recommendation was made that we should see the Senate abolished, pro tem anyway, until meaningful reform could be agreed, if it ever could, at which time it would be reconstituted. In the meantime, there would be transitional provisions enabling the House of Commons to fulfill all the functions the House of Commons and the Senate together fulfill now. But we had to make a choice, really, between that position and the less radical position of improving the temporary provisions outlined in the accord. We chose the latter because the former might very well be something the province of Quebec would object to. I don't know, but at least that's never been canvassed that I am aware of.

So we simply say that in the gravy train that's being transferred from the federal government to the provincial, a piece of it should also be transferred to the territorial government, if you were to be fair about it.

The next section deals with section 6 of the accord, and there we are dealing with the right to nominate nominees for the Supreme Court of Canada. Mr. Speaker, almost any system of appointing judges to the Supreme Court of Canada, as to the provincial superior courts, is better than the present one, which is entirely political at bottom. Here at least, if it's to be political, there'll be a mix, because the governments in the provinces are not always of the same stripe as the federal government. So we welcome this as an improvement, but to be fair again, the territories should have their shot at nomination, doubtless pro rata, as the provinces.

Number (4) of the amendment deals with section 7, which in turn deals with a proposed addition to the Constitution Act itself and is dealing with the question of shared-cost programs and is colloquially known as the opting-out provision. Mr. Speaker, at the present time we have a system which seems to have bogged down but I'm sure can be reactivated. But one virtue of it is that the provinces can only claim their assistance if they meet the standards of the national program.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Now, we aren't absolutely certain -- no one can be certain -- what "national objectives" means except for one thing: we can be certain it needn't mean the same thing as "national standards." The logic here is that in the proposed amendment, the Meech Lake accord itself, both terms are used in the section dealing with immigration. It speaks of national objectives and national standards, so there must be a difference. Obviously, "objectives" being a vaguer word than "standards," the difference must be in the direction of greater vagueness.

So we might well have a balkanization, as it were, of services. That's to say that although the taxpayer of Canada pays an equal amount per head, across Canada there will be varying levels of service for a given dollar of tax money expended on the project across Canada, simply because the government in the province or territory has satisfied -- I guess this just deals with provinces; it does, yes -- in the province has satisfied the national government that they have met national objectives, although the standard in that particular province is lower than the national one.

It is arguable, Mr. Speaker, that if the test had been national objectives and not national standards earlier when we had the argument about medicare and extra billing, an insurance scheme that had extra billing in it would have been found to have met national objectives, in that it is a national program provincially

administered within provincial jurisdiction, which relieves the citizen of the greatest part of the cost of medical care. It might well have been thought that that was consistent with national objectives, and we would have had extra billing as an option to medicare in all provinces across Canada that chose that way, and whether they had extra billing or not, they would still get the same amount of money from the federal government. Even most of the members on the other side of the House would probably disagree with that concept, and we certainly do. It is because of future programs that would receive similar interpretation that we feel we should stick with the idea of national standards as being the test.

Perhaps I should say something general about the basis for these amendments, Mr. Speaker. As you know, our provincial government declined to have hearings on the accord. They said, as you know, Mr. Speaker, that we've got 83 MLAs who are excellent reporters of the opinions in their constituencies, to just stick with them. But that is something that can be said on any question, so why do we have hearings on an ambulance system or hearings on Workers' Compensation Board or hearings on the Surface Rights Act or any of the other hearings we've had up and down the province? The same argument, exactly, applies to all of them. In fact, on a matter as important as the national Constitution, it seems to me there's a much stronger case for public hearings than for, say, changes in ambulance service. I would hope so.

So we conducted public hearings. As our leader said, we had over 100 personal submissions, supported by written submissions in the greatest number of cases. So in all of these proposals, what came out of those hearings -- and the interesting thing was the unanimity with which those who presented to us agreed on what was wrong, irrespective of their political stripe. Our leader read out the very diverse group of presenters on all sides of the political spectrum. So this, besides being therefore good sense, is not a particularly political document, I think perhaps if one reads it objectively, one will reach that conclusion. We have some proof of that because of the hon. members on the other side of the House who have agreed with some of the proposals, at any rate.

Clause (5) of the amendment, Mr. Speaker, deals with the unanimity provisions in the proposal, and clause (b) in the list there deals with the Senate and refers to the method of selection. It is proposed that the change in that be unanimous.

Subsection (c) deals with the number and qualifications of Senators, qualifications meaning how many from each province. That must be a matter of unanimity under the proposal and indeed under the present existing Constitution, Mr. Speaker.

Subsection (i) deals with the creation of new provinces. We believe it is an unfair knock upon the Territories that they should be required to surmount a hurdle where they can become provinces that, for example, the province of Alberta did not have to surmount. It is possible that we would never have become a province if all the other existing provinces had had to agree before Parliament made us a province in 1905. That is a very strongly held feeling in the Yukon Territory and, I'm sure, in the Northwest Territories, from all accounts.

Mr. Speaker, that still leaves a number of matters where unanimity is still required. I wouldn't want the House to think that we're against unanimity for what most people consider, including us, the most fundamental changes. For instance, any change to the office of the Queen, the Governor General, or the Lieutenant Governor of a province must continue to be a matter for unanimity to change, the unanimity of all the provinces and Parlia-

ment. The right of a province to a number of members in the House of Commons not less than the number of Senators by which the province was entitled to be represented in 1982, that stays in the unanimity column. So does the principle of proportionate representation of the province in the House of Commons. So does the use of the English or the French language, except for section 43 -- I forget what section 43 is on. So does the extension of existing provinces into the Territories. So does an amendment to that part of the Constitution.

Clause (6) of the amendment deals with the rights of aboriginal peoples, and here we think is a very, very strong case for amendment. There was reference in the 1982 Constitution, as I'm sure you know, Mr. Speaker, to the right of the aboriginal people to require a conference of all the provincial ministers, and the federal government also, on the question of aboriginal rights. But it was a one-shot deal, and the one shot went by and nothing happened. If Senate reform is to be on top of the list, then this is even more important than Senate reform and that should be on the list too.

The reply is made, Mr. Speaker: look, it really doesn't matter, because the idea of aboriginal rights and working towards self-government is such an obvious idea to work on that surely the first ministers will take it up. But there is something that not many people have remarked on about the Meech Lake accord, as I will call it -- as I say, inaccurately, strictly speaking -- that I'm indebted to the former Senator Eugene Forsey for remarking upon, which is this: that the constitution of the First Ministers' Conference, the constitutional provisions for the First Ministers' Conference incorporated here, speak of Senate reform as having to go in the Constitution, and I think there's one other thing they speak of. And then it says: and such other topics or subjects or matters as the first ministers may agree.

