

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, April 14, 1988 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 88/04/14

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our Father, we confidently ask for Your strength and encouragement in our service of You through our service of others.

We humbly ask for Your gift of wisdom to guide us in making good laws and good decisions for the present and the future of Alberta.

Amen.

head: READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, I move that the petition for private Bills presented before the Assembly on April 13, 1988, be now read and received.

[Motion carried]

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, Swan Hills is one of those pretty little towns that exists to the north and the west of Edmonton, and it's my pleasure today to introduce to you and all Members of the Legislative Assembly, 54 grade 6 students from Swan Hills, who are accompanied by two teachers Ian Hallworth and Joyce Venables, and six parents who are acting in the role of supervisors today: Terry Evert, Marleen Hindes, Corinne Laing, Renee Waklin, Gladys Ekroth, and Lynn Wilson. I'd also like to point out that when the Premier found out we were having some special guests from Swan Hills today, he wanted me to make a special statement of hello to them. He was in Swan Hills on September 11, 1987. I would ask that our young guests and their parents and teachers rise 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 26 students from St. Basil school from the constituency of Edmonton-Norwood. I'm told and I know that two of the members here are pages in the Assembly at this present time, and also I'm told that three of the students are among the top math students in the city. They are accompanied by their teacher and one of our former colleagues from this Assembly Walter Szwender. Now, I know that Walter has looked forward for many months for this introduction from me. I would say that they are in the public gallery; I would ask them to stand and receive a warm welcome from this Assembly.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I'm particularly honoured today to introduce to you and to the Assembly, a group of 27 grade 12 students. They're very special students. They're here with Interculture Canada. Interculture Canada is an organization pro-

viding worldwide cultural exchange; now over 70 countries are members. This organization promotes world peace and international development through cultural exchanges. The nature of the program allows families in Alberta to host a student from another country through their grade 12 year to live in their home and go to school in our province. They represent the following countries: Sweden, Brazil, Belgium, Argentina, South Australia, Austria, Hong Kong, Indonesia, France, Paraguay, Iceland, Spain, Netherlands, Venezuela, Denmark, Honduras, Chile, Switzerland, Thailand, and Norway.

Mr. Speaker, they are accompanied by two members representing host families from Alberta, Mrs. Helen Wood and Mrs. Edwina Madill. They're seated in the public gallery, and I would ask them to rise so that members can show them how really glad we are that they're here in Alberta and Canada.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I have two welcomes to bring to your attention today. First, it is a special privilege for me and on behalf of my colleague the Member for Macleod, the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, Mr. Hugh Craig, chairman of the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation. Mr. Craig has just received the First Heritage Tourism Award presented at the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta annual meeting in Banff on April 9. He is also a member of the Remington-Alberta museum advisory committee and serves us well on the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump advisory board. I'd like to ask Mr. Craig to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, six grade 10 students from the Chinook Winds Adventist Academy in Springbank. I'd like to remind members of the Assembly that when some of these students were in grade 7, they and their teachers and other students were able to escape a destructive fire which, in fact, destroyed their school right on the outskirts of Calgary. For about a year they found accommodation elsewhere in Calgary.

They are seated in the members' gallery. They're accompanied by their teacher Mr. Loren Agrey, and I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. ZARUSKY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to the rest of the Assembly, Mr. Ron Pollard from the community of Thorhild. He is the chairman of the economic development committee there and is visiting the Legislature to gather some information on a project for the community. He is seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask him to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Social Policy Statement

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Yesterday a document was passed out in the House, A Statement of Social Policy for Alberta. After the House the Deputy Premier elaborated on the rhetoric. And basically, I saw it and it was rhetoric; the report itself didn't say much. But the Deputy Premier did seem to fill in the blanks for us outside the House. He elaborated on what the government means when it wants to "build on our strong tradition of volunteerism." He gave us the example of food banks.

My question to the Premier: is it now government policy that such basic services as feeding the poor should be turned over to charity?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier: was the Deputy Premier, then, just speaking for himself, and does the Premier now contradict what the Deputy Premier says and reject what the Deputy Premier said yesterday?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the Deputy Premier didn't say that it was government policy to turn the feeding of people over to charity.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's absolute nonsense. If he was watching, he would know that he said it. My question back to this Premier: would he agree that the reason we have food banks in this city is the fact of government policy that has allowed high unemployment and cutbacks in Social Services? That's why we have food banks. Would the Premier acknowledge that?

