

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Monday, December 7, 1987 2:30 p.m.**Date: **87/12/07**

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

At the beginning of this week we ask You, Father, to renew and strengthen in us the awareness of our duty and privilege as members of this Legislature.

We ask You also in Your divine providence to bless and protect the Assembly and the province we are elected to serve.

Amen.

head: **PRESENTING PETITIONS**

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to present this petition of 1,046 names petitioning the government of Alberta to build a multilevel care facility in La Crete.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 277****An Act to Amend the
Municipal Taxation Act**

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 277, An Act to Amend the Municipal Taxation Act.

It's a request that the municipalities of this province have been asking for for some time, which allows them to have the authority of designating what is and what isn't farmland within their boundaries.

[Leave granted; Bill 277 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 25**Security Home Trust Company Act**

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being Bill Pr. 25, the Security Home Trust Company Act.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to incorporate this trust company, establish its capitalization, and provide the usual powers of a body corporate.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 25 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 26**Fair & Millikin Insurance Company Act**

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being Bill Pr. 26, the Fair & Millikin Insurance Company Act.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is similar to that which I have described in respect to Bill Pr. 25.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 26 read a first time]

Bill Pr. 27**Hermo T. Pagtakhan Bar Admission Act**

MR. HERON: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 27, the Hermo T. Pagtakhan Bar Admission Act.

This is a Bill presented for the admission of Mr. Pagtakhan to the Alberta Bar.

[Leave granted; Bill Pr. 27 read a first time]

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the 14th annual report of the Alberta Law Foundation.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the report called Post-Secondary Operating Grants in Alberta: An Equity Study, by Dr. J. Stefan Dupré. I've arranged to have copies made available for all hon. members.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table this afternoon for the information of all members a copy of the wording of a petition that was signed by 650 students at the University of Lethbridge inviting the minister to stay at the residence and familiarize himself with the problems of students there.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to members of the House some very special guests of the Assembly seated in your gallery today. They are the winners of the annual bursary awards presented by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Alberta branch.

These bursaries are presented annually by the Alberta branch, and as hon. members know, all members of this House constitute the membership of the branch. The purpose of the bursaries, Mr. Speaker, is to increase interest in Parliament among young Albertans. Each year two recipients are nominated, one from the Alberta All Girl's Parliament and one from the TUXIS Parliament. Nominations are made by the Parliament with whom the candidate is associated, and each bursary for \$1,000 is presented along with a commemorative framed scroll.

This year, Mr. Speaker, the bursaries will be presented to Miss Sarah Baker of Calgary and Miss Dallas Mueller of Lacombe, cowinners of the Alberta All Girl's Parliament, and to Mr. David Green of Edmonton, who represents the TUXIS.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask these people to rise in the gallery as I read their names. We have Miss Sarah Baker and her father, Mr. John Baker; Miss Dallas Mueller and her father, Mr. Phil Mueller; Mr. David Green and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Les Klick. In addition, we have Ms Marilyn McGivern of the All Girl's Parliament, and not with us today but with us in spirit is Mr. David Marriott, the Crown counsel in Lacombe. These two last people work extremely hard to encourage the involvement of these young people, and as a former Lieutenant Governor of TUXIS Parliament, I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, having heard the debates, that amongst these winners are future mem-

bers of this Assembly and, who knows, maybe of a future Parliament. Would the hon. members of the House join with me in welcoming these special people to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Advanced Education, followed by the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore, followed by Edmonton-MiU Woods.

MR. RUSSELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the House, the author of the report I just tabled today, Dr. Stefan Dupré. He served as a chairman or member of approximately a dozen federal or provincial commissions, inquiries, and task forces and was the founding chairman of the Ontario Council on University Affairs. He's been a member of the National Research Council and of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. He's a past president of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, a recipient of the institute's Vanier medal, and an officer of the Order of Canada. He's just completed a very extensive and important study for Albertans on postsecondary financing, and I'd ask members to extend to our visitor a warm welcome.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, 31 grade 6 students from Lee Ridge school. They are accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Olga Severin and parent Mrs. Sonia Plawke. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and to the other members of the House this afternoon, Mr. Svend Robinson, the MP for Burnaby, who is sitting in your gallery today. He's in town to address a meeting this evening to discuss with interested citizens his observations of a recent trip to Chile. I'd ask him to stand and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and members of the Assembly some 28 students from Eastwood junior high in the riding of Edmonton-Norwood. I've been to this school many times, and I assure you it's a first-rate school and there is a lot of pride among both the students and the staff in that school. They are accompanied by their teachers Ms Sylvia Krogh, Mr. Dave Tomaszewski, and Mr. Jonathan Reich. They're seated in the public gallery. I would ask them to stand and receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to introduce a group of 17 Albertans who have driven over 10 hours to come to the Legislature to be with us today. They represent the Concerned Citizens Group of La Crete and are here to present their case for a multilevel hospital in La Crete. I would ask that they please rise and receive the warm welcome of the members of the Assembly.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Hospital Utilization

MR. MARTIN: Yes. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the first question to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. Throughout Alberta there are many hundreds of long-term care

patients who are trapped in acute care hospital beds. Most of these people are seniors, and they reflect the fact that the government has not planned the system properly and has failed in its responsibility to provide long-term care facilities.

Mr. Speaker, at the Alberta Hospital Association convention the minister announced that he was basically going to punish the victims, and effective January 1, patients in active treatment hospitals would be assessed . . . If they were assessed that they could be in auxiliary care, it was going to start to cost them \$14. My question to this minister: will he explain why, instead of dealing with the obvious causes of the problem, he's decided to put a fine on senior citizens in this province?

MR. M. MOORE: First of all, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has a number of his facts mixed up pretty badly. This province has more beds for senior citizens for long-term care than any province in Canada, including some very fine auxiliary hospital and nursing home facilities throughout the entire province, many of them located in smaller communities which have been struggling hard to make sure that they keep those facilities in the face of the opposition that comes from both the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Liberal party. But we keep trying.

The facts of the matter are that the numbers of people who are in active treatment hospital beds in Alberta who have been assessed for auxiliary care are lower now than they were a year ago. We hope within the next year and a half to bring on another close to 300 beds in Edmonton, which will reduce the numbers that are waiting for auxiliary beds in this city to almost zero.

In the meantime, there are a number of seniors who are drawing pensions, are occupying active treatment hospital beds, and paying nothing for long-term care in active treatment hospital beds. It's been proposed to us by active treatment hospital boards and others that it ought to be reasonable that if those people have been assessed for long-term care and are receiving pensions, they should pay the same amount for occupying an active treatment hospital bed if they've been assessed for auxiliary care as they would if they were in an auxiliary bed. That is exactly what is happening. There is absolutely nothing unfair about a situation like that. As a matter of fact, it was unfair . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. There should be probably one or two more supplementaries.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I would remind this minister that these people are not in acute care hospitals because they want to be. They're not checking in for rest and relaxation. My question is: why doesn't the government change its policy rather than charge these people unnecessary fines? It's not their fault. Why do this?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition doesn't know what he's talking about. The facts of the matter are that these seniors have been assessed as requiring long-term care, either auxiliary hospital or nursing home care. Now, what the active treatment hospitals can do with them, and do in a lot of provinces, is simply check them out of the hospital, and then they are left on their own if there are no auxiliary hospital beds. In our case we've decided to utilize surplus active treatment hospital beds that exist in this province to house seniors who've been assessed for long-term, auxiliary, or nursing home care. And all we are saying is that they will pay no more and no

less than if we did have an auxiliary hospital bed or a nursing home bed.

Now, there's got to be something wrong with the hon. leader's figuring if he believes there's something unfair about that. It would be unfair to have people in the active treatment beds for months on end paying nothing while people across the street or in an adjoining facility paid \$14 a day in an auxiliary bed.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, if this minister would listen, we'd ask the question. There is a surplus in Edmonton of over 361 beds. They have no place to go. That's the reality. And I say to this minister: why don't you get on building these long-term beds instead of punishing the people that are there that have no alternative?

MR. M. MOORE: Again, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is completely mixed up. The people have a place to go. They are staying in active treatment hospitals. And if they were not staying in active treatment hospitals and we had an auxiliary hospital bed for them, they would be paying \$14 a day after 60 days, and that's all we are asking them to pay in the active treatment hospital.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows full well that we've taken some very aggressive steps in terms of developing new facilities for senior citizens who've been assessed for auxiliary hospital care and nursing home care. The decision we made with respect to the Edmonton General hospital becoming a full auxiliary hospital in addition to the geriatric care centre there next April after the Mill Woods hospital opens is one that will bring on about 300 new beds in this city alone. You add to that the beds that have been approved for the Allan Gray Auxiliary hospital in the Chinese community and you've got over 400 beds coming on stream within the next two years. That will resolve the problem.

In the meantime, we're not turving seniors out in the cold, as the NDP might do to avoid... [interjections] Well, what would you do if you didn't have any facilities?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. minister. Unfortunately, you don't get a chance to ask a question across the floor. Final supplementary, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. People are well aware that this government is punishing seniors for their mismanagement. I would point out that these particular citizens that are in acute care hospitals have to maintain their own residence because they never know if they're going to be there on a day-to-day basis or when they're going to be discharged. Does the minister not fail to recognize that they often have to maintain another residence and possibly cannot afford to pay this fine that the minister is putting on them?

MR. M. MOORE: First of all, Mr. Speaker, it should be made abundantly clear that this government has the best programs in place for senior citizens of any government in Canada. You can look at our programs under Aids to Daily Living and other areas where we provide significantly greater benefits. I recall a year ago when we increased the per diem rate on auxiliary hospitals from \$10 to \$14 a day. We had comparisons with every other province in Canada, and we were the lowest of any in that area. Now, I don't know what else we can do to ensure that these people have adequate care. We are doing, I think, a very good job.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by Calgary-Glenmore, followed by Clover Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, we may be saving money, but we're doing it on the backs of helpless people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to know: is this a long-term plan in disguise to force acute care hospitals to change their bed use without any additional funds to adapt their facilities?

MR. M. MOORE: I think I've already answered that question, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, is the minister evaluating methods of discharging these seniors in acute care hospitals and in long-term care facilities to their own homes and perhaps reassessing the type of care with rehabilitation programs?

MR. M. MOORE: Well, Mr. Speaker, we do have a pilot program going on right now that's attempting to develop ways in which we can classify patients so that we can have them in the right kinds of facilities. In many cases I think we could move seniors from nursing homes or avoid them going into nursing homes and provide them with home nursing care, home homemaker care, and if we did perhaps a better job of distributing the number of seniors that are involved between those kinds of services, we may not have as many in active treatment hospitals as we have today.

[There was a loud noise in the Chamber]

MR. SPEAKER: It's not a new signal.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, supplementary question to the minister. Last spring the minister indicated to the Assembly that there would be a review and some action taken on converting active treatment beds in the rural areas to long-term care. Can the minister indicate what has happened to that program?

MR. M. MOORE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. What we did is we wrote to every hospital board in the province, including the urban ones, and invited them to assess the need for active treatment beds and to advise us if they wished to convert some of their active treatment beds to auxiliary beds in multiples of five. We felt that any fewer than five would not be able to provide the appropriate auxiliary level of care.

We've had a considerable amount of interest in doing that from some hospitals. Thus far I believe there are about two or three that actually applied, and the conversion is under way or under planning. I hope there are some more, particularly some of the smaller hospitals who have fewer active treatment beds occupied than they have actually in operation, that would make application. So far it's been a slower response than we had anticipated, but hopefully it will come.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

Free Trade

MR. PIQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture. No one questions the importance of the United States market for the continued health of our red meat industry. If there was one

positive thing, one positive thing, the Mulroney trade deal was supposed to accomplish, it was to guarantee my neighbours and other Alberta farmers and ranchers access to the United States market. But this deal does no such thing. Existing countervail duties remain in place, and Alberta red meat producers will still be subject to the harassment of United States protections. Will the minister admit today that the Conservatives clearly failed to achieve this long-promised guarantee of secure access to the United States and that Alberta producers will still be vulnerable to United States countervail duties in the future?