Therefore, to get an item on the agenda, the first ministers must agree, and that, in the absence of something to the contrary, means all the first ministers. It follows that any Premier can put a veto on aboriginal rights or any other topic except Senate reform and one other that just escapes me for the moment being discussed. Oh, yes, the other thing is roles and responsibilities in relation to fisheries. The Senate and fisheries have to be on the agenda, but anything else can be vetoed, in effect, by any other Premier, and that's not fair. I think we must appeal to the good sense and the sense of fairness of all members to, for sure, get that amendment in. And of course, if you're going to have it on the agenda, you've got to have representatives of the aboriginal peoples there, so that's the other amendment that follows in clause (6).

Clause (7) is sexual equality. That is an amendment out of abundance of caution. The logic of this, Mr. Speaker, is as follows: that the Charter of Rights is not superior to the Constitution nor inferior to it; it is of equal rank. Therefore, if in construing the Constitution one runs into an inconsistency with the Charter of Rights, it does not automatically follow that one or the other is superior. In fact, the other rule of construction is that special provisions take precedence over general provisions, so it might be argued that if there is a special provision that negatives sexual equality, then that would take precedence over the Charter of Rights. In fact, something like that did happen in a case of construing the Indian Act where it discriminates against women. The Supreme Court of Canada had to tussle with that.

Now, that's why we didn't put into the amendment that the entire Constitution be subject to the Charter of Rights. There are too many difficulties there, seen and unseen. Let us stick

with the one thing that is seen and obvious and clear and reasonable, which is that at least the Constitution should be -- at least section 16, which deals with the French/English duality of Canada and the distinct society present in the province of Quebec -- subject not only to interpretation in favour of multiculturalism and aboriginal rights but also in favour of sexual equality. That's what section 28, which is added, is.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, we come to clause (8), which deals with the necessity to hold hearings, and that is the item I particularly wish to speak to. I wish to remind members that in most countries in the world, I think, constitutional amendments merit a plebiscite. For some reason, this is not so strong a custom in countries that derive their constitution from Britain but is very strong in continental countries and other constitutions which ultimately derive their law from Roman law. It's a curiosity, but nonetheless it is a fact that that is so.

In Canada we have neither the requirements for a plebiscite nor for even public hearings. There should at least be the requirement for public hearings. We have seen in this province how lackadaisical people were even on so basic a document as this, which in some way was seen as being a charter to not have public hearings, because the riposte was made: "Look, people just aren't interested in my constituency. I've had very few inquiries even for a text of the accord." That should be a condemnation of the system rather than a justification of it, Mr. Speaker, because there should be some kind of duty on the government to alert people to what is at stake. And if there were public hearings enjoined as a matter of constitutional requirement, then people would be more alert to what was at stake and we would, I hope, get a better constitution out of it.

I mean, if there was a head of steam in the public built up on particular items here, then the government would be much more likely to themselves bring in amendments and to pay attention to what logic and experience says ought to be the case in reviewing the rather hurriedly put together document which is the constitutional amendment before us. Somewhat hurriedly -- I realize it is the fruit of years of negotiation for some, but in the end it was quite hurried. It's pretty good considering it was done in a hurry, but it can be better. It should be better; it ought to be better; we can make it better. We've got time to make it better. Let us do it. This amendment does that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments with regard to this omnibus amendment to the main motion and say this to begin with: there are some parts of the amendment that I agree with, and there are one or two parts that I disagree with. I guess in voting what you must do is, if you can't agree with the whole, you have to reject it on the basis of some of the parts.

AN HON. MEMBER: Or divide the motion.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Or divide the motion, whichever the Assembly so desires.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to go over parts of the amendment 1, 2, and 3 as such but concentrate on 4, 5, and also part 8. In part 4 what we are asked to do is in place of the words "national objectives" put in place the words "national standards." That sounds on first blush like it's a very innocent type of amendment that's potentially acceptable. But what we have to look at is the implementation of that, maybe not in a current government but down the road a number of years or even within

a very few years, as I see it.

When you say "national objectives," what you do is establish where you want to go and the kind of overall government programming you'd like in Canada. Maybe it's in terms of health care; maybe it's in terms of national agricultural policy or whatever it may be. When I look at the words "national standards," you change at that point from the end to the means, whereby you are attempting, I believe, to control the means by which the programs are to be implemented. The best example I can think of when I look at those two sets of words is in terms of a national day care program. In this province and even the current government and the previous government, in implementing day care there was a greater emphasis on private day care. Other parties of Canada look at that as the only time you have quality day care is when you have a public day care program.

Now, if our national objective happens to be day care for all people or a certain group of people in Canada, I can agree with that. That's the objective. But on top of that, we ask each province with possible federal/provincial legislation, with agreements in terms of cost sharing in place. But our national objective is one upon which we can agree, and in many countries of the world that has happened. But implementation -- we may see in this province that we can implement it a certain way through the private system in the province of Alberta. But if the national standard says that day care must be implemented through a public program in order to be up to a certain quality, then you strap the flexibility and the ability of a provincial jurisdiction, and even local jurisdictions, municipal jurisdictions, in dealing with that respective program.

So I would have to be convinced, first of all, that those two words "national standards" could not be defined in that way. My interpretation at the moment is that that is not what the objective is. So that's my first concern, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, as we move to section 5 of the amendment and "striking out clauses (b), (c) and (i)," I would in a sense have no problem with that. But I look at section 8, the extension of existing provinces into territories, and as I look at the accord and at the amendments, what about those people in the territories? Have they any rights at that point in time to either accept, participate, or reject that concept of another province extending itself into the territories? I feel there's a lack of participation.

Secondly, the federal government. The province of Alberta was created by an initiative of the federal system. As I look at it, to me that would be a better way of handling this matter as well, whereby the federal system has greater authority in determination of new provinces or extension into the territories. Now, that certainly is contradictory to what is in the accord at the present time, but we elect federal governments to have some type of authority and power to create the overall nation, as we see it. Each of us votes for federal parties, and I believe that if they lose that authority, particularly on this aspect, we lose something in terms of our overall development and our objectives as a nation. So I do have concern with the amendment as it is and its shortcomings but also the clause as it is in the main motion.