MR. GETTY: Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. There are food banks all over Canada, the United States, and for that matter, the world. In society there are always problems with some people who need more help than others, and our society reacts in a variety of ways to help them.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's people helping people, neighbours again.

My question to the Premier -- so we can be absolutely sure, because this doesn't mean anything; it's all right-wing rhetoric -- is the Premier saying, then, that he finds it acceptable to have food banks in this province, that they will always be here, that this program is to shift away so that the charitable sector will take up these sorts of stands and they will not be part of government policy? What is it? We want to know, Mr. Premier.

MR. GETTY: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, I think every member of this Legislature would prefer that there not be food banks. But as I said, in our society we react in a variety of ways to help people who require help. The hon. member may say what he wants about this document, but I think it is a remarkable document that's unmatched anywhere in Canada. It is presented by a caring government, and it is reflecting the views of the people of Alberta who believe in the institutions of the family, believe in individual initiative, yet believe in caring for those who need care.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, yes, we are neighbourly, whether it comes to offering airplane rides or food hampers.

Mr. Speaker, does this paper, then, issue a warning that social allowance rates are going to be left at their current inadequate levels?

MR. GETTY: I'm not certain, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member means the rates that have been announced as being increased by 13.5 percent -- at that level? Because obviously they're being increased by 13.5 percent.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary question to the Premier. In the document self-reliance is quoted in a significant

way. Could the Premier indicate what the plans are from this point on in terms of looking at current government programs and refocusing some of their objectives in terms of self-reliance? Will that happen soon, or will that be into the fall session?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, self-reliance, individual initiative, the strength of the family, love for our homes and our communities and our province, caring for people, are all in this document.

First of all, as the hon. Deputy Premier mentioned yesterday, a resolution now exists on the Order Paper under Government Motions to deal in a debate on this matter in the House and to hear all members' views. But secondly, the government will match any new programs that are suggested against this policy paper, and the government will also measure existing programs against this policy paper. For those that require changes, changes will be made.

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

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Vegreville.

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville.

Agricultural Concerns

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier today. Weekly newspapers in rural Alberta have a very sad tale to tell about the alarming number of farm families forced to abandon their futures in agriculture. Now, the Conservative policy statement released in the House yesterday refers to statistics that indicate that our rural population will decline to less than 14 percent of the total by the year 2001. I'm wondering if the Premier can tell us if this prediction of rural depopulation is a policy objective of the government, or is it an estimate of an inevitable trend?

MR. GETTY: There has been for some time all over North America a move from rural Alberta into urban centres. This government has worked very hard to continue to maintain the strength of rural Alberta, our family farms, and our agricultural communities. We do more than any other province in Canada, and we'll continue to do that.

MR. FOX: Well, Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. There's been an average of 15 families forced off the farm every week since this fall, when the Premier said, "We'll do everything possible to strengthen the family farm and to keep people on the farm." I'm wondering what specific programs the Premier is prepared to announce in this Assembly that deal specifically with the debt crisis in agriculture.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Agriculture or the Associate Minister of Agriculture may well wish to speak on this as well.

But I think it's clear that the government has provided a great deal of assistance in helping our farmers with their debt problems: some \$2 billion provided to the farmers and ranchers of Alberta, fixed-rate, 20-year money at 9 percent. That's not matched anywhere in North America. Also, Mr. Speaker, while

that 9 percent is fixed for 20 years, it could be lower should we be allowed to reduce interest rates. I must say that the farmers and ranchers of Alberta have taken up those funds, and some 80 percent of the money that has been taken up has been used to reduce existing debt dramatically. It's providing some savings of \$40 million to farmers and ranchers of Alberta. This program, along with protection for energy costs, protection for fertilizer costs, assistance with insurance and stabilization, provides Alberta's farmers and ranchers with the best opportunity anywhere in Canada to grow and thrive in the agricultural sector.

MR. FOX: The proof is in the pudding, Mr. Speaker. The statistics speak for themselves.