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps one question is enough.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, may I indicate at the outset that I'm delighted that the cattle producers themselves have endorsed the agreement, because they recognize the positive impact that it will have on their specific industry. I also should share with the hon. member that that is the purpose for the five-year examination period, whereby we can look at each other's rules and regulations and legislation as it relates to the industry so that hopefully we can do away with a number of the irritants that do exist.

MR. PIQUETTE: The minister still clearly didn't answer the question. Given that the binational panel will clearly not prevent the United States from slapping Alberta with antidumping and countervail duties almost at will, how can the minister pretend that this ineffective binational mechanism will result in any guaranteed access?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we are very confident that with this agreement it is going to include increased access. As the hon. member has indicated and as I reinforced when I responded to him with his initial question, we are going to go through a period of re-evaluation as it relates to the specific legislation rules and regulations that do pertain to the industries on both sides so that we will have an opportunity for input to remove whatever irritants might exist.

MR. PIQUETTE: Then the minister does admit that we have no guaranteed access. I guess I would like to ask the minister: does he not agree with Dr. Joe Rosario, the executive director of his own department's trade policy secretariat -- and I quote -- that a "more rigorous dispute settlement mechanism" was preferred by your department? How are you going to answer that to Alberta farmers?

MR. ELZINGA: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted that they brought the issue up and reinforced again what the hon. Member for Vegreville had brought up as it related to a comment by Dr. Rosario, because here I have a written statement from Dr. Rosario disputing what the Member for Vegreville originally had said and again disputing what this hon. member is attempting to convey, because again they are inaccuracies. [interjections]

Mr. Speaker, I regret. . . I guess they don't wish to hear the answer. If they wish, I'm more than happy to share it with them. I should indicate that Dr. Rosario indicated that the mechanism that is in place now, if we do go ahead with this agreement, is much superior to what we presently have. They conveniently forgot to leave the end of his statement off.

MR. PIQUETTE: I hope the minister files that statement from his executive director.

Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary: will the minister at least inform us what specific clause under the Mulroney trade deal removes the 4.4 cents a pound countervailing duty on Canadian live hog exports? Can the minister at least clarify that very important point?

MR. ELZINGA: I'm happy to clarify for the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, and I'm happy that as Minister of Agriculture I can speak out so forcefully on behalf of our producers, whereby when the trade hearings were held in Edmonton, the Alberta pork producers attended the all-parliamentary standing committee and endorsed this agreement, contrary to what the hon. members opposite are conveying.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes Stettler, followed by Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. DOWNEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the interests of the red meat industry and the giant step that has been taken with this trade agreement, I wonder if the minister could inform the House just what percentage of red meat in Alberta goes to markets outside Alberta.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to share that information with the hon. member. We only consume 23 percent of what we produce in this province. Again that underscores the importance of this agreement. We have to make sure we have access to other markets. We export from our province approximately 77 percent of our beef.

If I can put in one last comment as it relates to this agreement too, Mr. Speaker, I think it's noteworthy, prior to the initialing of the agreement, that the members from the New Democratic Party were indicating we were going to do away with the supply-managed sectors. They were saying we were going to do away with a number of things. We protected those sectors just as we're protecting access to the United States market.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon, supplementary.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, thank you. It may be a giant step for the Tory party, but it was a pretty small step for ranchers in this province.

Would the Minister of Agriculture inform us as to whether or not the tribunal that decides on the countervail -- Americans can countervail our beef -- whether the decision coming from that tribunal is binding in any way on the Americans? Is the decision from the tribunal binding in any way on the Americans?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, what I would do, since we have a minister that has been very involved in the discussions, is I would refer it to the hon. minister of intergovernmental affairs who has been more instrumental in the putting together of this document than myself.

MR. TAYLOR: That's not red meat; that's dead meat.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, just a brief comment that the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon is useful for keeping the NDP happy with their laughter as his every riposte achieves the desired results from his friends on his left.

The answer is yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Main question, the leader of the Liberals.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to continue the questions along the free trade line but direct them to the Premier. Without any preamble I'll get in because I think I'm after information that -- the guide and outfitters' licences, for instance, are granted now with the requirement that they cannot be transferred to an American. Under the new free trade Act will guide and outfitters' licences be available to Americans? Will they be able to be sold to Americans?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd refer that matter to our Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. I don't recall that it ever came up in any of our discussions. The minister may have been faced with it.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, further information. We have, as the Premier is well aware, SBEC, or the small business equity corporations, and Vencap operating in the province. Under the free trade agreement will these organizations be able to continue to operate, give capital to small Alberta companies?

MR. GETTY: They don't appear to be related in terms of questions, but the answer is yes.

MR. SPEAKER: There is a relevancy problem.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, no, the relationship is all as to what we can do under the free trade pact. I thought I was making that fairly clear.

Mr. Speaker, could the Premier tell us: if these organizations can continue, does that mean they will then be loaning to or financing small American companies that come up here? In other words, will our Alberta taxpayers' money be used to subsidize American corporations moving in here?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, these companies are not subsidizing anybody. They're investing.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, another area. This again is to do with the free trade pact. Prior to the free trade pact, as you know, the Americans called royalties in timber in British Columbia "bottom-loading," as far as cedar shakes are concerned. Has the Premier made any effort to clear, to make sure, that the sliding-scale oil and gas royalty system we use will not be considered, as was the royalty for cedar shakes, some form of bottom-loading for our oil and gas industry?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there will be absolutely no impact on the government's royalty system.

MR. HERON: A supplementary question for the Premier. Given that opponents to the free trade agreement have argued that foreign investment is bad for Alberta and Canada and that freer access to capital markets will harm our financial institutions, I'd like to ask the Premier if he is familiar with the very positive preliminary assessment recently released by Canada's largest financial institution, that is the Royal Bank of Canada?

MR. GETTY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and not just the Royal Bank of Canada, but it is true that they have very strongly endorsed the trade arrangement. But most thoughtful organizations, businesses in Canada, have also endorsed the trade arrangement, and

I must say that we will have, from a provincial outlook, an ability to attract investment from the south and will not be as captive to the markets from eastern Canada.

University of Lethbridge

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of Advanced Education. They're with regard to the report tabled today, the Dupré report, specifically pages 104 to 109 referring to the University of Lethbridge. Dr. Dupré notes that "the University's current operating grant may be below the level it might have attained under applicable granting rules." He also goes on to note that both the university and the Department of Advanced Education failed to pursue a funding initiative to pay for program developments involving the School of Fine Arts.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister indicate whether the department and the minister are prepared to pursue that recommendation and undertake negotiations with the University of Lethbridge to provide program grants in that area of fine arts?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, the question that the hon. member has raised is an important one in that it deals with a policy issue that is not strictly financial in its targeting. The Dupré report essentially deals with alleged funding inequities in the system, but Dr. Dupré discovered some other policy matters that he's recommending we pursue. That one, as a matter of fact, is under way today. The presidents were all in the city today to receive their copies of the report and go over it with us, and the president of the University of Lethbridge has started his negotiations with the department today.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I certainly compliment the minister for that.

In terms of other areas of the report Dr. Dupré noted that there is a lack of diversity in the third- and fourth-year courses at the University of Lethbridge and that there may be a need for adjusting the operating revenues to the university. Could the minister indicate the government's position with regards to that recommendation and whether that is one being pursued in terms of adjustments as well?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say that the government recognizes the University of Lethbridge as a very important institution in the postsecondary system. We've recognized for sometime the struggles they have had relating to internal administration and their self-governance, their financing and programming, enrollment, and the state of their building. Otherwise, things aren't bad down there, but we're making moves to try and address all of those problems.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Dr. Dupré states that there is a need for the enrollment situation at the U of L to be reconsidered to see if special funding requirements must continue or whether the U of L can be financially viable on its own. Could the minister indicate which direction the government would take at this time in terms of a policy decision or directive in that matter?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to answer that question because I don't want to prejudge the issues at hand. But the glaring problem is the low enrollment in third and fourth years, which is quite out of balance with the enrollment in first and second years. We intend to give priority to addressing that

problem. The funding system that the government uses, of course, would be adjusted to reflect any solution that's arrived at.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary. It's with regards to the special mandate that the University of Lethbridge had in its original design and which was discussed quite thoroughly in this Legislature on the resolution by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West. Could the minister indicate whether that original mandate provided to the University of Lethbridge still holds and that it's the intent of the government to follow through on that mandate?

MR. RUSSELL: I think it's fair to review the mandate to see if it's still applicable today. As far as I know it is, but all the parties that are concerned are open-minded, and the objective is to make the University of Lethbridge the third strong university in the province.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Given that Dr. Dupré has identified several areas of inequity among the institutions in the province and has recommended specific allocations that should be adjusted, can the minister advise us today how long it's going to take before we see some action on these recommendations?

MR. RUSSELL: Well, as I indicated to the earlier question, Mr. Speaker, action has started with respect to the University of Lethbridge today. Insofar as financial inequities that have been identified -- to put it into context, out of annual operating grants around the \$800 million mark per annum, Dr. Dupré identified some inequities that total \$4 million, which includes a special research support grant of a million dollars for the University of Calgary. So in a system that is as volatile and changing with respect to enrollments and new programming, et cetera, to come within \$3 million in an \$800 million budget I think has been quite good on the part of the system. Notwithstanding that, the inequities he has identified are important to the institutions that are involved, and I intend to pursue those matters with my colleagues immediately.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Yes. Dr. Dupré in his study indicated that the shortfall with respect to fine art funding, which he described as likely substantial, goes back to at least 1982. I'm wondering whether the minister would undertake to ensure that rectification of the situation covers these past years and that such rectification will be forthwith, as recommended by Dr. Dupré.

MR. RUSSELL: Well, Mr. Speaker, there's no way, of course, that anyone would commit retroactivity with respect to any of these inequities or faults. The idea is to go forward on a system that we believe is fair and equitable, and we will be doing that. If there are corrections to be made, they will be made at the earliest opportunity.

MR. GOGO: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. minister. Insofar as I believe the government of Alberta earnestly encouraged the University of Lethbridge to launch the graduate nursing program for registered nurses, could the minister advise the Assembly whether it's still the intent of this government to ensure and encourage the continuation of the nursing program at the

University of Lethbridge?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I can't answer that question today because we're just getting into it, but I believe it's fair to say that if a program is needed, it will be supported and funded adequately. We're presently introducing an aspect of rationalization into the system and propose to phase out unnecessary duplication or destructive competition in the system.

Employment Alternatives Program

DR. CASSIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Career Development and Employment. In May of 1987 the minister announced the employment alternatives program. Could he inform the House how many unemployed Albertans have found work through this program?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the employment alternatives program was launched about five and a half, six months ago, and as hon. members will recall, the program was targeted at social assistance recipients in the employables category and people whose unemployment insurance had run out. The most recent figures I have are to the middle of November, and it has been indicated that 4,000 individuals within those two categories are now working under the program.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

DR. CASSIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Could the minister assure the House that adequate safeguards are in place to ensure against fraudulent abuse of the program by employers?

MR. ORMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, on a regular basis we are challenged with monitoring all of our programs. Obviously, when we have points of contact with in excess of half a million people through a year through our career centres and all of our programs, it is very important that we do monitor, particularly the job creation and the training programs.

It's determined that less than 1 percent of our programs are subject to any kind of abuse. Generally, it has to do with a lack of understanding of the program; there is misinformation, miscommunication between the employee, the business, the trainee, or the department.

With regard to the employment alternatives program, Mr. Speaker, we have not detected any abuse. In fact, the program had a minimum criterion of 30 weeks; that is, the employers had to participate for a minimum of 30 weeks. The average is 51 weeks. Certainly the fact that the wage subsidy under the program is averaging in excess of \$6.20 an hour I think is indicative that there is no intention to abuse this program. It's the business community working together with the government to help the disadvantaged in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Calgary-North West.