The third comment I'd like to make, Mr. Speaker, is with regard to public hearings. Certainly public hearings have a lot of merit in this process. The joint committee of the House of Commons made a recommendation, recommended by Mr. Holtby, that there be an ongoing joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons, with the provincial governments and the territories represented. Now, the joint committee didn't go as far as including the provincial representatives and the ter-

ritories, but they felt, and I quote from their document on page 134, that

such a committee would be expected to meet prior to the First Ministers' Conferences, hold public hearings and make recommendations to the first ministers. Such a committee would help to meet the basic objective of involving all Members of Parliament as full and active participants in the constitutional evolution of Canada

and certainly the Senators, and if we extended that further to provincial governments and the territories, it would be more inclusive as I see it, the object being that we'd be able to bring in a greater level of public involvement in the constitutional process, which is certainly necessary.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona mentioned that very few of his constituents have made representations with regard to the Meech accord. I would have to agree with him; I have had very few representations in terms of this accord. People are ready to go along and agree to whatever we as members of this Legislature determine is right, whatever other Legislatures determine is right, and whatever the federal government in its discussions determines is right. When that happens, it places more responsibility on us as members to assure ourselves that what is being done is right and that we protect our constituents, who are leaving the responsibility in our hands, from any type of vested-interest group that may harm this Confederation of ours in the future. A lot of responsibility is placed upon us as members of the Legislature and elected officials during these discussions on the Meech Lake accord. So public input, through whatever process, is certainly one that has much merit. This amendment highlights that, and I certainly would support the amendment on that basis.

So, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make these comments as my feelings and attitude towards the amendments that have been placed before us at this time.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak in favour of the amendment that was moved by the hon. Leader of the Opposition last Wednesday. Last Wednesday when the Leader of the Opposition spoke in the Assembly on resolution 17, he noted that this particular resolution is perhaps the most important piece of business this Assembly will deal with. He was quite right. Budgets last a year, usually; sometimes they're defeated long before the year. Legislation lasts as long as governments allow it to last. Governments, Mr. Speaker, last as long as the electorate will tolerate them. Constitutions, on the other hand, last longer than budgets. They last longer than some pieces of legislation. Indeed, constitutions last longer than governments.

There's a sense of stability, a sense of continuity, and perhaps even a sense of permanence in the constitution of a nation. Constitutions define our limitations, they outline our expectations, and they reflect what we are as a nation of peoples. Last day when we dealt with this resolution, I found myself in agreement with the Minister of the Environment when he noted:

... 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.

I share with the minister that sense of honour and the pride. For that, once again I want to thank the people of Edmonton-Belmont for allowing me the opportunity to participate in this

particular debate in this Assembly.

As I've said, Mr. Speaker, I feel extraordinarily fortunate that I'm able to participate in the debate. I wish that more Canadians, more Albertans, had the opportunity to share this forum here in this Assembly with all of us. But with only 83 seats in this Assembly, we must accept the limitations that are imposed upon us by the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. The limited number of seats in this Assembly should not have limited, however, the input that Albertans were afforded. Albertans should have had the opportunity to, in a formal way, speak to this very important document. I regret that the government chose to exclude Albertans from this process. Once again, we see that the government wasn't listening, doesn't listen, and perhaps doesn't care. The American Constitution starts with "We, the people." Perhaps our Constitution should begin with: "As directed by the Premier, we the Tory back-bench loyalists commend to our constituents this document, whether you like it or not." [interjection] I invite you to participate in this amendment at any time, hon. member.

Mr. Speaker, the government should have had public hearings on the accord. I can't understand the reason why, but it's not too late. Are they afraid? Are they afraid what Albertans may tell them? [interjection] Indeed, hon. member, they are. But what's wrong with people telling their government what they don't like? What's wrong with people telling their government what they do like? Perhaps you'll have bouquets as well as some beefs. It's somewhat ironic that in the past little while we couldn't flip through a newspaper without seeing an advertisement from the government advising Albertans that theirs was an open government. "On such and such a date, between such and such a time, a minister of the Crown will answer the telephone. You'll be able to speak to this minister because this is an open government. After that date and after that time, you want to get in touch with the member? Good luck."

Mr. Speaker, we should have had and we could have had public hearings on the accord. Why does the government want to advise Albertans today that this is an open government? Could it be that after an entire summer of not being available to Albertans, principally on this topic, they realized just how isolated they are, just how shut in they are?

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud that the New Democrat Official Opposition went out and listened to Albertans. I'm proud that we went out and invited average Albertans to come and participate, to come and listen, to come and speak, so that we would be able to more accurately reflect what Albertans had to say about the Meech Lake accord, what Albertans had to say about how they saw themselves fitting into Canada and how they wanted to participate in Canada. Albertans told us of the strengths they saw in the Constitutional Accord. They also told us of the weaknesses they saw.

On the positive side, Mr. Speaker, I don't think anyone would deny that seeing the Premier of the province of Quebec sign the document was in fact very positive. In fact, having 11 men sign the document was incredibly, extraordinarily positive. Eleven men representing every province of Canada, a wide variety of political ideologies and philosophies, managed to agree to this particular amendment. But why? The reason they agreed is because everybody got something they wanted from the negotiated package. Ten provinces, 10 Premiers, had an awful lot of power transferred back to their provinces, and the Conservative Prime Minister got the opportunity to perhaps revive some of his falling political fortunes.

Mr. Speaker, the provinces got a lot. Now we have the right

to submit nominees to the federal government for consideration in Senate appointments.

ANHON. MEMBER: Send Nick.

MR. SIGURDSON: Send Nick. Not a bad idea. So patronage has now changed from the federal level to the provincial level. Maybe that's not all that bad; I don't know. We'll have to wait and see what comes of it. Provinces now have the right to submit nominees to the federal government for consideration in Supreme Court appointments. Provinces will get money from the federal level if they opt out of nationally cost-shared programs, providing that the province has a program that is compatible with national objectives.

Now, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona dealt with the difference in the wording between "national objectives" and "national standards," but I think it's important to reiterate that it ought really to be "national standards," not "national objectives." Had we had national objectives prior to the extra billing being shut down by the federal government, perhaps we'd still have extra billing today, because that met a national objective; it would not have met a national standard. So it's regrettable that we're going to allow only national objectives to be in our Constitution when it really ought to be national standards.

The provinces got an awful lot of the accord: consideration on immigration, absolute power of veto on limited circumstances. But, Mr. Speaker, there were some winners in that package, and of course wherever there are winners in any package, there also must be some losers. The extent of the loss must be considered, for if the loss is great to one or more Canadians, then perhaps -- only perhaps -- that loss is substantial enough for us to reconsider the benefits we are about to gain for ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quote again from the Minister of the Environment. On Wednesday when he addressed resolution 17, he noted:

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 the 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.

The minister goes on to say:

An amendment did occur in 1982, and it ignored one large province in our country, the province of Quebec.

Let me repeat that, just the last sentence.

An amendment did occur in 1982, and it ignored one large province in our country, the province of Quebec.

Well, Mr. Speaker, with due respect to the minister, I believe he's missed the point. Yes, there was an amendment in 1982, but it wasn't that it ignored the province of Quebec; it was that the then Premier of the province of Quebec chose to ignore the 1982 amendment. The Premier of the province of Quebec ignored it, not the other way around, but he had to. A separatist Premier then governing the province of Quebec could not have signed the 1982 amendment. It would have denied their *raison d'être*. Nobody was ignored, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the opposite is true. Perhaps everybody was invited.