I will direct the next question to the Minister of Agriculture, though. In the report issued by the department on the ADC, they estimate that a further 2,400 quarter sections of land in rural Alberta will be restructured. I'm wondering if the minister has done any studies to determine what effects losing that many farm families from rural Alberta will have on our schools, on our businesses, and on our communities in general?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the figures do speak for themselves, and it's only sad that the opposition would not look at the figures, whereby the figures indicate that in the year 1987, because of the strong support of this government, for the first time since 1980 farm bankruptcies have actually decreased rather than increased. In addition to that, our farming population has decreased at a smaller rate than any other province in Canada. Again, that is attributed directly to the strong support that the Premier indicated in his comments to the hon. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Well, I'm sure that will make the farm families going broke all over Alberta sleep better tonight, Mr. Speaker.

I'm wondering which of the following ideas that I've brought forward in this Assembly the minister is actively considering to deal with the debt crisis: 6 percent interest rates on farm loans, debt set-aside, debt mediation with teeth, the Alberta farmland trust. Are you looking at any of those programs?

MR. ELZINGA: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have analyzed some of them. Some of them I recognize are programs he has adopted from the province of Manitoba, and when the analysts did look at them very closely, they found that they had more of a detrimental impact on farming in Manitoba, so we naturally are not going to accept them here. But we are analyzing a number of measures that we feel will contribute in a very positive way, as the Premier has indicated on an ongoing basis, and they will be announced when the time is appropriate.

MR. SPEAKER: The main question or a supplementary, Westlock-Sturgeon?

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. It's also to the Premier. Would he not consider now actually putting a debt adjustment board with some teeth in, in view of that huge hemorrhage or movement of people off the farms, particularly also with the Mulroney trade agreement opening it up for large American corporate farms to come in and push the small farmers off the land here?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, both the arguments the

hon. member made for doing such a thing are absolutely false. There isn't a large hemorrhage.

As a matter of fact, the hon. member must be staying in the city too much. If he traveled through rural Alberta with me, he would know that Alberta's farmers and ranchers are very, very confident and building for the future. Our meat sector in agriculture is very strong. Government programs have assisted dramatically in stabilizing the grain sector. Alberta's farmers and ranchers are tough, able to compete. They are looking forward to the free trade agreement; it opens new horizons for them. They've never been protected in the past. They're prepared to compete with anybody, and they are going to be able to compete in the biggest market in the world. It's going to allow an entirely new opportunity for growth in rural Alberta. They aren't going about looking negatively at things like that like the hon. leader of the Liberal Party is.

MR. HYLAND: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture. I wonder if the minister can inform the Assembly on what percentage, either directly or indirectly, of farm debt the government is now carrying?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I believe it's somewhere in the 50 percent area when one takes into account those farmers who have participated under the farm credit stability program, which totals in the vicinity of some 15,000. In addition, we've got in excess of \$1 billion loaned out by way of direct loans through ADC and some loan guarantees. I will confirm those figures and get back to the hon. member.

Sour Gas Plants

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the question is to the Minister of the Environment and possibly Municipal Affairs. One of the major problems facing farmers and residents west of Highway 2 between Calgary and Edmonton is the huge number of blossoming sulphur and gas plants under the government's policy that if you put a number of plants out, each doing a little bit, you may be able to get away with more pollution in the long run.

The second sentence, Mr. Speaker, is: added to this problem is a recent court case of the Canadian Occidental Plant in Mazeppa, just south of Calgary, where the municipality that had arranged tougher environmental laws on the start-up of a plant had those laws thrown out as being ultra vires.

My question to the Minister of the Environment is: what is this government's policy as far as helping out councils or putting through in such a way that our municipal councils will have some authority on the pollution laws before a plant can go in?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, at the outset it is certainly not the intent of the government, and the government certainly has no agenda to basically say there should be literally hundreds and hundreds of small sour gas plants around the province of Alberta to in fact hide the case of sulphur emissions or pollution in our province. That simply isn't so. That's just nonsensical, and I don't know why the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon would even raise it in that light.

The policies we have in our province currently say that for any sour gas plant that has the sulphur emissions above 10 tonnes per day level in limit in essence they will have to have pollution control equipment, and it will have to be sulphur recovered. I've indicated publicly in the past that that is a matter we currently have reviewed to see whether or not that level

of 10 tonnes per day should be lowered and reduced, and we're having discussions ongoing right now with agencies such as the Energy Resources Conservation Board and others. Perhaps at some time through 1988 we will be in a position to add some further detail to that.

With respect to assistance to municipalities in this regard, of course all municipal governments in our province basically have to issue development permits to any developer who would come along. At that point in time, the municipal government can ask the developer or the proponent of a sour gas plant to identify what, in fact, will be part of the plant that they will have in question.