DR. CASSIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, another supplementary. Has the minister reached an agreement with the federal government to provide additional funding to the program through the Canadian job strategy?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, we negotiated a four-cornered agreement -- that is, an agreement with Health and Welfare

Canada; Canada Employment and Immigration; the Department of Social Services; and my department, Career Development and Employment -- to be sure that we fell within the guidelines of the federal government's responsibilities and our joint responsibilities in dealing with people on social assistance.

We have in fact used up provincial government funds at a much more rapid pace than we had anticipated, and I think that's to the credit of the business community who took up the challenge in this connection. The federal government had targeted some \$6 million, Mr. Speaker, to address social assistance recipients in the employables category. It is my understanding that their programs have not experienced the same rapid take-up as ours. I will be discussing with my federal colleagues the possibility of them designating some of their dollars from their social assistance employables category programs to our area of the employment alternatives program.

DR. CASSIN: Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Given the great utilization of the program by both the employer and the job seeker, will the provincial government be making available more funds for the program to provide increased job opportunities for unemployed Albertans?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I guess that becomes the most important question. Obviously, when we have a program that has expended funds at basically twice the speed we anticipated, we are now examining ways in which we can enhance dollars for that particular program. I also believe that because it is such an important program -- because I believe we are on the leading edge of dealing with people, the employables on social assistance, in terms of assimilating them into the labour force, I believe it's very important that we step back and have a very good look at the program, assess the positives and negatives. It gives us a chance to do some evaluation and then possibly move back into the program.

We will be making that decision in the very near future, Mr. Speaker. I can assure all hon. members that following the Provincial Treasurer's address I will be here arguing for my colleagues in this Legislature to support further funding under that program.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regards to the monitoring of the program, I'm wondering if the minister can advise the members of the Assembly how many on-site inspections have been made to businesses that are utilizing the program, just to ensure that the system is not being abused? How many on-site inspections have been made?

MR. ORMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the best use of the resources, the manpower, of the Department of Career Development and Employment is to go out and inspect sites. If we have 4,000 people working in the program, it would be virtually impossible to visit every site because the average number of people working for each business is about one person per company; therefore, it becomes a very difficult challenge for us to monitor. If we had a situation where companies were taking up 20 and 30 people at a time, it would be much easier to follow up on. But I can assure the hon. member that, as we do in all of our programs, we do follow-ups with the employee and the employer to make sure there is no abuse. Mr. Speaker, whenever

there is an abuse, I can assure you that it comes to our attention and we move very swiftly to rectify that particular situation.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: in spite of the glowing terminology we've now been informed we have a 35 percent dropout, and we need to know why that's happening. Would the minister inform the House then what ongoing research is being done regarding that dropout: the causes, the characteristics, the support available to users, employee input, employer input, and so on?

MR. ORMAN: First, Mr. Speaker, I'd recommend that the hon. member doesn't go the newspaper to do her research. I'd certainly be pleased to provide her with any information she requires to make an evaluation. I can tell you that the dropout rate is substantially less than 35 percent. As a matter of fact, I've had a conversation with the reporter that reported 35 percent and pointed out to her that the statistics she was using have nothing to do with the retention rate in the program. But if the hon. member has a legitimate interest, I'd provide her with the details. I don't have them at my fingertips at this particular point, but I can assure you it's substantially less than 35 percent.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Highlands, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by Cypress-Redcliff, Edmonton-Strathcona, Olds-Didsbury, Stettler, Wainwright, Edmonton-Highlands.

Olympics Communications Program

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that last Thursday the Public Affairs Bureau sent some 25 public relations officers from Edmonton to Calgary to tour the Olympic site and did so on the government aircraft. I wonder if the Deputy Premier is prepared to explain to the Assembly why it is, in this time when people programs like education, health care, social services are being cut back, that this type of government expenditure was necessary?

MR. RUSSELL: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I missed the first part of the question, and I'm unable from what I heard to connect it to my responsibility.

MS BARRETT: I'll gladly repeat the question, Mr. Speaker. I was asking the Deputy Premier if he would explain why, when other programs, people programs, are being cut, his department, the Public Affairs Bureau, decided it was important to send these people to Calgary to tour the Olympic sites.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I'll be glad to look up the details of that trip and report back to the hon. member.

MS BARRETT: Well, supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the Deputy Premier also confirm that it's the Public Affairs Bureau's intention to establish and promote, quote, "the government's presence at the Olympics" by setting up a special office, not even in a government building, starting in January in order to do this instead of using established Alberta Tourism offices?

MR. RUSSELL: You bet it is, Mr. Speaker. We're going to tell the Alberta story to the Olympic visitors in a way that's really

positive and effective.

MS BARRETT: Well, supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure they are, and I just wonder how much it's going to cost.

Can the minister explain why it is that the former managing director of the Public Affairs Bureau, now on contract to do this special promotions project, is submitting and getting paid \$175 a crack just to draft a letter?

MR. RUSSELL: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I'll have to look up the details of whatever it is the hon. member is referring to. If she's referring to services tendered by the firm of Frank Calder, who's now out there in the private sector, he's competing along with any number of other private firms.

MS BARRETT: Privatize yourself for fun and profit with the Alberta government.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has avoided answering one of the important questions, so could he tell us just how many \$175 letters he's prepared to buy on behalf of promoting the Alberta government and how much this whole project is going to cost Alberta taxpayers?

MR. RUSSELL: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member wants details of the Olympics communications program, we'd be pleased to provide them. I doubt very much if the government is paying somebody \$175 to write a letter. These consulting firms are like any other number of private-sector firms: you pay for the services on a time basis or on a specific contract, item-by-item basis. But to go at it in the method we are makes it pretty difficult to handle. But there is a special communications budget for what I think is going to be a really positive and unique opportunity for Alberta to tell its story.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, probably the Deputy Premier could save himself some money and the black eye the province is getting by just trying to solve the Lubicon problem.

MR. SPEAKER: What on earth has that got to do with the topic? This is a . . .

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order. If the Chair's memory hasn't failed entirely, we realize that on Thursday and Friday there were certain complaints from parts of the House, including Westlock-Sturgeon, about succinct supplementaries as well as the length of answers, so the supplementary question please.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I was proceeding full speed ahead until you stopped me.

My question to the Deputy Premier, after he has just bailed himself out of that one, is to ask him whether or not he's devoting some money to trying to inform the people that are coming for the Olympics that there are other attractions in Alberta they could take in while they are here. What advertising I've seen has all been on the Olympics. What is he doing to try to encourage people to get out around the province to other attractions we have in this province?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, there are two elements to what we're talking about. That kind of program, of course, is carried on on a year-round basis by our Department of Tourism. But

the package I was describing to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands is aimed specifically at a unique group of visitors that will never be assembled in Alberta again: top decision-making executives of prime corporations from all over the world. Their companies are bringing them in here to enjoy Alberta for a few days, and we want to give them a message to take home with them. Now, that's pretty positive, and I realize the socialists don't like doing that, but we're going to do it. [interjections]

MR. STEWART: Supplemental to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Can the minister . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair is having trouble hearing. Calgary-North Hill please.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Economic Development and Trade advise the Assembly of what steps his department will be taking to promote the business opportunities centre during the Olympics?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, we're working very closely with the Olympic Secretariat because, as the Deputy Premier indicated to the members of the Assembly, there will be a tremendous number of visitors from throughout the world visiting southern Alberta and other parts of Alberta during this exciting period in February. So we're working with a private-sector group of businesspeople in Alberta to try and match Alberta businesspeople with the visitors who are coming in in order that there may be an opportunity to enhance economic development in Alberta. I'm sure all members of the Assembly would support that part of the activity in addition to enjoying the events that will take place in February.

MR. SPEAKER: Do the REPs have any questions? You don't have a question on this? Okay.

The time for question period has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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 pro-

posed in the schedule hereto relate to matters referred to in section 41 of the Constitution Act, 1982;

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

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

Attendu:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Adjourned debate December 4: Mr. Orman]

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, you will recall that on Friday last I began the debate on this motion by dealing with some of the general aspects of the Constitutional Accord. I left off at a point where I was going to discuss . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order in the Chamber please so the minister may proceed. Hon. minister.

MR. ORMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was going to discuss the aspects of the Constitutional Accord that affect immigration matters in this country. As minister responsible for immigration matters in Alberta, I'd like to take this time this afternoon to explain to the members of the Assembly how the Meech Lake accord affects immigration.

But first, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that I make a general statement on the significance of immigration to this

province and other provinces. I believe it goes without saying that immigration has played a very important economic and cultural role in the development of this province and others in Canada. It is from those skills of individuals that we have benefited, particularly in the area of their enterprise, their creativity, their training, and of the tens of thousands of men and women who have come from the four corners of the world to live and work among us.

To give you some idea of the magnitude, Mr. Speaker, I want to share with you a few statistics. In 1981 the Canada census indicated that nearly 17 percent of our 2.2 million population in Alberta -- those individuals were born outside Canada. In Edmonton and Calgary it was as high as 20 percent, and I should think that some six, seven years later those figures have substantially increased. Since 1982 more than 57,000 new immigrants have come to Alberta. These newcomers and their generations to follow will contribute to the growth and expansion and cultural enrichment of Alberta for the betterment of all Albertans.

Hon. members will find it useful, Mr. Speaker, if I begin with a brief overview of the Constitution and legal framework which exists at the present time for handling immigration matters. Members may be aware that immigration is an area of shared jurisdiction. Under section 95 of the Constitution Act, 1867, that document recognizes the concurrent legislative powers of the federal and provincial governments in immigration matters, and in recognition of this fact, the federal Immigration Act of 1976 expressly requires the federal government to consult with the provinces to ascertain regional demographic needs in labour market considerations prior to setting future immigration levels.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the Immigration Act of 1976 contains two other provisions which are of considerable importance to the province. Briefly, section 109(1) requires the federal government to consult with the provinces on matters of settlement assistance; section 109(2) of the Immigration Act authorizes the federal minister of immigration to enter into agreements with the provinces for the development, co-ordination, and implementation of immigration and settlement programs.

Despite the fact that the Constitution Act of 1867 specified that the provinces had a role to play in immigration matters, historically provinces had been restricted from providing comments on immigration levels in labour market conditions. In 1978, however, Mr. Speaker, the federal government and the government of Canada entered into the so-called Cullen/Couture agreement, and this agreement gave Quebec a predominant role in recruitment and selection of immigrants under the independent class and business immigrants. Under the agreement Quebec established target levels for independent immigrants and, in consultation with the federal government on immigration levels, selected immigrants for entry into Canada. I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that this agreement was unique to Quebec and not extended to other provinces. The Cullen/Couture agreement recognized that the provinces have a substantial role to play in immigration and settlement matters.

As I indicated, Mr. Speaker, and lamentably, Ottawa was unwilling to recognize the principle of equality of the provinces, refusing similar authority as was extended to the province of Quebec. Alberta could not obtain equal treatment from the federal Liberal government. It was not until the election of the federal Conservatives in 1984 that the door was opened for the provinces to enter into a new spirit of co-operation with regard to immigration matters.

*See pages 2004-11

Within a year, Mr. Speaker, my predecessor and colleague the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, Ernie Isley, was the first Alberta minister to negotiate an agreement specifically dealing with the province of Alberta and the federal government relating to immigration matters. The three-year agreement gives recognition to Alberta's legal and constitutional role in matters relating to immigration, and most importantly, Mr. Speaker, the agreement lays down a co-operative framework for planning, development, and management of programs and services relating to immigration and settlement services,

A key feature of the agreement is a joint committee on immigration, a joint committee between the provinces and the federal government at the bureaucrat level to oversee the implementation of this particular agreement. It has a tradition of smooth operation in a spirit of co-operation that is, I believe, going to be a model for all provinces to follow, following the ratification of the Meech Lake accord, Mr. Speaker. The signing of the immigration agreement with Ottawa in November 1985 heralded an important new era in the province's involvement in these areas, and Alberta has put programs in place which in many ways set examples for other jurisdictions to follow.