Can the same be said about the constitutional amendment for this year, 1987? Is everybody being invited in? Is anybody being left out? Well, regrettably, yes, some Canadians are being left out. Mr. Speaker. Canadians who live north of 60th parallel.

Canadians living in either the Yukon Territory or the Northwest Territories have had their dream of perhaps one day becoming a province shattered. That dream has been virtually shattered.

Prior to the 1982 amendment people of the territories had the right to negotiate with the federal government alone, directly, for admission into Canada as a member of Confederation. Manitoba enjoyed that right in 1870, British Columbia in 1871, Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905, and finally Newfoundland in 1949. With the 1982 constitutional amendment all that changed. Territories would not only have to negotiate with the federal government for entry into Confederation, but they'd have to go many steps beyond that and seek the approval of seven of the 10 provinces that had at least 50 percent of the population of Canada. That was a rather difficult objective to try and meet. With the 1987 amendment requiring unanimity of the existing provinces for the creation of a new province, the objective may well prove to be impossible.

Mr. Speaker, this must be my day to quote Tories, because I want to quote the words of former Member of Parliament for the constituency of the Yukon, who later became the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada. Mr. Erik Nielsen, the then Member of Parliament for the Yukon, said, and this was after the 1982 amendment:

For over half a century, the dream of provincial status has been the lodestone of northern hope. It has been central to the vision of the north, which sees the development of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories as the best and brightest hope for Canada's future. When the Prime Minister accepted the inclusion of two clauses in the April Accord, and this is April '82,

relating to the extension of existing provinces into the territory, and notwithstanding any other law or practice for the establishment of a new province, he dealt a crushing blow to the hopes and aspirations of thousands of Canadian citizens resident above 60. He gave away what was not his to give away: the rights and privileges of Canadian citizens resident above 60.

Mr. Speaker, that statement was made after the April '82 accord that then required seven out of 10 provinces with 50 percent of the population of Canada -- not unanimity, as the 1987 accord requires. One wonders just what that former Deputy Prime Minister thinks of this particular amendment. I can't understand the reason or reasons why the provinces want to have the right to veto with regard to the admission of new provinces into Confederation. Perhaps if the Premier speaks to this amendment at some point, he will advise us what the reasons were for having the power of veto on this particular clause in the accord. And it's an important question; it's an important question for Canadians. For after the 1982 amendment was brought into our Constitution a number of Premiers, along with the then Prime Minister of Canada, were prepared to amend that particular section of seven and 50 and return to the old rule of allowing territories that wanted to enter into provincehood the opportunity to negotiate directly with the federal government.

I'm told that even three of the 10 Premiers who signed the 1987 constitutional amendment were prepared to see the return of the pre-1982 rule. What happened? Why the change? Why the need for unanimity, Mr. Speaker? It may interest members here to know that the decision on absolute veto for territories becoming provinces was made behind closed doors. That was one of the decisions made during that 19-hour marathon session. It was made without the input of government leaders out of the Northwest Territories or the Yukon Territory. They were not even invited to attend the meeting to see what was going on. The Prime Minister of Canada, in a letter to Yukon government

leader Tony Penikett, promised to represent the interests of the people of the north. Some representation -- amazing representation -- and you wonder why we have some concerns about free trade. The Prime Minister sold out the interests of the people of the territories.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the territories have been relegated to second-class Canadians; they've been excluded from this package. The Minister of the Environment said in the last set of amendments that the people of Quebec were ignored. That is not the case. However, in this amendment the people of the north have indeed been ignored.

If the Constitution is supposed to reflect the equality of people and regions of the land, then this clause miserably fails to do that. This clause will allow the fate of tens of thousands of Canadians to be determined by people other than themselves. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have often listened in this Legislature to members who have suggested that we in the west have been bullied by central Canada, by Ontario and Quebec. Are we now growing up? Is this our period of adolescence as a province, and are we now prepared to join with the bullies and bully those in the north?

The Premier of Alberta has said that he supports the veto for all provinces so that all parts of Canada will have an equal base of power from which to begin. But that's just not the case. As Albertans, I believe it is incumbent upon all of us to speak on behalf of those who have been ignored and seek to amend the proposed 1987 constitutional amendment by striking out in the proposed section 41 of the Constitution Act, 1982, subclause (i).

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey.

MR. JONSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a few minutes to comment on this rather multifaceted amendment that's been proposed. I'd like to start by just addressing the matter of public hearings. I think we've had many people comment on the virtues of this particular proposal, but I'd like to start by saying that I'm not exactly sure how many people the New Democratic Party had out to its hearings. I know that in the area I represent the number that came to a series of hearings that I held, which dealt with this as one of its first agenda items, certainly had many, many more times the number of people attending than was the case for the "public hearing" in our area. It seems to me very interesting that the outcome of the meetings I attended is quite different in terms of what the people's view was of this particular accord -- and would be, I'm sure, of these amendments.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I think a number of the amendments that are proposed are there to perhaps give the hon. members opposite an opportunity to talk about some of their policies and so forth. But a number of the items which are dealt with in this amendment are really provided for and guaranteed in other parts of the accord and in the Constitution Act, 1982. I would like to refer to some examples. For instance, there's the reference to including the word "multicultural." This feature of our Canadian society is already recognized in section 27 of the 1982 Constitution Act and section 16 of the accord.

There is also the proposal, Mr. Speaker, that we need to add some additional wording regarding aboriginal rights, certainly a very, very important topic. But this is quite adequately dealt with to this point in time in the evolution of our Constitution in sections 25 and 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

The topic of gender is mentioned in this amendment. It is quite adequately dealt with, Mr. Speaker, in sections 15 and 28 of the Constitution Act. I might also add that in terms of the whole issue of women's rights, that group which I think would be most profoundly affected by this particular Constitutional Accord is quite satisfied with the provisions that are there regarding women's rights, and that is the largest women's organization in Quebec.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk briefly about the amendment proposed here in terms of unanimity. The people that support these amendments seem to fail to recognize that one of the major features that is supposed to be in a Constitution, particularly any aspect of the Constitution which would protect and guarantee individual provinces or states their rights, is that it should certainly take into account the fact that within a country such as Australia or Canada there should be protection for an overall region to not be excluded from having the yes or the no say over any possible amendment. The people supporting this amendment seem to ignore the fact that in our existing formula, that which requires 50 percent of the population plus two-thirds of the provinces, it is quite possible for either of the regions with the small populations to have their majority view overridden by the votes of the other two regions of the [country]. If we're going to pursue an objective which is very, very important for Alberta, I believe the amending formula which is currently proposed is one which is much better in terms of protecting and keeping equal the provinces of this nation in terms of changing our Constitution.