MR. TAYLOR: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Now that we have a new environment policy that the minister has talked about, is the government prepared to review the Planning Act -- this could be to the minister of municipalities -- and the industrial development strategy to see whether or not gas and sulphur plants can be removed from agricultural areas or close to prime agricultural land?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the Minister of Municipal Affairs would like to supplement this because this question had also to deal with the Planning Act.

There is no doubt at all that in recent years in the province of Alberta there has been increased interest by the citizens. So when a proponent comes forward with a sour gas plant, citizens in the area have tended now to assemble and to say, basically, "We are not interested in having the sour gas plant in our area." It's a situation I refer to by way of the word NIMBY, meaning "not in my backyard." The same kind of concept applies for garbage dumps and/or the like. That seems to be an ongoing thing.

My understanding is that we currently have approximately 35 small sour gas plants that are located close or proximate to urban settlements throughout the province of Alberta, and I understand that over the next decade there may very well be a system whereby there will be upwards of two per year, on average, added or at least planned for.

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps a supplementary to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the minister says "hundreds and hundreds;" there are dozens and dozens of plants that he is permitting.

The minister's policies of moving gas plants away from residential areas is well known. However, the minister is still allowing gas plants to go into prime agricultural land. This is what I want to know: will he not take a step further and forbid plants to be built on prime agricultural land?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's an interesting question. Basically, most of these plants take up landholdings of approximately four to five to six acres in area. That is the approximate size of a rural acreage subdivision. Would the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon also be arguing, then, that there should no longer be permitted in the province of Alberta any rural acreage development of four to six acres in size, or is it simply a question of saying you shouldn't have any industrial development by way of sour gas plants?

Whatever the answer is, I think all of us recognize that in terms of the concern this government has shown with respect to

the protection of agricultural land, I'd like to point out that it was not too long ago that we asked the Environment Council of Alberta to undertake a major series of public hearings throughout the whole province of Alberta, looking at the whole question of utilization of prime agricultural land. I think it's a matter that all of us are concerned about; that if number 1 soil is taken out, whether or not it be for a rural subdivision or industrial development, that's a negative.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Final supplementary, Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, thank you for saving the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Kindly proceed with the question, please.

MR. TAYLOR: The last supplementary, then, to the minister. He mentions four or five acres. The minister surely well knows that in a sulphur plant the danger area could go out over quite a number of acres. We're talking about neutralizing maybe a quarter section. Will he not take it upon himself and this government to at least approach some other members of the government to say that prime agricultural land is much too valuable to be turned over to sulphur plants and gasoline plants?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm always moved by the emotion of the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, particularly when he shakes his hand at me.

I would like to repeat what I said in the third question he raised. He asked me: will I undertake it? I thought I had responded in the third question he had raised that we had already undertaken it and that we'd asked the Environment Council of Alberta not too long ago to undertake a massive public hearing throughout the whole province of Alberta with this whole question of future use of prime agricultural land. I should also point out for the benefit of the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon that that report has now been published. If the member has not had an opportunity to read the report, I'll be very happy to convey one to his office tomorrow so that he might be able to review it over the weekend and come back Monday with a little more knowledge in this particular area.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The Member for Stettler, followed by Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised that the hon. leader of the Liberal Party didn't ask some more specific questions about the Carbondale proposal from Norcen Energy. My question to the minister is: has that application been approved?

MR. KOWALSKI: No, Mr. Speaker. An application was forwarded to my desk, I believe, in the summer of 1986. It remains on my desk, unapproved.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. For the Minister of Agriculture, who probably understands the concerns of the beekeeper whose business borders the proposed site and the many other market gardeners in the area: in view of the plant proponents' promise of six-hour flares during upsets, I would ask him to explain why this government has no policy of protection of prime agricultural land from proposed developments that could be located

just as easily at industrial subdivisions a mere three or four miles away.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we've got a number of areas that relate directly to the preservation of agricultural land. We work very closely with the municipalities concerned, plus I do have full faith in the concern that the Minister of the Environment consistently indicates in this House as it deals with environmental concerns.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Little Bow, followed by Olds-Didsbury, Edmonton-Beverly, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Rural Population Decline

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier, and it relates to page 17 relative to the rural population decline which has already been raised somewhat in the House, but I'd to look at it in a different perspective. We note some very significant things that have happened in rural Alberta, such as that school populations in counties and municipalities have decreased in the last 10 years some 30 percent, having a very significant effect. We've noted, also, more farmers with off-farm employment to try and subsidize their farm incomes, which is a positive step in one sense, and other trends.