Under the terms of the Meech Lake accord there is a commitment to sign an immigration agreement with Quebec which incorporates the principles of the Cullen/Couture agreement regarding, firstly, the establishment of an economic criterion for family reunification and assisted relatives and, secondly, the selection of independent immigrants, visitors for medical treatment, students, temporary workers, and refugees. As well, the Meech Lake accord also provides Quebec with an opportunity to assume responsibility over immigration and settlement services matters that are presently being delivered by the federal government along with accompanying financial compensation.

Finally and most importantly, the accord specifies that the immigration agreement similar to the Quebec agreement can be negotiated with any province and that Canada's Constitution will be amended to expressly recognize and constitutionally protect immigration agreements bilaterally negotiated between the federal government and a province.

Given the importance of immigration to Alberta's current and future development and prosperity and given the record of immigration in this province, it is both appropriate and necessary, Mr. Speaker, that Alberta support the Meech Lake accord, which will strengthen its constitutional and legal responsibilities for immigration. It is our view -- that is, the view of the government of Alberta -- that the provinces are better positioned to identify and develop and deliver the needs and services of newly arrived individuals to our province, and we feel that we are best positioned to facilitate the integration of immigrants in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I should hasten to point out, however, that the proposed constitutional amendment ensures that the federal government will continue to set national standards and objectives, determine the overall level of immigration, continue to establish classes of immigrants, and identify inadmissible aliens. The federal government will also retain responsibility for refugee matters. There is no question in my mind that there is clearly an overriding role that the federal government must play in immigration matters. However, I believe that this is the time -- and the Constitution affords thus, to take opportunity of that time -- to separate the two functions in terms of immigration settlement services and overall immigration policy. With the tradition of co-operation that we've had under our immigration

agreement with the federal government, we believe it can be nothing but a further positive step for the evolution of this particular province.

Mr. Speaker, members will appreciate that immigration agreements will undoubtedly vary from province to province, and this should be the case. Each province puts forward its own features as it sees fit. It may wish to see certain aspects included or excluded from this agreement. I believe that it should reflect the particular needs of each particular province. I do not believe that there should be a total national application of immigration matters. Each province has a particular role to play in the consultation and the delivery of the programs as stated. Negotiations may cover a wide variety of significant areas, including, for example, selection criteria for immigrants, entry levels, and settlement programs, to name just these three. These are the areas, Mr. Speaker, where I believe the provinces have a substantial role in determining those particular levels, and certainly it is our wish to pursue the opportunity thereby presented under the Meech Lake accord.

I should also point out, Mr. Speaker, that all agreements will be subject to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, thus preventing discriminatory practices with respect to race, place of origin, or any other grounds relative to that particular Charter. Additionally, the application of the Charter ensures mobility rights for all permanent residents of Canada, including new immigrants.

The government of Alberta is giving careful consideration and thought to identifying the features that we wish to see included and entrenched in an immigration agreement with Ottawa. I would undertake here, Mr. Speaker, to solicit input from individuals and interest groups, the settlement service agencies, and my colleagues throughout the province, utilizing their experience and understanding of immigration matters to provide us with the input and the advice that we see necessary to move forward in this particular area.

I would also point out that we anticipate Quebec will be the first province to negotiate an entrenched immigration agreement, an agreement which no doubt will serve as the standard for any subsequent agreements negotiated with other provinces.

I believe now, Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate to briefly review the record of this government in areas of immigration. I should say that it is a source of both strength and pride that the ethnicity within Alberta has contributed to the growth and development both socially and economically. For some 15 years now under the Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta there has been consistent sustained and vigorous support for initiatives which support newcomers. Some members here will recall, and we all will know of, two Bills introduced by Premier Lougheed at the opening of the Legislature in 1972. These were the Alberta Bill of Rights and the Individual's Rights Protection Act, both documents which clearly established guiding principles and legislative protection to enhance the rights and freedoms of ethnic minorities in this province. Other examples, Mr. Speaker: the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council; the cabinet committee on cultural heritage, which plays a very important role in monitoring policy-making in this province and to determine its relevancy in connection with Alberta's cultural groups.

Members will also recall, Mr. Speaker, that our Premier, the Hon. Don Getty, recently initiated moves that resulted in the renaming of the Department of Culture to the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism and the establishment of the Multicultural Resource Development Institute, along with the establishment of the Alberta Multicultural Commission. And only a

few weeks ago the government announced the names of people selected to sit on the Immigration and Settlement Services Advisory Committee, which reports to me as minister responsible for immigration matters. These all, Mr. Speaker, are designed and put in place to provide us with the government with the widest possible input from all groups -- not only cultural, not only multicultural, but all Albertans -- and provide us with a wide range of opportunities to decide on policy implementation and how that is impacted with the ethnic community.

Over the past year Alberta has assumed a leadership role, Mr. Speaker, in the area of language training for immigrants. It is my view that a coherent national policy is still lacking in this area. I have expressed concerns with my colleagues, the federal ministers responsible for labour market and immigration matters, that the level of funding for English as a Second Language should not be connected to the labour market strategy but in fact should be connected directly to the levels of immigration. I have had unanimous support for my position from the labour market ministers responsible for immigration at our labour market ministers' conference, Mr. Speaker, and I am looking forward to continuing to press the federal government to live up to the provincial support for our province's particular position. Alberta's English as a Second Language secretariat, chaired by my department, is unique in Canada. It is a co-ordinating mechanism for ensuring that provincial resources are effectively utilized in this particular area.

The Alberta Immigration Review Panel is yet another example of this government's efforts to be supportive of the needs of those who are in need of assistance. As some hon. members may know, there are instances where prospective immigrants and visitors are not eligible for admission to Canada because of their failure to meet Canadian medical requirements. The panel reviews the merits of each case and may recommend, for compassionate and humanitarian reasons, entry under a ministerial permit. Since 1979, Mr. Speaker, and keeping in mind the decisions based on compassionate and humanitarian reasons, some 1,000 individuals have settled in Alberta under minister's permit.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, I wish to emphasize this afternoon that if Alberta negotiates an immigration agreement, the cornerstone of our philosophy as a government will remain as it has been in the past since 1971, and that is that the number one priority in this province is for family reunification under our Immigration Act. It will be and has been the cornerstone of our particular policy.

Currently, immigrants who join relatives already here account for more than 50 percent of all immigrants who settle in Alberta. Moreover, Alberta's impressive record for accepting refugees will continue. In the five years from 1982 to 1986 more than 13,000 refugees were included among Alberta's 57,000 immigrants. In 1986, Mr. Speaker, we were second only to Ontario in receiving refugees to our province, and that is not based on a per capita number; it is based on total figures. So the fourth largest province in this country has the second largest commitment to refugees in this country, and I think it belies much of the attitude that prevails in other parts of this country about Alberta's attitude towards immigration.

The Meech Lake accord, Mr. Speaker, is a document that respects our Constitutional roots while looking to the future. Its immigration provisions correctly acknowledge that provinces are best able to determine their needs and to provide services to

facilitate the successful integration of newcomers, while preserving an important role for the federal government in several key areas, as I've indicated. It is a document which emphasizes a strong spirit of federal/provincial co-operation, and as such it is a document that contributes to nation-building in Canada. The Meech Lake accord is worthy of the unanimous support of this Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that we saw on Friday the amendments we had proposed for this resolution fail. We believe those amendments would have made the resolution an altogether better one and the amendment to the Constitution of Canada superior to what it otherwise was. But on the other hand, one has to concede, as I have done before in starting off the debate on the amendment, that the accord itself is in principle necessary and has many good elements. The purpose, of course, was an entirely praiseworthy one: to have the province of Quebec not only legally governed by the 1982 Constitution but governed by it with their consent. Because, however legally bound a person is, the governance of that person works ill if it is without the assent of that person. So no one appraising the motion before us objectively would have to say that it is all good on one side or all bad on the other side. It is a mixture. The task before each and every one of us, I suggest, is to add the pluses up and add the minuses up and see whether it comes on the positive or the negative side of zero when one does one's sums at the end. So if it is not too presumptuous, Mr. Speaker, I would go through the accord and try and indicate to hon. members who may be interested the pluses and the minuses so they can do that sum for themselves.

The process contains a considerable negative. It is an extraordinary thing, Mr. Speaker, that nearly all the written Constitutions of western countries -- that's to say, western countries that have written Constitutions -- have for a change of the Constitution a process which involves a plebiscite. We do not. But more puzzling yet, not only do we not have the need for a vote by the people individually on this, but there is no provision for public hearings. You would have thought it would be common sense to have them. We have thrashed this out, I agree, at the time of the consideration of our omnibus amendments, because that was one of them that we suggested.

Nonetheless, it remains a question, now that we do not have those public hearings government funded and widespread in Alberta, just how legitimate it is for the Legislature alone to go ahead and pass anything to do with the Constitution. I don't speak of legitimate in the legal sense -- obviously, it's legitimate in that sense -- I mean substantially speaking, when we are doing something that's very important to people and yet they have not been fully informed about it and they have not had a decent chance to express their ideas.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we, for our part, did have some hearings. Even though they were limited, we did receive 106 submissions in person and more written ones. It was sufficient to show that there is very great debate out there over many of the provisions by people who are well informed in the areas they speak on and by others who are simply anxious to have certain matters thrashed out; that it is a shame, indeed, that it is not part of the Constitution that there be public hearings, not only nationally but in each province too. I think it does not sit well with this government that they decline to have that kind of process.

A criticism that has been voiced is the lack of clarity of the

provisions of the accord. By that, I think most people mean the lack of distinctness or particularity. Since the words themselves are clear enough, of course, it is the meaning that is not perfectly clear. But on the other hand, one must say that it is normal in a Constitution to use words that are not refined in terms of particularity. That's a silly way of saying what I mean, which is this: that the concepts must be set out in general terms so they can fit circumstances as they arrive.

The trouble about being particular in a large document -- the Constitution, particularly -- is that you come to a situation that was never contemplated by those who were filling in the particulars, which, if it had been contemplated, would have caused them not to have stated the particulars in the way they have, and lo and behold, you are committing an injustice. So it is better to state the concepts in liberal terms and then allow interpretation to take place, which will be held if there are guides for construing the document that are plain.

There are some guides here. There is a body of law already, for the past 120 years, that tells us how we should construe the Constitution of Canada. There is a fresh body of law since 1982 that tells us how we should construe that amendment to the Constitution that occurred in 1982, particularly with respect to the Charter of Rights. And so it is not a necessarily damning criticism of a document that contains the Constitution of a country that it is lacking in particularity, which is what I believe people mean when they say that it is unclear.

Take, for example, the illustration of the use of the word "objectives," which we objected to being used in place of the word "standards," denoting the conditions under which, in a shared-cost program, provinces would be able to claim their per capita share in the province of the federal funding for that program which trenched upon provincial jurisdiction. True, we would have preferred the word "standards"; that is clear. But it does not follow that the word "objectives" will be construed in such a way as to create an injustice. There is certainly more scope for it to be construed in such a way, but it does not follow that it will be. Indeed, it is open to a court. It would be better if these things would not have to end up in a court, but the more written your Constitution is, the more likely it is that constitutional matters will end up in court. A court can well say that if the standards are distinctly broken, then they cannot achieve the objectives set out, because in order to effect any certain end, the standards of operation to achieve that end must be geared to that purpose. So if the standards are broken, the objectives, it can be argued, perhaps will not be achieved. So that is the sort of thing I mean about lack of particular words, words of particularity, in a Constitution not being necessarily a damning indictment of it.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

Another example in the document is at the beginning, where it speaks of the distinct society of the province of Quebec without saying what that is. That is perhaps an easier one to cope with, because it is simply describing what is there, Mr. Speaker, and so you don't really need to imagine a great number of things. You simply have to observe what is there and to deduce from that what is distinct about it. As to the linguistic duality throughout Canada being a fundamental characteristic, that again is something that could be further defined, doubtless, but it is probably the case that if one wishes to introduce a concept at all, it is best to leave it in that general term and let it be fleshed out by decisions in court, if that should ever be necessary, to achieve the necessary particularity. Because the

one advantage about going to court on a matter like this is that if the judges are doing their job properly, they will simply make a ruling that embraces the situation in front of them, and that situation will therefore not necessarily apply to a similar but not identical situation, because it may be that the points of dissimilarity affect the principle of the thing. And so you can get the particularity from example to example, which may in the end produce a principle of general application. So it is a subtle process and, in general, one that has worked well.