The amendment that is being proposed is purporting to abolish the Senate, as I recall. That is certainly a most amazing amendment, Mr. Speaker, when we consider the great need within this nation of ours to have better representation for our regions and less of a concentration in certain areas of legislation of power in central Canada. But the amendment proposes that the Senate be abolished.

The argument has also been advanced, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. WRIGHT: On a point of order.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: A point of order has been called.

MR. WRIGHT: Yes. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but on a point of order. We must speak to the actual amendment, and that does not include a proposal to abolish the Senate. As I said, we made a choice between that which was recommended and the other provision which was to extend the power of appointment to the Territories but keeping the Senate.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will the hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey please recognize that and continue.

MR. JONSON: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I was just wanting to comment on some of the other constitutional views of the opposition opposite.

I'd like to go on to comment on section 7, part 4, as proposed for amendment. The proposal is to make what may seem like an innocent enough change of the word "objectives" to "national standards." Mr. Speaker, this is adding a great deal of structure, a great deal of limitation to what could be done with an otherwise very good initiative on the part of the federal government

according to certain objectives of benefit to the nation as a whole. I suppose both terms are subject to interpretation. However, as I've said, "standards" is a very restrictive term. It would negate the intent of the accord on this point and really mean the federal government could dictate all significant aspects of such a program in an area of provincial jurisdiction.

This was an area which was of great interest in the meetings that I held in my constituency, and it was pointed out that there had been a number of points made in favour of leaving the accord as is, of course, with the word "objectives." But it was pointed out that most good variations and changes in a program and improvements in it are made closest to the source of administration, which is within the provinces, and there at the local level. And further, that leaving some flexibility in the actual application of a national program of this type would lead to a better program better meeting the needs of the provinces.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that I'd like to just return to my introductory point, and that is that the Meech Lake accord, as it is called, was in my experience very much supported by the constituents that I represent. I think a Constitution is something that evolves. Certainly it has to change with due care and deliberation. The accord may not be perfect; I'm sure there will be further amendments. But it's an important step along the way to a good Constitution for Canada.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support the amendment of the Leader of the Official Opposition. I believe that it addresses some of the serious problems that are left in the Constitutional Accord.

First, I would like to say that the Constitutional Accord does something that is very fundamentally important to Canada, something that the New Democratic Party has suggested and pushed for a number of times over many years, and that is: recognize the distinct society of Quebec and its responsibilities within Canada. So, Mr. Speaker, the fundamental idea behind the Constitutional Accord is one that we support. But that doesn't mean that the accord is so good that it cannot be improved.

One can't help wondering, when one looks at the number of problems with the accord. Many of the people that came to our hearings -- and you may talk of the numbers or pooh-pooh the numbers -- were very serious about the problems with the accord. I might add that there is a very high degree of unanimity among not only the people that we listen to here but also that the federal all-party, all-parliamentary committee listened to. I would like to remind the members opposite that the use of all-party committees for hearings is quite a good one and one that this government might like to adopt for something as important as the Constitutional Accord. So there is a high degree of unanimity on the problems with the accord, and many of the amendments that we put forward, I think, reflect that unanimity -- and right across the country, not just in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I want to spend most of my time talking, though, about one particular amendment, and that is number 5, the one that refers to the amendments, or how the Senate will be amended and how Senators will be appointed. We've recommended that the Constitution be amended to provide that Senate reform be made on the vote of the Parliament and the Legislatures of two-thirds of the provinces comprising at least 50 percent of the population of Canada; that is, to conform to the present general amending formula. Mr. Speaker, we feel that this



would certainly be an adequate amending formula and there is no need to go to a unanimity rule, as the Premiers and the Prime Minister chose to do. If you checked the constitutions of almost any other country, you would not find that they had any unanimity rules for changing their institutions.

The member across the way, the last speaker, at first said that we were intending to abolish the Senate, and spoke as if we had put that in as amendment. It is certainly the wish of the New Democratic Party that we abolish the Senate in this country. We certainly do not need the Senate as it's presently constituted. But we decided not to put that forward at this time as an amendment to this accord. We felt that the people of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon should be able to participate in the present process suggested by this accord of the provinces, and therefore the territories, in our suggestion, having a say in the appointment of Senators. So rather than leave them out, in the meantime, while we're waiting for meaningful Senate reform, we felt that we would drop the abolition statement for the moment and pursue the idea that the Yukon and the Northwest Territories should not be left out of the suggested process for appointing Senators.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's clear that if you appoint the Senators from the province, from the provincial level and the territories level, instead of from the federal level, that may give some added regional emphasis to the Senate and, therefore, to part of our federal institutions. But I don't really believe that the people of Canada, the people of Alberta, will be any happier with the patronage appointments that you'll get from the governments of the various provinces, any more than they're now happy with the patronage appointments that you get from the federal government. So it would seem to me that we really should abolish the Senate. But in the meantime, since we don't think that's going to happen right away, we think that at least the Territories and the Yukon should be allowed to participate in the proposed amending formula.

Now, one of the things that the Premier of Alberta wanted to push was a Triple E Senate, and he comes back from the conference on the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord and says that he is closer to that now than he was before. I would just like to say to the House that I have difficulty understanding his logic. If he has so few Premiers, as the Premier of B.C. and the Premier of Saskatchewan are sort of lukewarm to the idea of a Triple E Senate, and the present amending formula says that you have to have three-quarters of the provinces -- that would be seven out of the 10, with 50 percent of the population -- and now we're going to change that to needing unanimity from all 10 provinces, that somehow that's going to be easier to get, I think the Premier is rather confused about mathematical odds and about people's behaviour and how they vote and how they think.

All it would take with the new formula, the unanimity formula, is one province to say, "I've got some political debts I must pay off, and I have some people I want to appoint to the Senate, so it's going to have to wait till the next time around, till next year." I mean, the idea of talking about Senate reform is supposedly on the yearly agenda of the first ministers. So how the Premier of Alberta comes to the conclusion that he will have an easier time getting unanimity than he would have getting seven out of 10 with 50 percent of the population is beyond me. I think the members on the other side should stop and give that some thought.

With unanimity, all it takes is for one province to disagree. Why would Ontario or Quebec willingly or easily give up their right to have federal institutions -- namely, the House of Com-

mons -- in which they have an advantage at the ballot box? Why would they agree to a Senate that would, say, give the same number of seats to each province? Can you imagine Prince Edward Island getting the same number of seats as Ontario? Well, I can imagine that, but I'm not sure that I can imagine Ontario agreeing.

So all you need is one province and they've got a veto, which reminds me that the Member for Red Deer-South, in speaking the other day, claimed that Ontario by itself has a veto now. Now, I don't know how he arrives at that conclusion. Ontario doesn't have 50 percent of the population, so it would need some other provinces to join with it in order to stop the amending formula as it is now from working towards Senate reform. Okay? But not only will we let Ontario have a veto if we have unanimity; we will let Prince Edward Island have a veto if we have to have unanimity. So the Member for Red Deer-South should check a geography book and find out that in fact there is not 50 percent of Canadians in Ontario.