As I look at government, I note that certain programs are attempting to meet this need of the declining population and deal with it. But my question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker: is there a comprehensive attack on the problem? Is there a government/cabinet task force that deals specifically with that problem, or would the Premier be considering a white paper on that specific problem so that the government can focus its attention on such an urgent matter?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the cabinet committee on agriculture and the rural economy deals with this matter actively virtually every week. It is the government's desire to strengthen the entire agricultural community and also to assist in the rural economy, our towns and our rural communities, throughout Alberta. We have programs, of course. Our whole program of decentralization, providing opportunities throughout the province outside of the major population centres, and also in our assistance to school boards in a variety of ways -- the schools boards that need extra help, communities that need extra help, tourism assistance, special grants for areas that need extra help: this is an ongoing matter with our government on a daily and weekly basis.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Premier. Could the Premier indicate if there is some comprehensive long-term planning group within cabinet that looks at the objectives in that perspective? I can understand the day-to-day viewpoint, but is the Premier giving direction to his cabinet? I believe that beyond the agricultural and rural portfolios that has to focus on this problem on a longer term basis.

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, these cabinet committees must deal at times with short-term problems, but they are also long-term planning committees. The economic planning committee of cabinet, the agriculture and rural economy committee of cabinet, deal with this matter on a long-term basis, and of course cabinet themselves deal with it.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question, then, to the Minister of Agriculture, in line with these questions. In terms of some of the young farmers who may not be able to lease back some of their land, this week or next week, could the minister indicate whether any progress has been made with regards to that policy, in that we can maybe slow down the loss of young farmers by implementing a lease-back program or other program fairly soon?

MR. ELZINGA: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker; I missed what program the hon. member was referring to.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, during the past week or so I've been raising the matter of young farmers who are going to lose their land this week by quitclaims or foreclosures and the possibility of a lease-back program being put in place so that those young farmers who have certain capabilities may stay on the land.

MR. SPEAKER: That clears, hon. member. Thank you.

MR. ELZINGA: Yes, and we are working on that, as we have indicated to the hon. member in the past. The associate minister has that under active consideration.

I should indicate, if I could underscore a comment that the Premier made to the hon. member as it relates to our rural communities, we have tripled the funding under this year's budget, also, for our processing agreement, whereby we are contributing additional funding to value-added processing throughout the province which will help all of the rural economy in general.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Education. Could the minister indicate what kind of policy paper could be presented to this Legislature that will deal with this continuous decline of school population in rural Alberta?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, the difficulty in dealing with the issue in as broadly based a way as the member has defined is that some of the rural school board areas are in fact growing in their population; others are declining. I would refer him to the policy paper which was put before Albertans with respect to the equity in education financing issue. As he knows, the new School Act recognizes the principle of equity -- in other words, the equitable opportunity for Albertans to an education. Certainly when we get into the debate on the School Act, I think we could have a very good discussion about the issue.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Agriculture. These statistics are alarming: declining to 14 percent of the total population by the year 2000. Is the minister satisfied that his government's response is adequate in the face of these kinds of statistics: that half of Alberta's farmers will be wiped out in 12 years?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the document does not indicate it the way the hon. member has worded it, but I wanted to leave the hon. member with the assurance, as has been done in this House on many occasions, that even though we are contributing in a very substantial way to the support of our agricultural sector, recognizing the prime importance it does play in our Alberta way of life, we recognize also that there are financial difficulties, and that is why we have been so reactive and so sup-

portive and are going to continue to be so.

We are, as I indicated earlier, also examining additional programs that hopefully will be more supportive of the agricultural sector sometime in the future. But let me leave the hon. member with the assurance that we're not satisfied even though we are making success and are proving that with the correct support the farming sector can prove to be economically stable. We are going to continue with that strong support, recognizing the importance that it plays to everybody's way of life in this province.

MR. CHUMIR: To the Minister of Education. I wonder whether the minister can tell us what specific programs her department has to help rural areas avoid the closure of schools, an event which can imperil the existence of whole communities.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, the matter in which education is funded in this province addresses the needs of all students in Alberta -- not just those in rural or urban areas, but all of them. The issue, unquestionably, of school closure causes as much consternation within an urban community as it does within a rural community. I am pleased that to date there has been a minimal number of school closures in our province, and certainly I hope that will continue to be the way.