In fact, when you look at examples in the past of general words or general concepts even, without the words being so general, that have worked very well in favour of the people, one can start, if you like, with perhaps one of the most famous provisions of all in Magna Carta, that no man shall be imprisoned or deseized of his property without the judgment of his peers. Now, that was a fairly particular statement in Magna Carta, but it embraced a concept which is commonplace in western jurisdictions doubtless now, certainly not yet generally throughout the world, that you should not be deprived of life, liberty, or property without a judgment, not of your superiors but of your commoners, your peers.

So that in the end established a right to a jury, not only in criminal matters but also in civil matters, in English courts, and with the British Empire which carried with it English law, not the law of any other country, it spread throughout the world. And that very basic concept of the jury all springs from the idea that was embodied in those words in Magna Carta, which were not new at that time; they were . . . But we're getting too detailed now.

As an example of the flexibility that can occur in a Constitution, one can look at the American Constitution, which was at first interpreted as being consistent with slavery and then not consistent with slavery, and simultaneously between north and south interpreted in both ways as being consistent and inconsistent. Then after the question was settled in the modern fashion, the question arose whether facilities could be equal though separate. And the answer was yes for the best part of, well, 80 years until the Supreme Court of that country decided otherwise, that institutions which were separate by race could not in truth be equal. So the Constitution has not changed one iota in that time, but interpretations of it are, and moreover those interpretations have changed in court, and perhaps slowly, but in the end have changed for the better. So because a matter is not so clear and even though it must go to court to get the clarity, there are precedents in the jurisdictions similar to ours, and indeed in our own, which suggests that that is not altogether a bad thing.

Aboriginal rights was a matter which greatly concerned us, Mr. Speaker, because they are in fact guaranteed in the 1982 Constitution in section 35. Section 35 of that Constitutional amendment or that Act says:

The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.

Then it goes on to define what it is meant by the "aboriginal peoples of Canada." Yet progress in sorting out what that means has been slow indeed, and the one shot that was ordained by the 1982 Constitution has been exhausted and nothing much seems to be moving. So it seemed to us a matter of simple justice that that should be at the top of the agenda for the first ministers, even ahead of Senate reform and certainly ahead of fisheries, Mr. Speaker; yet it was not. However, that's not to say that the aboriginal peoples are bereft of rights. They do have their constitutional rights under the 1982 Constitution. Let us balance that against the lack of distinct provision for them in

the accord that we are debating today and decide where the plus and where the minus is there.

I should in a general say that if nothing else, the debate on our amendments and the debate we're presently having that deal with the deficits in this accord will serve as a blueprint, as it were, for the ministers when in future years, if this accord is passed into the law of Canada unamended -- a blueprint for the improvements that need to be done in future years. So we do a service to the people of this country in analyzing these deficits and arriving perhaps at some consensus at least as to where improvements could be made, even if right now those improvements cannot be effected.

The major demand of the aboriginal peoples, of course, is for self-government. Self-government means some things to some of them and other things to others of them, and I think it quite unreasonable to demand there be a general definition. So this is going to be a long process requiring great patience by us in dealing with the scores of different peoples that are embraced by the term "aboriginal peoples of Canada," differing fundamentally in language between themselves, differing fundamentally in customs between themselves, and of course differing fundamentally or greatly in the places they live and their traditional styles of life.

We debated on the omnibus amendment the question of women's equality rights -- that is to say, section 28 of the Charter of Rights -- and whether or not it should apply in the amendment to section 16. Our view was clear that out of an abundance of caution, those rights should be put in. In fact, on the face of it, it would certainly seem better that all Charter rights be declared unimpaired by the opening section, paragraph 1, of the schedule to the Constitution amendment Act. Nonetheless, neither of those amendments was accepted by this House.

But I do wish to point out on the positive side that there are those constitutional experts, who must be respected, who testified before the parliamentary committee that there was no question in their minds that all the Charter rights apply to section 1 of the schedule -- that's the distinct society and linguistic duality section -- and that view was accepted by the majority on ... In fact, it was accepted by the whole committee, but there was a minority report that said, "Well, since you're so certain that it applies, why don't you stick it in anyway and be clear about it?" Nonetheless, it would seem to me unlikely that the Supreme Court of Canada would now rule that the Charter of Rights didn't apply to that section, because nowadays it is permissible to refer to the legislative history of a measure, particularly a constitutional one, as an aid to construction of what it means. So all is not lost on that.

As to the amending formula, this perhaps is one of the more difficult ones to accept in the form that it is posited in the motion before us, Mr. Speaker. Despite what we have heard, it would seem virtually certain that Senate reform is in very, very bad shape. It is very hard to understand how every single province would agree to give up the great bonus of patronage that has been conferred upon each of them by the provisions of the accord in terms of the appointments of Senators, and also with respect to Quebec and Ontario giving up the power of having, I think, 24 Senators each to appoint compared to only two each or whatever the number would be -- I think four or half a dozen; I can't remember what the Triple E proposal is, but something like that -- in a reformed Senate. Because all the leading proposals for reform, whether it's the Triple E or the House of the provinces or whatever it is, have the idea of equality as the most important idea in a Canadian Senate just as it is the most impor-

tant idea in the American one, as being a counterbalance to the federal government at the centre as distinct from a counterbalance in terms of increasing provincial powers, because there are some things that are most efficiently done from the centre, so there should be checks and balances at the centre as well as on the peripheries.

So it is really hard to see, on an amending formula that is rigid on Senate reform, that we are putting our best foot forward on that one. But again, the amending formula that is 100 percent -- i.e., no formula at all; it's just everyone's consent -- only applies in a limited numbers of cases. Admittedly, they are amongst the most important ones. But, for instance, aboriginal rights still can be achieved under the general amending formula which is two-thirds with 50 percent. So one should be careful not to exaggerate the importance of the extension of the unanimity provision, bearing in mind that it's still not the general provision and bearing in mind also that there were certain fundamental provisions that are unanimous under the existing Constitution to achieve amendment to, Mr. Speaker.

The territories are completely left out not only in the 1982 Constitution but also in the accord we are debating. This is one of the more serious defects. It has decreased the chances of their achieving provincial status, and it has left them in the cold on the appointment of judges and the appointment of Senators. That is something that without doubt comes out on the negative side, the minus side, in doing one's sums.

The Senate itself. Well, for so long as the New Democratic Party has been in existence, its policy on the Senate has been to abolish it. But if we are to have one, the tentative and, one hopes, temporary reform that is contemplated by the amendment Act is better than nothing. It would be better still to have an amendment which just did away with the Senate until we had a measure of reform or until we had a reform under the process set out in either the present Constitution or the present Constitution as it will be amended. But in the meantime, too, the pluses and minuses are not all on one side.

The Supreme Court of Canada was not amongst our omnibus resolutions, Mr. Speaker, because the way it is treated in this accord marks an improvement over what we have now. I mean, it's largely a political matter appointing to the Supreme Court of Canada now, as to the superior courts of the provinces. Under this proposal, the politics of it -- if that's the way the provinces want to go about it -- will now be shifted to the provinces. But it will mix it up a bit and spread it around a bit, which is a little better than at present. Of course, it's nonsense that we should have any element of politics at all in the appointment of judges, but doing it this way is better than the present state of affairs.

The immigration that the Minister of Career Development and Employment spoke of is not in fact an amendment to the Constitution, because as far as I can see, the powers that are being given to the province of Quebec are being given under the existing section 95, and what's set out in the accord is the terms of that agreement and the statement that doesn't impair what can be done vis-à-vis the provinces. Because the provinces from the start have had the power to make laws in respect of immigration into each province.

As for first ministers' conferences, that is simply the recognition of a fact. They're given no powers of legislation. There are some that carp at this, but it seems to me that first ministers' conferences are a fact, they will continue to be a fact, they are not an unreasonable step in the constitutional process and the government process, Mr. Speaker, and let us recognize them and institutionalize them, providing the power that they wield ...

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: I believe . . . The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

MR. GOGO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the opportunity of speaking on motion 17 regarding the constitutional amendment commonly known as the Meech Lake accord.

Mr. Speaker, I've listened with interest to the five speakers who have spoken so far, and they've made excellent points in their own way. However, I would like to express my views, which differ markedly from some of them. I think it'd be important for us to take just a moment and look back at how this all came about. Most members of this House were alive and well back in 1971, which was exactly 100 years after British Columbia entered Confederation, when at Victoria they had the First Ministers' Conference. They almost concluded an agreement. As a matter of fact, when they wrapped up the conference, they had an agreement. By the time the Premier of Quebec got back to Quebec, however, they had had second thoughts. Then, as you know, Mr. Speaker, our former Premier took, I believe, strong initiatives that culminated in the Prime Minister of Canada attempting unilaterally to do things with the Constitution, then known as the BNA Act, that was unacceptable to many Canadians. As a matter of fact, although the Supreme Court ruled, he was probably constitutionally correct; based on the custom, it just was not to be done. So then we had the Constitution Act, 1982 -- I believe it was April -- brought into Canada, and most people in the country were reasonably happy that finally we had in our country a Constitution that applied to all of us. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, many people weren't happy with that, because following that many of the Premiers continued to believe there should be changes. The primary change, of course, was to attempt to include our second most populous province in Canada, Quebec, in the Constitution.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we now have in our possession the proposed amendment to the Constitution signed by all the major players in Canada, presumably on behalf of, in our democratic society, their citizens. So I suppose one would say at first blush, "Why even discuss it? Because the Premiers of this country and the Prime Minister have agreed that this should happen." Well, it's probably not that simple, Mr. Speaker. I do believe it's important that each Assembly in the country must adopt this verbatim, as well as the House of Commons and the Senate.

I would like to take a moment or two and express my views on different parts of the proposed amendment. First, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to commend our Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, the hon. Mr. Horsman, for all the effort he's put into putting this together, and certainly the Premier, the Premier who speaks on behalf of all of us. But then there are many unsung heroes, and those are the people within FIGA who do all the work in terms of preparation for these constitutional conferences. I've attended one Premiers' Conference, and I've had many people tell me how well prepared the province of Alberta has been at all these conferences. So the unsung heroes obviously are the expertise we have in Alberta in the employment of the government of Alberta.

But, Mr. Speaker, let's review why Alberta was so keen on this and what their priorities were. First of all, as expressed by our Premier, they felt very strongly that all provinces should be equal. So unless you had Quebec in, you didn't have equality. So the number one objective of the Alberta government, as stated by the Premier, was to get Quebec back into the Constitutional fold in Canada. Was that achieved? Certainly it was achieved, because Mr. Bourassa was the first one to sign on be-

half of his government.

The second one, Mr. Speaker, and one the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie and others feel very strongly about, was Senate reform. The Alberta government, through its Premier, made its second priority at the First Ministers' Conference to be one of Senate reform and a commitment by the government of Canada to deal with Senate reform. And I want to speak about that at some length in a moment.

It seems to be the feeling, Mr. Speaker, based on the 23 people who spoke to an amendment proposed last week, that there were losers in this, and I have difficulty discovering who the losers are. I guess that's what the whole purpose of the debate is. To have any Prime Minister of the country bring about unanimous agreement by all the leaders in that country has to be an achievement. I haven't seen anyone yet, or heard anyone, recognize the Prime Minister of Canada for this great achievement. I think it's a tremendous step forward. But who are the losers? I don't know who the losers are. I'm told that the aboriginal people are losers. At the same time, I'm told that this agreement changes nothing in Canada; whatever people had before, they still have. So I don't understand how they lose. Maybe other members do. I don't understand; I think everybody has won.