Just a point on his whole discussion. I was just reading through some of his remarks. This debate is very, very important and should be done at the level of debating point by point and suggested amendment by suggested amendment very, very carefully and very, very thoroughly. And most of the time the speaker from Red Deer-South spent berating the New Democratic Party and how they decide their policy and all this kind of nonsense that I don't intend to get into. But I just say to him that this debate is far more important than jumping on some political hobbyhorse and riding it to death. He really should have gotten down into some serious details -- he did a little bit, and I will come back to a couple of the points he made at the end in a very serious way about the issues -- rather than riding some political hobbyhorse and trying to score cheap political points.

The other point I might make about the possibility of Senate reform is that not only is it unlikely that Quebec or Ontario would give up their advantage at the ballot box, so to speak, in terms of federal institutions, not only is it likely that one out of 10 would reject a Triple E Senate, for example, but the House of Commons itself isn't likely to be too quick to give up its powers and share them with a Senate. I know that at the present time they have sort of a deadlock situation with the Senate. Actually, the Senate has gone from being a useless backwater, a House that nobody paid any attention to, to something worse. It's now suddenly become a Senate that's decided to wield its power, and given the way that it's appointed, that is something we could certainly do without in this country.

I'd like to suggest a couple of methods of getting some reform at the federal level in terms of institutions in this province other than direct Senate reform. It seems to me that one of the basic needs is for some regional representation at the centre that is not just on the geographical basis that each constituency elects one person and party politics becomes the name of the game. One idea would be to have each of the provinces -- basically, what I'm suggesting is that when we have an election, we allow some proportional representation in the House as well as the geographic representation that we presently have. It's an idea that has been talked about before, and some nations do do that. We certainly could not switch to a proportional system totally in this country. It's far too big. Each little region of the country -- for instance the Peace River country, where I come, from needs a representative in Ottawa specifically and directly from the Peace River country. So I'm not suggesting doing away with the 282 constituencies.

But I would suggest that at the end of an election, when the

votes are all counted and the totals calculated, if a party gets 25 percent of the vote in a province like, say, Alberta, then that party be allowed to elect extra people to the House of Commons on a basis something like this. Suppose we said, okay, each province will get an extra 10 seats based on a proportional basis. Therefore, if a party got 30 percent of the vote, they would have three out of those 10 seats that would be overlaid over the 282 regional seats. So there would then be, say, 382 seats in the Assembly, 100 of which would be done on a proportional basis.

Now, there would be some very distinct advantages to that. One of them would be that every party — no matter how much the country had broken down regionally, as it did, say, under Trudeau at one stage, where the Liberals did not have any Members of Parliament west of Winnipeg, they would still be able to get cabinet material out of Saskatchewan, Alberta, and B.C., with a proportional overlay like I'm suggesting. Or when Joe Clark was Prime Minister and had no representation in Quebec, he wouldn't have to go to the Senate to find some cabinet ministers; he would be able to get some representation in his cabinet out of Quebec. So that kind of mechanism might be an alternative to bothering to reform the Senate, and perhaps one could just abolish the Senate.

MR. DAY: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: A point of order has been called.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under Standing Order 20(b) the member is required to speak directly to the amendment. He's not talking about Senate reform here at all; he's talking about changing the representative form of government on a national basis, and I'm having difficulty seeing how that applies to the amendment in any way, shape, or form.

MR. McEACHERN: The member across the way, of course, is very limited in his vision. That's his problem.

What we're really talking about with Senate reform is getting some regional representation from across this country on a more equitable basis in our federal institutions. Now, whether we talk about just the House of Commons or whether we talk about the House of Commons and the Senate both, it seems to me that we need to look at that as a package. One of the packages, the one I was suggesting, was merely ...

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Strathcona raised the point that we are not discussing the reform of the Senate, and I think the hon. member should keep that in mind. Please continue.

MR. McEACHERN: We are talking about the process, though. [interjections]. Okay. So I will go back to the process. However, the suggestion is still not a bad one and one that the member might like to consider rather than trying to get a Triple E Senate, which, the way they've built the formula, they will never get. So really, the government should be glad of some alternatives, because they're certainly going to need them.

Another alternative to the Triple E Senate, which is put forward by this government, is an idea that was put forward by our party here in Alberta, called the council of the provinces. It's very clear in this country that we need some regional representation over and above what we get in the House of Commons, so one of the ideas that we had was to not only abolish

the Senate but also to set up a council of the provinces, which would help to meet that need.

The council of the provinces would represent the interests of the provinces and be done under the control of each province. They would appoint the people to the council of the provinces, and they would deal with questions that require the consent of both Parliament and the provinces.

The council of the provinces would deal first with the concurrent powers so that it would be a joint exercise of power between the House of Commons and the council of the provinces. It would exercise some control over federal emergency powers; it would have some say in treaties relative to provincial jurisdictions, to shared-cost programs, and to ratification or rejection of federal appointments to the ...

MR. YOUNG: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: A point of order by the Government House Leader.

MR. YOUNG: Perhaps the hon. member could reference his current remarks to the amendment and perhaps he couldn't, and in the event that he couldn't, perhaps he would move on to talk about something that he could reference to the amendment.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, on the first page of the amendment, number (5):

In section 9, in proposed section 41 of the Constitution Act, 1982, [would be amended] by striking out clauses (b), (c), and

(i);

This would change the amending formula, and there's not much point in worrying about just changing the formula if you're not talking about what it is you're trying to change and what needs to be done. If the government thinks that the Triple E Senate is the be-all and end-all, there is no reason why we shouldn't look at some alternatives, because the Triple E Senate will not be possible under the amending formula as proposed by the government.

So what the government needs, particularly if they insist on going ahead and passing the Meech Lake accord with refusal of making any changes — if the government does that, then they are boxing themselves into a formula for amending the Senate that they will never achieve, and therefore we will be stuck with this thing called the Senate that we've got now. So to think a little bit before you pass that as to some possible alternatives and how you might achieve them with a different amending formula, seems to me to make a lot of sense. So I don't understand why the members don't want to get down to discussing the details of what it is we're trying to do and how we're going to do it and keep worrying about points of order. I certainly would appreciate ...

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, on another point of order. The hon. member apparently lost his debate in his own caucus. But having lost his debate in his caucus, if he wants to redebate it he should do it again in his caucus not in here. It's his party's amendment and his leader's amendment that he should be speaking to, and perhaps he could try to do that.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: As we all know, members of the Assembly, what goes on in caucus is very private.