MR. SPEAKER: Olds-Didsbury, followed by Edmonton-Beverly.

Grain Quota Delivery System

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Recently the Canadian Wheat Board's Quota Review Committee concluded the review of the grain quota delivery system. They made a number of recommendations, including a production-based quota system that would function through the use of supply agreements. I wonder if the minister could indicate whether or not he's in a position yet to indicate the government's views with respect to the recommendations of that committee.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we appreciate very much the opportunity to have input into that review process. As the hon. member is aware, it's out there for discussion purposes. We do have some what we consider very legitimate concerns as it relates to the suggested policy that is being advocated, because it appears to favour a little too much the major grain companies and the Canadian Wheat Board and not enough on the side of the farming population.

MR. BRASSARD: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, then. Can the minister indicate just what impact he would see this new supply agreement making on the grain industry?

MR. ELZINGA: It is our hope that there will be created a greater certainty amongst the farming population as it relates to the actual delivery of their grains. Under the proposed quota delivery system it offers those guarantees, again to the Canadian Wheat Board but not to the farmer, whereby he is held to the agreement and he will have to ship the grain, but there is no compulsory agreement on the side of the Canadian Wheat Board also, whereby they would have to take the grain in the event that the farmer wanted to deliver it. That is our major concern.

MR. BRASSARD: Then final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Could the minister indicate if he has contacted the federal government with those concerns?

MR. ELZINGA: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I don't recall the exact date, but it was some time ago that I wrote to the minister responsible, the Hon. Charlie Mayer, and just as late as yesterday we had a conversation on that and some other topics.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar, then Lloydminster.

Tornado Victims' Assistance

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The aftermath of last July's tornado has brought to light a number of deficiencies in the insurance and construction industries which have frustrated the attempts of many of my constituents to get on with the rebuilding of their lives. I know that the minister's department, if not the minister personally, has been contacted by the tornado victims about the problems they have encountered with the insurers and the contractors. My question, then, is: what plan of action has the minister prepared to address these concerns?

MISS McCOY: Well, Mr. Speaker, the number of claims that occurred out of the tornado were astounding, because there were claims that people were putting in for water damage to their cars, let alone their homes. And those that were right in the path of the tornado . . . I know that my department, through the regional office here in Edmonton, had people available immediately following the disaster. On a daily basis they were working with the residents and others who had been suffering from the damage. Then as time went on and it was a question of processing the claims, the department worked not only with those who had suffered damage but also with the adjusters and insurance companies at great length. Individual cases are still occurring, and the department is still helping them on an individual basis as is appropriate.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Given that some tornado victims have complained to the minister's department that they have been unfairly treated by both the insurance companies and the adjusters, will the minister give these claims her personal attention and, if warranted, request on behalf of the victims that the Superintendent of Insurance launch an investigation under section 533 of the Insurance Act?

MISS McCOY: Well, Mr. Speaker, needless to say, I don't know what specific cases the hon. member is referring to. I do know that the Superintendent of Insurance has been monitoring things between the claimant and the insurance company and the adjusters, and I'm certain that the superintendent would not allow any unfair practices or procedures to prevail.

In any event, I would invite the hon. member, if he does have specific cases of any victims at all, please to bring them to my office, and we will do everything we can to help.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, as the minister's department has received complaints from people who feel they have been misled by those they employ to repair their homes, has the minister directed that these complaints be forwarded to the director of trade practices for investigation?

MISS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, I don't know the cases to which the hon. member refers, and I would again invite him to bring them to my office. In the meantime the department has been working with all of the victims -- very heavily involved, far beyond the call of duty. They have been working not only during office hours but also evenings and weekends when required. I would expect all of the remedies and avenues of appeal to have been fully opened to anyone who suffered from the disaster.

MR. SPEAKER: Final, Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is to the Premier. Some of these people in the trailer park stand to lose their homes a second time because they can't get mobile-home insurance. It's a case where people need help for personal emergencies. Will the Premier help? Will he order an investigation of this problem and consider the establishment of a government program to insure mobile-home owners?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for raising an issue that his constituents raised with him as a problem. I'll discuss it with our Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and perhaps be able to respond to the hon. member.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Edmonton-Gold Bar, a supplementary.