I think back, Mr. Speaker, and it's interesting in terms of Canadian history. We're all politicians; we all know politics is the art of the possible and compromise has to be the name of the game. People seem to think compromise is a dirty word. Well, it was just over 100 years ago, 1871, when British Columbia was brought into Canada, and how were they brought in? They were promised the rail line; that's what brought them in. They wanted to be a part of Canada in terms of transportation; hence the Canadian Pacific railway. It was only some 10 to 15 years later when they drove the last spike and opened that railway.

But they came in a year after Manitoba. What was Manitoba given? Prince Edward Island came in two years later in 1873. What were they given? I think, Mr. Speaker, it's important to realize and recognize that Sir John A., in attempting to build this country, had to be realistic and offer these proposed provinces something to bring them in. Did Prime Minister Mulroney do anything different? I suggest not, and that's about what we're getting into now, Mr. Speaker.

The minister of career development and the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona have spoken with regard to immigration. Two years ago we reached an agreement with Canada on immigration. I think enough has been said. Reference to the Supreme Court has been mentioned -- the nine justices, three from Quebec. Surely there's no quarrel with that, Mr. Speaker, recognizing the type of legal system the province of Quebec uses. Reference to the conference on the economy each year: we just heard not long ago where this government has proposed a white paper on social policy, pointing out that it's essential to have an economic policy if you're going to have a social policy, so surely having a First Ministers' Conference annually on the economy is critically important.

We then come, Mr. Speaker, to what I think are two most important areas in the constitutional amendment. The first one is the amending formula. There are great critics that you can't have unanimity because unanimity is not possible. Well, if it wasn't possible, why on earth would we have unanimous agreement in front of us from the first ministers? How on the one hand can you say you can't have unanimous agreement when you've got it in your hand with the signatures of them all? Now, if you want to say . . .

MR. TAYLOR: How about McKenna?

MR. GOGO: Mr. McKenna was not a player in the game. Would the hon. leader understand that? Surely we're man enough in this House to recognize, if we believe in democracy, that those who are elected by the people to make decisions are those who should make them.

Now, I have great difficulty, because on the one hand we have unanimous agreement here and now we want to say, "Yeah, but I don't trust them." You want to have it both ways. If you want Mr. Turner's name on here, have him get elected to be the Prime Minister or the Premier, but he's not there. Let's not have that. Unanimity, Mr. Speaker -- for those who don't believe it can be achieved, I ask them to look at the records. For those who think that we in Alberta with 10 percent of the people are so safe or immune under the present amending formula, I think they should take a moment. British Columbia has got 13 percent of the people and we have 10; that's 23. Saskatchewan's five more; that's 28. Surely somebody in this country, if they decided on the amending formula of seven provinces and 50 percent, could certainly get the best of us in the present amending formula.

Regarding federal institutions, the proposal for unanimity means we at last have a veto, and why is it important? Why is it important? Well, to the critics I simply point out that in 1905 when we were created, Alberta as a province four days ahead of Saskatchewan -- let's look at what happened. Let's look at what happened when Alberta tried to get its nonrenewable resources. It took 25 years, and what happened in the 25-year period? In Saskatchewan the government of Canada gave away 85 percent of those resources that were known at that time, so come 1930 when they did get ownership of the resources, what was left? Today Saskatchewan owns 15 percent of the oil. Alberta owns 85 percent of the oil, only because the government of Canada didn't get around to give anything away to the CPR and others. Hon. members know that. Hon. members are well aware of that, and yet it seems to me they're not content. But let's look at the record book. Let's look at OPEC in 1974. Let's look at two-dollar oil that was beginning to escalate. Let's look at what the Alberta government wanted to do in terms of price.

Oh, it was great for Ontario to have world price for gold. It was great for Quebec to have world price for electricity. It was even great for B.C. in those days, with all the Liberal members, to have a world price for lumber. But what about Alberta? What about Alberta, that was depending on oil revenue to build us hospitals and schools? What happened then, Mr. Speaker? Finally, we saw a glimmer of hope of increasing prices, and what happened? Because we were exporting 1.5 million barrels a day, the government of Canada stepped in and put on an export price. And that tax was what, Mr. Speaker? The tax was the difference between what the United States would pay for oil on the world market and the Canadian price. So Alberta was left in the lurch again.

And when we started to quarrel a bit, what happened? Ottawa got up on its hind legs under that peace, order, and good government, and what did they do? Look at the laws they passed, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to talk about the national energy program any more than anybody else, but you can't alter facts. Opinions you can argue with, but facts are there. Is it any wonder today our Premier is finally saying, "We want to have a veto with everybody else so we're equal in this country"? And what's wrong with that, Mr. Speaker? I know, I know, because I'm from Lethbridge -- we're outnumbered by Calgary 10 to one

-- I know what it's like in reality, in terms of political reality, because Lethbridge is probably the same way to Cardston.

So is it any wonder that Ottawa and central Canada want to change the status quo? Well, certainly we understand they don't want to change the status quo. Why would they? Who wants to change it? The one thing we don't want to do, Mr. Speaker, is to ever change the status quo. We're happy with what we've got and we want to keep it. Because you see, if common sense prevailed. Alberta Government Telephones, with its big tower downtown -- they don't even have Alberta Government Telephones in Edmonton; they've got Edmonton Telephones. If common sense prevailed, we'd transfer AGT to Calgary where it belongs. But you know, Mr. Speaker, that can't happen because of the makeup of this House. It just can't happen, but common sense says it should.

Well, Ottawa is no different. When you have within central Canada -- you have 8 million in Ontario and 6 million in Quebec, and they've always been there. I can understand why they don't want to change. If I were an MPP from Queen's Park or an MNA from the National Assembly, I would probably feel different, but I'm not. I'm here, and my job is to try and stand up and speak up for Albertans, particularly those in Lethbridge-West, Mr. Speaker.

So I have no quarrel with the amending formula. Let's remember, hon. members, it's only applicable to national institutions. It's only applicable to those areas that deal with all the provinces and the government of Canada. I believe some people are out there saying to the public, "Hey, it's going to be required for everything." Well, I, along with many members, had a public meeting on November 18, and I had the good fortune of having Dr. David Elton, the president of Canada West Foundation, and Dr. Peter McCormick, two recognized experts as far as I'm concerned, and they're apolitical. I'm not saying nonpolitical; I'm saying apolitical. I held a public meeting, invited people to come out, sent out 500 letters, spent good money on advertising, and we got some 50-odd or 60 people out. And there were excellent questions. But except for two people who for some reason thought that by making the provinces stronger, you're making the country weaker; for having stronger regions, you were destroying the country, almost everybody -- and I'm proud to say not one member of my political association was there. I specifically asked them not to come out so I could hear from the people. So based on that, most people agreed that Meech Lake, although not perfect -- and I hope people understand. I don't know what went on behind closed doors, even with my own Premier, but I'm sure there was give and there was take. The fact of the matter is that they reached a conclusion and they all signed it.

One of the most important ones, Mr. Speaker, and I want to speak on it, is the question of Senate reform. Too many people, it seems to me, have spent all their time insulting the Senate. I've never been asked or summoned to the Senate. If I were, I'd be overjoyed. I think many members of the opposite benches would trip over themselves trying to get in, because that's a recognition. That's a recognition -- regardless of why -- that you either have made or will make a contribution to Canada. The only stumbling block so far is that to be a Senator, you've got to own \$4,000-worth of real property. So I don't know what all the renters are going to do. As a matter of fact, I'm curious, under the Charter of Rights, why that's even legal nowadays. Nonetheless, it's a requirement, and I would look to my colleague from Edmonton-Strathcona, because I have great admiration for his technical and legal ability. I think it's wrong, by the

way, that they should even have to own \$4,000 of real property.

But too many of us, Mr. Speaker, spend our time being critical of the Senators, and I don't think we should. We should be critical of the system. Joyce Fairbairn, the Senator from Lethbridge: a remarkable person as far as I'm concerned. Her political beliefs leave a lot to be desired, but, you know, we all mature; give us time. But I would point out, Mr. Speaker, Martha Bielish, on the other hand, up in the north made a remarkable contribution to the people of Canada. Unfortunately, under the new age requirements, she has to retire in two years. But look at her resumé, Mr. Speaker, the number of organizations she has been involved in and president of. So I think she's definitely a tribute to the Senate.

I look at what they've done. I look at the youth studies they've done in Canada -- invaluable; soil erosion -- invaluable; Senator Fairbairn in a committee dealing with illiteracy -- remarkable. I think they're great assets. Unfortunately they don't have any power; maybe to hold up a drug Bill now and then, but they really don't have any power. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that's what we're talking about, because we in this House believe in the principle that those who are to govern us must be elected by us. In that context the Senate does not do the job.

The Triple E Senate has been spoken of many times. The Minister of Municipal Affairs, I'm proud to say, spent a lot of time as chairman of reform of the upper House, traveling across Canada and getting those views. The one message, Mr. Speaker, that came out constantly was: we want to be governed by those who are elected by us, not those who are appointed by somebody else. But let's not bad-mouth the system unless we know more about it, and particularly, in my view, we shouldn't be critical of those who are summoned to the Senate. I mean, I've never criticized Mr. Lawson from Vancouver, who's attended 1 percent of the meetings of the Senate since he was appointed. I've never been critical of him. I assume he's a Canadian citizen, because that's a requirement. But that's his business, as long as he doesn't make a decision affecting me.

Our Senate is remarkably similar to America's. American Senators can't sponsor a money Bill. Our Senators can't, but they can hold it up. We cannot achieve equality in this country, Mr. Speaker, unless we get far more than 10 percent of our people in this province or have a change in the Senate. And how do we do that? Well, I can't think of a better way than getting Senate reform on the agenda each and every year. People are going to get fed up with having that on the agenda without being resolved. Now, I think there is a mechanism that we could employ that would be extremely useful. I don't advocate for one moment that we refuse -- we have a vacancy now; Senator Cameron has resigned. I don't advocate that we not appoint a Senator, but I do think, Mr. Speaker, it would be an excellent idea for us to elect a nominee. Then under the accord before us, the Prime Minister would have to appoint that person. Well, wouldn't it be remarkable if we elect a nominee. We don't have to spend \$3.5 million. We could do it in the next general election, and it wouldn't cost anything except the ballot.

Now look at this scenario, Mr. Speaker -- and I'm well aware that Sir Winston Churchill once said what he considered the most important qualifications for a politician, and they were to foretell or predict what was going to happen today, tomorrow, and next year and then later on to explain why they didn't happen. So one has to be a little careful about being too emphatic about what's going to happen. But just imagine, Mr. Speaker, if I could spell out a scenario: we in Alberta decide at the next

general election that we'll elect a nominee to be appointed as a Senator -- first in Canada; never done before -- and then sit back and watch what the other Premiers would do in Canada. I'm confident no Premier in Canada would appoint anybody to the Senate. They, too, would have elections. We would be partway there, because I believe the public would then demand, based on the precedent set by Alberta of electing its first nominee. It seems a little bit ironical, but it's the only way, I think, to go.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude on this note so other hon. members can get in. I've looked at the Meech Lake; I've looked at it very carefully. I cannot see any losers in this system. I see winners in the system. I'm also not naive to know, Mr. Speaker, that there was a lot of wheeling and dealing that went on. I accept that, and I have the utmost confidence in my Premier, speaking for me, to put this together.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would hope -- although I respect the hon. members for their proposed amendments, they know full well that if their amendments carry, the accord is dead. They know that. They know that very well. So I have a little difficulty in accepting even in principle the fact that they want to amend it, although I respect their right to propose them.

I think it's time to get on with the governing of this nation. The fact that we have all the elected people in Canada, representing everybody in Canada under our system of government, endorsing the Meech Lake accord on June 3 -- I think we owe it to them, Mr. Speaker, to pass this amendment.

Thank you.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address the motion that's before us relative to the Constitutional Accord. When I examine the constitutional amendment that we have before us, the question that arises in my mind is the one that's been raised by the Member for Lethbridge-West. It's the item on which I have not been convinced as to my support for or against. But under the present circumstances, I must say that in my examination I'm unable to support the constitutional amendment as set out.