I would urge the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, though, to try and deal with the amendment. I'm having difficulty fol-

lowing his debate, so if he would try and follow the debate.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: On the point of order. Mr. Speaker. I might just refer all hon. members to the section that's been referenced here; 41(b) has to do with

the powers of the Senate and the method of selecting Senators.

Subsection (c):

the number of members by which a province is entitled to be represented in the Senate and the residence qualifications of Senators.

And subsection (i):

notwithstanding any other law or practice, the establishment of new provinces . . .

I took from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway's remarks that they were directed specifically to those subsections within the Meech Lake accord, as referenced by the hon. Leader of the Opposition's amendment, which is what we're debating.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you. Mr. Speaker. You don't really bother me with all your interruptions, except that it would be better if you would have paid more attention to listening to the substance of what we're talking about and to the people of Alberta. But of course, you didn't want to listen to either, so I guess why should I be surprised . . .

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Hon. member, I think that if you will use your time to engage in debate rather than to suggest to the other members how they should perform in the Assembly, it will be appropriate.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I thought he had the rebuttal coming at least.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from Calgary-Mountain View just pointed out, of course we're talking about what kind of Senate you're going to have, how you're going to reform it, what the rules are for appointment of Senators: all those things. So to suggest that what I was saying was not in order is mere nonsense. Obviously, the government wants to get into an argument about the process or something. Personally, I think that if we could just continue with talking a little bit about the kind of institution we should be having as a Senate, rather than what this accord is proposing at this stage, that would make a certain amount of sense.

I'd like to say that the council of the provinces is a kind of thing that this government really should tune in to and take a really good look at. It has certain merits that are not unlike, in some ways, the Triple E Senate. It would have equal representation from each of the provinces. They would have say in any concurrent jurisdiction between the federal government and the provinces. As well as an advantage to that, there would also be a disadvantage that I should warn this government about, though: you would have to put your name on the line when it came time to vote on an issue, and the whole world would know which way you voted on it. You wouldn't be able to, as has been done so much in the past by this government, go to a Premiers' Conference and stand up and say one thing or say behind closed doors that you want something and then later not stand up and take responsibility for that action.

So the democratic process, the parliamentary procedure that would govern this council of the provinces would be one that would take a certain amount of responsibility as well as a certain amount of advantage to be able to vet, if you like, the regional differences of this country. It would be a mechanism by which

the provinces and the federal government could work out disputes and disagreements or even things that they agreed on and therefore would be able to go ahead.

I want to turn for a moment, Mr. Speaker, from talking about the Senate and the need for reform there and the kinds of reform one might have. The main need at the present time, just to reiterate before I leave that, is for the Yukon and the Territories to be allowed to take their fair share in naming people or suggesting people to the Senate. They should not be excluded from that, the same as they should not be excluded from becoming a province by this unanimity formula that the government in Ottawa and the Premiers dreamed up.

I would like to say about the hearing process that I was fortunate enough to be able to take part in a couple of them, and they were very worth while. A lot of people came. The numbers were enough to keep us busy two days in Edmonton, two in Calgary, and I think there were four other places that were a full day as well.

What I was disappointed in, though, was that none of the people that proposed the positive side -- and there is a positive side to this Constitutional Accord -- came forward. Most of the people that came forward were very negative and picked on the problems in the accord, and I agree there are many problems in the accord. I'm wondering where the people that think like the government on this, that think it's a perfect accord the way it is, and that it doesn't need revising -- where were you in these public hearings? And where are you now in terms of details and getting down to one point at a time and discussing why we don't need to accommodate the people of the north, why we don't need to accommodate the aboriginals of this country? We can identify that the people of Quebec are a distinct society, but where is the recognition that the natives of Canada are a distinct society also? They were here first, before the English or French came, and there has been nothing done to recognize that or their right to self-government; nor has there even been as a minimum the idea that there should be ongoing talks about that once a year as there is about Senate reform. I mean, really when it gets down to it, other than the Senate making a nuisance of itself right now, who really cares about the Senate, compared to doing something for the native people in a way that will change and affect their daily lives?

So, Mr. Speaker, while our party supports the fundamental aim of the Constitutional Accord, to recognize the distinct character of Quebec -- as I said, it's something that this party has stood for for a long time. So we are really glad to participate in the discussion about that, but this accord is not perfect. It has several flaws in it. There is a great deal of unanimity about those flaws, and there is no reason why we shouldn't say -- "we," I mean all of us here on all sides of the House -- "Yes, this, this, and this could be improved." I think we should do that.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an historic debate for our country, the Meech Lake accord, and in some ways a historic debate as a member of that Confederation for the province of Alberta. And it's an honour for me, Mr. Speaker, as a member of this Assembly, my first term as a member, to be able to join in that debate and offer my comments as a proud Canadian. Like all my colleagues who have spoken to this constitutional amendment so far, we want to begin by say-

ing that we're pleased that Quebec is now a signatory to the Constitution of this country. It was a major omission, and I think a very serious omission, that the repatriation of our constitutional process, which took place in 1981 and '82, resulted in Quebec not being able to bring itself to support the repatriated Constitution. The fact that every provincial political party in Quebec, to my understanding, did not agree with that repatriation and refused to endorse the signatory of the province on that document is a testimony to the way that that process was undertaken and the way it was deeply felt by the people of Quebec.

As well, the people of Quebec were promised by the rest of Canada during the debate on their referendum, put forward by the Parti Québécois, that the "no" vote in that referendum was not a vote for the status quo, and there was an implication in that, Mr. Speaker, that the rest of Canada would move to accommodate some of the legitimate aspirations of Quebec and repatriate our Constitution and make of it one in which they feel they could be a full partner.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's been some unfinished business in this country for a number of years, and that is, how to reconcile the Constitution Act of 1982 with those aspirations of Quebec in order to make and help Quebec feel that they are a part of this country and can support the Constitution of this country. So the fact that that overriding objective has been accomplished, I think, is a credit to the first ministers and I welcome that move.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Now, the question is, however, in undertaking that process, whether the amendment which is being brought forward to every provincial Legislature is a perfect amendment or even whether it is seriously flawed in a number of ways. Now, there's one way to view this, and that is that the price of Quebec's signature on the Constitution is of such overriding importance that the rest of the implications and changes to our Constitution are insignificant by comparison.

Well, Mr. Speaker, regardless of where individual members might stand on that, without a doubt I'm sure there is unanimity amongst members throughout the Legislature that this is not the perfect amendment that satisfies all of the aspirations of all the regions and people of this country. And I think it's in that spirit that the Leader of the Opposition has brought forward, as a result of public hearings, a number of amendments, that we believe do not take away in any major way from the aspirations that Quebec has, which brought it as a signatory to the Constitution, and yet at the same time, also deal with the legitimate grievances and concerns that people across this province have about what these changes mean for our country and for our Constitution, the way we govern ourselves in the future. Because there are some major changes over and beyond the concerns of Quebec that have been incorporated into this document.