We as Albertans must know what went on in terms of the negotiations that arrived at this conclusion. There was a sequence of events -- the 1986 annual Premiers' Conference, where all 10 Premiers endorsed the Edmonton declaration and, through that declaration, agreed that the first priority was to bring Quebec into the Constitution. Now, that's a noble objective, and I don't think anybody here really argues about that. The second part, though, does concern me: that all of the concerns and needs of the various provinces would be set aside in any discussion or on any shopping list while Quebec was brought in.

Quebec came into the discussion with a list of five items, of which we are all aware, I'm sure: first, the recognition of Quebec as a distinct society; secondly, a greater provincial role in immigration; thirdly, the provincial role in appointments to the Supreme Court of Canada; fourth, limitations on federal spending powers; five, a veto for Quebec on constitutional amendments. Those five items are in the constitutional amendment before us. They've moved from the political accord into the amendment, and we at this time are asked to approve and endorse the constitutional amendment on that basis.

What concerns me very much, as a member of this Legislature, is: what did we ask for, or what is left for Albertans? Now, we have an item on the agenda that's called Senate reform, and I want to speak about that in my conclusions. But was that the only item of discussion that we had? Are there

other promises that our Premier has with regards to negotiating certain items in terms of constitutional amendments? What did the Premier really fight for in those discussions behind closed doors? Now, from the remarks of the Member for Lethbridge-West, his own caucus has not been given that information. What was it that happened? We don't know that in this House. The Premier did not debate that issue in his presentation in the introduction of this resolution. The Premier explained what happened and gave us an itemized list of those happenings that are in this resolution. We need more than that in this Legislature. I need more than that to be convinced that I should support the constitutional amendments as set out. I've asked myself: on what basis can I make a judgment as to whether these amendments will make a good Constitution or not?

I would want to agree with Professor Ramsay Cook, who appeared before the special joint committee. He said this, and I think it summarizes what we should be looking at as members of this Legislature:

The argument that this set of proposals will bring Quebec into the Constitution is not in itself an argument in favour of the proposals. These proposals should be considered on their own merits as constitutional changes. Will they give Canadians a better Constitution? I think that is the question.

I would have to agree with that. I would have to agree that that's the basis upon which we should look and judge this amendment before us.

Now, people say that if I don't accept this amendment and I speak against it, we're going to speak against Quebec, and there's bad public relations between Alberta and Quebec. I hope not. I hope that isn't the reason for me to take a position or for me not to say something with regard to the amendment. Quebec was negotiating. Why wasn't Alberta negotiating? Why weren't we looking after not only our current situation but what we wanted in the future in this makeup of Canada? I believe that's what was forgotten in the haste to bring Quebec into the Constitution.

Based on what I feel is the basis on which we should judge this constitutional amendment, I think our assessment should be on two criteria: first of all, the merits of the proposal and, secondly, the consequences. What I would like to do is look at six of the issues in this amendment on that basis.

First of all, Quebec as a distinct society. We ask the question: why is Quebec constitutionally recognized in this amendment as a distinct society when others are not? Well, it was because of their request and the Edmonton declaration and the constitutional amendment now that is before us.

We ask the second question: will this distinct society undermine actual equality of the provinces? I don't believe it does, because if we look at the preamble of the accord, it recognizes the principle of equality of all provinces. That's acceptable. The Premier in this House has stated very clearly that in their examination, the term "distinct society" in the amendment does not give any special new legislative powers. The Prime Minister has said that to Canadians. I have to accept that on that basis. I hope that is true. I hope that in the future we do not have a series of court issues on determining what those words "distinct society" mean. I'll accept that in terms of the merit; I think it's good that we recognize them in the amendment. Secondly, I'll accept at face value the two leaders in their comments that the consequences will not affect or have legal powers over other provinces in our nation.

The second area, immigration: again, we in this province are protected. There is merit to the proposal. The consequences? I see none. I see that under the existing system whereby various

persons that immigrate to Canada will have the right to move from one province to another and be accepted through our regular process as active, responsible, and welcome Canadians. So that doesn't affect the accord or have any consequences, as I see it, that are unacceptable to myself.

The third area, the Supreme Court of Canada. What are the merits and what are the consequences? The merits as set out seem to be regular. There's only one question that I raise, and possibly the Premier, in closing the debate, could clarify this matter. As I look at section 101B.(2), it states there that

at least three judges of the Supreme Court of Canada shall be appointed from among persons who, after having been admitted to the bar of Quebec, have, for a total of at least ten years, been judges of any court of Quebec or of any court established by the Parliament of Canada, or members of the bar of Quebec.

The words that we should analyze here are the words "at least three judges of the Supreme Court of Canada." My interpretation -- and as I listened to various members speak about the Supreme Court of Canada, the inference was that Quebec would have three members on the Supreme Court of Canada. The words here are "at least three." Now, as I proceed and look at section 101C.(3), I believe that's the interpretation in that section. It says:

Where an appointment is made in accordance with subsection

(2) of any of the three judges necessary . . .

and then it goes on. To me that is talking about the three judges that are given to Quebec because of their special legal circumstances, and I agree with that.

But are we saying in this document: more than three; it is an open door to have all of the nine? Now, that's an extreme of the situation. Hopefully, a federal government would never do that. But when we say "at least three," and then we look at the other parts of Canada, how many can they appoint? What protection have we got in western Canada or in the maritime provinces in terms of the appointment of judges? I believe that should be clarified. That could have consequences in the future. With the various types of governments that can be in Canada, that could certainly affect the outcome of many decisions that would be referred to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Some say, and I want to point out, that that's different than Senate appointments. At the present time we have a formula, or there is an allotment of Senators to the various provinces. Under appointments to the Supreme Court of Canada, there is not an allotment. The only allotment here is the one that I have mentioned at this point. I believe we could have looked at a different approach, possibly, to the appointment of Supreme Court judges. The McElvy report had a recommendation with regards to an advisory council that could pick the judges for the Supreme Court of Canada on a more objective basis, and I think that has a lot of merit in terms of the objectivity by which Supreme Court judges could be appointed.

The fourth item is Senate reform. As we recognize, Quebec wanted a veto with regards to constitutional changes. All provinces demanded equality. What has happened is that under those circumstances, no matter what the beliefs are in the various provinces, and if Senate reform is unacceptable, it sits on the agenda of discussions of the first ministers for many, many years. The question was raised in this House about unanimity and that we can arrive at it in this country and that we have arrived at it by having this motion agreed upon by 10 Premiers and a Prime Minister. Well, the Prime Minister himself, in a comment to the press, said this: "Any time you get unanimity in this country it is an exception, believe me." Now he's doubting whether unanimity can be arrived at. To get Senate reform we

all know that unanimity is what we need.

Exclusion of the north is the fifth item that I'd like to look at. Very little is said in terms of the representation of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, both in terms of extension of existing provinces into the territories or the establishment of new provinces in those areas. I can have some sympathy for the comments of the former government leader of the Yukon, Tony Penikett, where he said this about the way he looked at their rights:

Let me emphasize that we in the Yukon are not opposed to the accord. It is obviously important for Canada to have Quebec endorse the Constitution as a full partner, but is it necessary to freeze out the north? Need the north be sacrificed to save Quebec?

Now, that's a concern about where they fit in the Confederation of Canada. We can look at their rights in terms of the appointments to the Supreme Court and in terms of the appointment of Senators, and they have very little say in terms of this amendment and possibly in their future.

Aboriginal rights. I suggest that placing that item on the agenda along with Senate reform would have placed that item as an item of high priority for consideration and certainly one that needs focus and attention at this point in time.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

As I examine those items in terms of their consequences, each and every one, some have good merits; others have not. But are they acceptable to us as Albertans at this time?

I want to conclude by making some comments with regard to the question of unanimity in terms of constitutional change. My only feeling, as I said in my opening remarks, is that unanimity makes constitutional change impossible. The earlier formula of 1982 that was agreed upon, the seven-fifty formula, would have at least given us a chance to bring about Senate reform. Fifty percent is closer to a majority position. The unanimity rule makes it much more difficult.

We look at the population of Prince Edward Island: 130,000 people that by the unanimity rule can control 25 million people. We look at unanimity in terms of being inflexible. At the present time, and I mentioned this earlier in the debate, there are many ambiguous words in the current Constitution. There will be many court cases. There will be many needs for Constitutional amendment. So that's a good reason why we should not use the unanimity rule but the seven-fifty formula, to preserve some flexibility.

What about the unanimity rule and the Triple E Senate? We all want that in this Legislature. We know that that would give us better representation in western Canada and better protection with regard to many of our concerns. The NDP are governments at present in some of our Canadian provinces and may be in the future, but as stated by the member earlier today, their objective is to abolish the Senate, not to reform the Senate. Now, as long as that exists, will any of those provinces vote in support of a reformed Senate and give us the unanimity that we want? I look at the last Western Premiers' Conference, where those Premiers could not agree on the Triple E Senate. They had some variations, but in terms of the Triple E Senate there was not agreement. Can we get unanimity, when they won't agree and in a sense their people agree here in western Canada, for a reformed Senate, specifically the Triple E?

The argument is given to us that under unanimity some of the smaller provinces could bargain, that they could use their veto power to stop amendments desired by Ontario and Quebec.

Now, that sounds right, and I think that's the argument that the Premier presents in this Legislature: that we would be able to stop and veto Ontario and Quebec from doing certain things, gaining certain items that they desire, and that we would have a bargaining position.

Well, let's examine that just a little closer. Do Ontario and Quebec really need more power to get what they want? Do they need constitutional change? I don't believe they do. They have the power, in terms of the House of Commons, by which they can secure most and, I think, all of their needs. They don't need Senate reform. They don't need to change the system. So what's going to happen? If they control the decision-making already, then the item of Senate reform, which is on the agenda of all future conferences -- it's set out so well in this amendment under part 6 -- will stay on the agenda for many years, because we, as the smaller provinces, really haven't got a negotiating position.

If it can be clarified for me where we do have one, I'd be more convinced to vote for this amendment. But in the Premier's presentation in introducing this amendment, I did not hear a clear argument as to why and how we could amend the Constitution with the unanimity clause. He said it was there, that it would protect what we have at the present time. But does it allow for changes that we want in the future? That's where my argument lies. We must look at what the consequences are in the future, not what they are today. If we just want to protect what we have today and not have significant change in the makeup of representation of various parts of Canada, specifically western Canada, then we go with the unanimity rule. But if we'd wanted some changes, I believe that Quebec would have still entered into the Constitution even with the seven-fifty rule. I don't think that was the major concern that they had, and as I look over the five items they had on their shopping list, it certainly isn't. They would have come into the Constitution if we'd preserved the other formula that would have given us some flexibility, some negotiating power in determining the future of this country.

Possibly when the population of Canada changes, if we have greater strength in terms of numbers in western Canada, a greater amount of representation, the unanimity formula might be the formula that should change the Constitution of Canada. But at the present time, I believe we put ourselves in a very difficult and even a most impossible situation to bring about that number one item that we believe, as western Canadians, we want, and that is the change of the Senate. I don't see how it can come about.

Now, I'm open to listen to the arguments as to what happened behind the scenes and what negotiating power we have as a province from this point on. I believe it's very minor. I believe that Quebec and Ontario have the chips in terms of the negotiations and that we will have to live with those consequences for many, many years. This formula will never ever be turned back. There is no way that once you give certain powers to provinces across the country, you can ever back it up a step. So endorsing and approving this formula at this time locks us in, as I believe it, with what we have today, but in terms of what we want to achieve in the future, I believe it's a deterrent and will not allow us to reach that particular goal.

On that basis, Mr. Speaker, I feel I cannot support the amendment at this time, for that very one reason. Now, the only proof that will determine whether I am right or the government is right will be time. Certainly it will be future generations that have to live with those consequences. At this time I felt

strongly to speak out against unanimity and to speak in terms of the 1982 formula or a formula with what I think has a little more flexibility.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't intend to make a lengthy speech. I'm sure that's a welcome announcement. [some applause] Thank you very much; I appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, it's been said over and over in the House that the Meech Lake amendment is flawed as to substance and as to process. I spoke to certain parts of it Friday in that regard, and I want to continue my comments. I truly believe that if this amendment is passed without any change, the outcome must surely be less than benign to Canadian government processes, to provincial/federal relationships and decision-making. It must be benign to a strong cohesive whole, a nation of fairness, justice, and equity for its citizens wherever they live and whatever their circumstances. Yes, the object, as so eloquently stated by the hon. Member for Little Bow, was to bring Quebec in, and surely all of us are grateful for that. We are grateful to the first ministers for stating that objective and for moving towards it. I believe that all Canadians welcome the entrance of Quebec as a willing, full-fledged member into the Canadian family, and I believe that we are grateful for their understanding and undertaking to join the Constitution of Canada as a written signatory.

But what of the rest of the substance? Well, Quebec is described in the first section as a distinct society. Now, the problem in this . . . I believe Quebec to be a distinctive society, and I believe that has been very positive and healthy in Canadian life from a cultural and economic position, that in fact there are many advantages to that distinctive quality that Quebec brings to Canada. But what does it mean to say that it is a distinct society? Does this in fact make French-speaking Canadians in Quebec superior or inferior? We don't know. This, Mr. Speaker, is a most ambiguous kind of description, and of course it means that eventually the courts will have to decide what it means and if it has any effect on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms or any other existing legislation. We at this point do not know what the effects of this description are going to be.

The second section deals with Senate appointments, and I spoke at some length last week on my dismay at what we've done here. We've given away, I believe, in the unanimity clause, our last bargaining chip to achieve a Senate that is equal and is elected and will have a new mandate and will be reformed and will serve Canadians from all regions. I think this has been a great loss, Mr. Speaker. I submit to you a second time that I believe political reform must precede economic reform, which we desperately need, and economic equity in Canada. I believe that we need a new mandate for the Senate. Central Canada does not need or want Senate reform. The numbers are already there for them politically. We have given away our chance of achieving it for the western region.

To go on to the unanimity clause, which in my view prevents any potential for that type of political reform, the Prime Minister has indicated publicly that we can't achieve unanimity. So who is to be believed here? How could future change of the Senate occur, Mr. Speaker, if in fact this amendment on unanimity is passed? How on earth can it ever occur? There is no potential for it, nor is there any potential for that amendment to be reversed, to go back to the earlier formula of seven and 50

percent.

To go on, Mr. Speaker, the section on the courts and appointments to the Supreme Court. Again, there is a tilt towards Quebec and Quebec rights, that there will never be less than three judges from Quebec on the Supreme Court. At the same time, there are some curious anomalies in appointments from the Territories and Yukon. Although it appears that people who are qualified from the Territories or Yukon could be appointed, there is no provision for how they would be appointed in this amendment. It clearly indicates that "where a vacancy occurs . . . the government of each province may, in relation . . . submit to the Minister of Justice," and so on. So there's no provision in here for the territories to submit names for appointment to the Supreme Court. How then would they achieve that kind of appointment? Presumably from other provinces. I think the chances of that are very, very slim, and I think, in that regard and in others, we have left the territories out.

The shared-cost programs, item 7 in the amendments, Mr. Speaker: some real questions left here about what the consequences will mean. National objectives: who sets them? We have no idea. Compatibility with national objectives in order to achieve transfers of funds: who decides what's compatible? This last week we were treated to the Minister of National Health and Welfare's submission on a national program of child care. It contains no standards for what child care should be across the country and thereby leaves us open to a patchwork of child care services across this nation of Canada, different from one province to another and yet all commanding national funding because they will argue that their programs are in fact compatible. Is that what we want? Is that what this is designed to do? Because I believe that's exactly what we will have coming down the road.

The First Ministers' Conference: I want to refer to it, Mr. Speaker. It's mentioned twice in amendments. In one case they enshrine in the amendment the requirement for a First Ministers' Conference annually on the economy. In the second instance they refer to it again in an amendment enshrining it as an annual requirement and placing the subjects of Senate reform and fisheries on the agenda for this particular conference. Now here, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that we have 11 people making decisions, taking positions, without any mandate from the Parliament of Canada or the Legislatures.

I just look, Mr. Speaker, at some of the examples before us. The text in the amendment says discussion, to be sure. It doesn't give decision-making powers; it says discussion. But what in fact have we been treated to? Well, we've been treated to decisions, and I point to Meech Lake and free trade as two of the examples. We have been committed by our various Premiers without ever giving, in this Legislature or other Legislatures, those Premiers any mandate to commit us. Our Prime Minister has committed us as a country without any mandate from the Parliament of Canada. Is that the kind of third type of government we want, where 11 people behind closed doors, without mandates from the provincial Legislatures or the Parliament of Canada can make decisions for the rest of the country and for all of us for years to come?

Mr. Speaker, the last clause in the amendments, the derogation clause, has troubled many people. It does mention that this in no way abrogates the rights, as specified in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, of aboriginal and multicultural communities. By the very fact that these two items have been mentioned and others protected by the Charter are not mentioned -- does that in fact mean that they are open to question? This fact

has been raised by a number of groups in Canada, minorities and women's groups in particular. It has not been resolved. If, in fact, it was meant to protect all of those mentioned in the Charter, why doesn't that amendment simply say that? It would be very simple to adjust it and amend it in that regard, and that would be very clear. But by leaving it open-ended, we once again leave this one to the courts for decisions. Does the fact that two are mentioned and the others not mean that the other minorities are not protected as they are in the Charter? We are left to question that down in the future.

Now, what's left out of the accord? Well, aboriginal rights are left out, and many of us bemoan that fact. We watched our first ministers at a conference earlier this year unable to arrive at a conclusion about aboriginal rights. New provinces and the formation of new provinces were left out. The territories weren't even at the table; they weren't one of the 11. They weren't there when the decision was made about their future. I ask you: is that fair? They suggest not, and I agree with them.

Let me comment just briefly, Mr. Speaker, on the process. The speed with which it was done seems to me to be very difficult to comprehend: 11 people locked in a room, closed doors, no discussion in advance or with their relative Legislatures, threats made about divisions. What we needed were public hearings. Some of the provinces undertake in their legislation to hold public hearings on issues of significance of this kind. Not so Alberta. We suggested them; we begged for them. Some provinces require them, not us. What this accord is doing in this process is encouraging loyalty to the province first and the nation second. I ask you: is that what we want? Is that what we want in Alberta or what we want for Canada? I believe that we are Canadians first and Albertans within that context, and that's what we need to build. We need to build confidence in our nation as a whole, not emphasize the differences in the provinces and regions, not set one against the other.

Canada, Mr. Speaker, isn't yet faced with the complexities of achieving change that would face, for instance, the U.S., as a contrast. We don't yet have the immense population to contend with. We're still in a position to make determinations and to rework our formal interactions. This process did not lead to it. We don't know what the points of negotiation were, who said what, and I'm not convinced of the process at all. We do have a Canadian Constitution. We had lots of discussion, to be sure, lots of acrimony when the Canadian Constitution was written and brought home to Canada, but that was done out in the open, as it should be. We also have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Now, the goal here is to achieve equality across our nation. I submit that it may in fact do the opposite and will encourage the preservation of inequities and unfair realization in different regions of Canada. I don't believe these amendments will achieve the goal of equity or fairness. Will it create a more progressive or co-operative nation? I think not. It needs further work. Mr. Speaker, this has not been an acceptable process. Yes, 11 people signed it, but the way in which it was done was not the Canadian way, not the way of openness and fairness, and they have arrived at something that is not an acceptable amendment as far as I'm concerned.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've certainly enjoyed the speeches that hon. members have made today either in support of or against or merely expressing concerns about the Meech Lake accord and what the implications are of good amendments

being proposed and defeated and what sort of document we're left with to approve or reject.

I certainly take the comments of our colleague from Little Bow to heart when he expresses deep concern about being asked to endorse a document and, by implication, to endorse a process that he objects to and finds offensive and that, you know, involves deals made and strategies developed that are unknown to us. It was a very secretive process that not only didn't involve any public input; it actively discouraged public input. It said, you know, by implication, by the way it was all developed, that the opinions of the people of Canada did not matter a whit to the 11 first ministers who got together and signed this accord, because they had no meaningful process of public input prior to the accord, and the accord that was arrived at was dealt with as a *fait accompli* document, one in which there was no room for amendments of any kind.

I was more than impressed by comments made, Mr. Speaker, by our colleague from Lethbridge-West, and I'm sure you were here and heard them. A good speech, but it left some questions unanswered in my mind because he was expressing concerns about admitting any amendments at all or permitting any amendments to this process, and I think that's a tad naive. I think that when we're dealing with something as important as a constitutional document, it requires input and it ought to be open, not only to consultation but to amendments.

The amendments that we put forward from this side of the House weren't unique or oddball sorts of amendments. They were the same sorts of amendments that concerned groups and political parties right across this great country of ours were putting forward, Mr. Speaker. I do think that there was some room to make some amendments, some reasonable amendments, and that's why we proposed them, and I'm sure our colleague from Lethbridge-West, in having time to reflect on that process, would agree with us.

I think it's important in this Assembly to realize what our role is, and I as a member in opposition take the words of the late, great John Diefenbaker to heart when he said that it's the opposition's duty to oppose. I accept that role within certain limitations, because if you don't have opposing views, then not very much gets accomplished, there's not good debate on issues. But I think it's much more important for an opposition to be able to present some worthwhile alternatives, and that's why we brought forward amendments. We were saying that this document has merit, that the amendments arrived at for the 1982 Constitution during the Meech Lake process were worthy of some merit but that they could be made better.

That's what we sought to do. We felt that it was our obligation as an opposition, because the government refused to hold public hearings, to go out and find out what Albertans were saying on this issue and give their concerns voice, come into this Legislature and use every tool at our disposal to put forward the concerns of aboriginal people in Alberta, put forward the concerns of women's groups and groups that are involved in immigration and refugee issues, put forward the concerns of people who felt that the process for Senate reform was made more difficult. We've done that, and I'm very proud of what we've done. We did a lot of work preparing the amendments. We did a lot of work on the hearing process. The members for Edmonton-Strathcona and Edmonton-Highlands deserve special commendation there. We fought very hard for them. I myself stood in my place and tried to make some compelling arguments that I hoped would sway members opposite, members on the government side, to look at some of these amendments and vote

for them. So we've done what we can to promote a process, Mr. Speaker, that would come up with a better document for all Canadians. I feel very good about that.

But what am I left with? I'm left with a decision, and a difficult decision. In spite of what needs to be made better with this Meech Lake accord, do I endorse what's left? Am I going to look at the Meech Lake accord itself as a document unto itself and decide it is worth supporting because of what's in there? Or should I oppose it because of what's not in there? It's not an easy decision and is one that I'm still struggling with.

Our hon. colleague from Lethbridge-West also made some comments about who were the losers in this process. Who were the losers? Why can't all Canadians just jump up and down and wave the flag and cheer this constitutional amendment because, by golly, 11 people got together and agreed on it? Well, there are some losers, Mr. Speaker, and I think they've been alluded to by members on both sides of the House. Foremost in my mind, I guess, are the people of northern Canada, conspicuous by their absence at the table where this accord was hammered out. Conspicuous by its absence was any reference to them and their aspirations as legitimate Canadians in terms of their ability to fill seats in the Supreme Court or the Senate. And what's

most offensive from their point of view, and I concur, is that the formula requiring unanimity for the creation of new provinces, I think, virtually ensures that it's not going to happen. So there are some losers.

There are some other losers too, Mr. Speaker. We have to take a close look at what's happened to aboriginal peoples in Canada over the years and what this accord means or could have meant for them. That's something I intend to pursue when the House gets back together again this evening. With that I'd move that we adjourn debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Moved by the hon. Member for Vegreville that we adjourn debate on Motion 17. All in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. So ordered.

[The House recessed at 5:29 p.m.]