Now, before I get into the specific areas where I believe the document is particularly flawed, I think it's important to also recognize, Mr. Speaker, that the process itself was also flawed. Perhaps this is something that's uniquely Canadian, but in countries all over the world the constitutions are the most important document at the core of the way countries govern themselves, and in countries all over the world they're passionately felt; people's feelings about the constitution are passionately held. When we look at a country like Haiti, that is struggling to have any kind of semblance of democratic control over their Constitution, I think we have to recognize that in Canada the fact that we would make these kinds of amendments without any

broad basis of public input makes of us one of the unique countries in the world, and in one sense I think this is something that we as Canadians ought to regret.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, the Constitution governs everything we do in this country and from it flows everything. So the kind of country we are, and the kind of country we want, has to be an important element of our Constitution. But the fact that so few people have been involved, have had the right to be involved, have had the opportunity to make their views felt or known says something to me, that at our root we have got to be concerned about a country where the people feel removed and remote from the most basic and the most important document that governs their political institutions and their life as a society together.

Now, we may want to stand up in this Legislature and talk about the public hearings or the meetings that we've held as individual MLAs in our constituencies. To all members who have done that this past summer, I congratulate them; I say: good for you. But when the people of a country do not have any formal opportunity established for them to have their input, their views known before a decision is ratified by the Assemblies and the House of Commons of this country, what we're creating then, Mr. Speaker, is a government remote and removed from the people of this country, and that should be of concern to every member of this Assembly and every member of the House of Commons. But the fact is that a deal was cut behind closed doors amongst 11 men, and as a result of that deal, no one was prepared to seriously, with the exception of a few provinces, open up that process and that document for criticism and input from the people within their province. It's been hurried up, and I think that for the long-range and the long-term health of the democracy of this country, that process has got to be of concern to all of us.

It was in that spirit, Mr. Speaker, that the Official Opposition undertook a series of public hearings across the province to receive input, receive suggestions and criticisms from people all over this province. All hon. members will be interested to know that there was a total of 131 submissions to this committee, 63 of which represented the views of organizations -- that is, they were not from individual citizens -- and those organizations represented many thousands of Albertans. I'm not satisfied with that process, Mr. Speaker; no one in the Official Opposition is. But we felt it was our responsibility as the second-largest party represented in this Legislature. Given that the provincial government refused to hold such hearings, it was incumbent upon us to do that job, and it was in that spirit that we did. I believe that the people of Alberta, whether they appeared or not, were appreciative that we provided them that opportunity.

So I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the lack of public hearings as a result of this amendment, the fact that people had few opportunities to speak on these changes indicates a serious flaw in the process that has been adopted. Now, some will say we've been debating the Constitution in Canada for years. They'll go back to first ministers' conferences years and years and years, decades, ago and say, "Well, you know, we've been having this debate all along; we've been having this public input all along." But the specifics of this amendment are very complex and far-reaching and, I believe, introduce concepts that previously were never debated or discussed. So I think that given this amendment to the Constitution introduced by the Premier and by all the Premiers in their Legislatures, it's a serious flaw in the way

we make our Constitution and our government work in this country that the public should not have that input.

Now, I'd like in particular to address my remarks, initially at least, to changes as they affect the two territories in Canada, that being the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory. Albertans, I would hope, more than perhaps any other province across Canada, could appreciate the situation in which the Northwest Territories and Yukon find themselves, because it was in 1905 out of the Northwest Territories that our province was created. The Prime Minister of the day and the people of this part of Canada of the day did not have to go, cap in hand, to all the other provinces and say: "Please make of us provinces. We want to have the same rights enjoyed by all other Canadian citizens." We didn't have to do that. We were simply, as a result of political pressure, petitions, and whatever, created out of the Northwest Territories: the province of Alberta and the province of Saskatchewan.

It would be interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that in 1905 Alberta had a population of slightly over 73,000 when we became a province. If you look at the combined population of Yukon and the Northwest Territories today, they have a population of about 80,000. So there are as many people living in those two territories today as lived in Alberta at the time we became a province, yet now, as a result of these amendments that are being introduced through the Constitutional Accord, all these people in the north part of our country will require the unanimous consent of every Legislature in Canada if they ever want to become the same kinds of citizens with the same rights in provinces that we enjoy in the rest of Canada. Well, Mr. Speaker, we don't agree that that is right, and we are asking in the amendment put forward by the Leader of the Opposition that we recognize that the creation of new provinces should not be subject to the veto of any one other province in this country, that we should go back to a formula which governs other changes in our Constitution, whereby they don't require every single province's approval before they in turn become provinces.

Now, in addition to this and because of this, individual members of this country, individual Canadian citizens who happen to live north of the 60th parallel are discriminated against in a couple of key areas. It means for one thing, for what it's worth, that it'll not be possible in order for you to sit in the Senate of this country as a person who lives in the Northwest Territories or Yukon. Under section 24 of the Constitution Act of 1867, the process is established whereby the Governor General appoints members to the Senate. It says in that section:

The Governor General shall from Time to Time, in the

Queen's Name, by Instrument under the Great Seal of Canada, summon qualified Persons to the Senate; and, subject to the Provisions of this Act, every Person so summoned shall become and be a Member of the Senate and a Senator.

"Subject to the Provisions of this Act": well, Mr. Speaker, this is the Act which we are amending. What the amendment introduced by the Premier does is to amend our Constitution, and states:

Where a vacancy occurs . . . the government of the province to which the vacancy relates may, in relation to that vacancy, submit to the Queen's Privy Council for Canada the names of persons who may be summoned to the Senate.

It says nothing about territories. How does a person living in Yukon have their name put forward to the Queen's Privy Council for Canada? This section doesn't allow it; it excludes it.

So we're proposing in the Leader of the Opposition's amendment to change that provision to add the words "or territory." It goes on, as you can read, Mr. Speaker, to subsection (2) where again:

the person summoned to to a vacancy in the Senate shall be chosen from among persons whose names have been submitted . . .

et cetera. The point is, given that section 24 does not change -- that is, the Governor General can make appointments "subject to the Provisions of this Act" -- citizens who live in the Northwest Territories or Yukon will have the virtual impossibility to be appointed to the Senate. In that way, this amendment discriminates against those who live north of 60.

Mr. Speaker, given the hour this afternoon, I wish to adjourn debate on this motion in front of us.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion as given by the Member for Calgary-Mountain View to adjourn debate on the amendment, those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye,

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

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the Legislature that the government does not plan to ask the Assembly to sit tomorrow evening, nor this evening, which has already been announced, and that on Wednesday, December 2, the order of business will be a continuation of Resolution 17, and perhaps we may deal with Resolution 20 as well.

[At 5:28 p.m. the House adjourned to Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.]