MRS. HEWES: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Are there circumstances in place? Is the office going to continue to operate, the emergency office, so that people with problems arising subsequently that may not yet be visible, either reconstruction or psychological problems, can find the assistance they need?

MISS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for disaster services may wish to supplement my answer. I can say this: as far as the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is concerned, the people we have on staff have been reaching out to the victims, as I said earlier, far beyond the call of duty. I know they would wish to continue their services to that degree.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, perhaps just a brief supplement to that. There is an ongoing process in response to disaster assistance and disaster-related activities. Alberta Public Safety Services is the only separate department of a government that exists in Canada solely for that kind of a situation.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar, main question, followed by Lloydminster, Calgary-Forest Lawn.

Social Policy Statement (continued)

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like many, yesterday I read this document entitled *Caring & Responsibility*. It's a carefully worded document to cover the world and all its contents, but it says very little. The title itself is interesting. The government appears as caring; communities and individuals are going to have to be responsible. There's an implication here that we aren't already responsible for our actions. I see it as a self-serving document full of contradiction. One wonders, in fact, where it's leading and what it does portend.

My questions are to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the

Premier would tell us: what is the real objective of this paper, this exercise, this caper? Why did the government feel it was necessary to write this?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the hon. member hasn't been listening in the question period today. We've already talked about some of the reasons for the document. We've talked about that it is a statement of the government's position on social policy for Alberta. It's a statement of the government's belief in individual initiative, self-reliance, caring for people, love of our homes, love of our communities, the strength of families, that the real strength of this province is the people of this province. [interjections]

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. members want to make fun of an issue which is the social policy for the people of Alberta. The hon. member asks a question; the opposition don't like to hear the answer, so they make a noise to try and drown it out. It's a shame that this party, who . . . Their friends in Ottawa have made the House of Commons a joke with the noise and the way they've disrupted it, and now they come here and try to do the same thing in our Legislature. [interjection] I would expect that the schoolchildren . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. Premier. Thank you, hon. members. Until there's silence, maybe it's time to count light bulbs in the ceiling.

MR. GETTY: I think it would be interesting for schoolchildren and guests who come to watch that kind of action by the opposition.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, this document will be used for planning future social programs of the government. It will also be used to measure existing ones. There is a resolution, as I said, on the Order Paper. As a matter of fact, with that resolution on there, I would expect that the hon. member would be able then to raise her points at that time -- we'd like to hear them -- and also, of course, in the estimates of the minister. And other ministers -- there are so many ministers who have responsibilities that are touched on by this document.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Yes, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier: has there, then, been specific direction given to departments to review particular legislation and programs to conform with whatever it is this document is saying?

MR. GETTY: Yes, Mr. Speaker,

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, will this paper, then, be followed by a major policy paper noting the changes in programs, or will each department slide in changes with this as justification? [interjection] That's two,

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, this is a statement of social policy,

MRS. HEWES: Aha! Aha!

Will, then, part of the government's direction -- since we're concerned here about creating an environment for family life -- be to raise the minimum wage immediately so that families can survive above the poverty line?

MR. GETTY: That "aha! aha!": I remember my mother used to

say that too.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member repeat her question? [interjections]

Energy Industry Activity

MR. CHERRY: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Energy. As we all know, oil drilling activity has been at its highest this year. Recent well counts show a decline in the number of rigs drilling due to the spring breakup. Could the minister indicate, in terms of activity indicators, what the outlook is for drilling in the province in 1988.

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I've been anxiously waiting ever since the spring session started for a question about energy, and I'm happy to have the opportunity to get one today. I hope some of my comments would inspire some of the members of the opposition to get up this evening in estimates and raise some points.

However, we are very happy with the indicators of economic activity in the energy sector so far this year. One stat that I want to throw out which is very significant is the fact that the number of well licences issued in the first quarter of this year was the highest ever in the history of this province. That's reflective of the intention and the plans of industry to get out there and drill their oil and gas wells.

In terms of investment there is a significant increase in investment and exploration and activity planned on the part of the companies for this year. A number of surveys have indicated that companies are prepared to invest up to a 38 percent increase over last year, with the overall average expected to be about 20 percent increase in that investment. So we're looking forward to a good year in terms of conventional oil and gas drilling.

MR. CHERRY: A supplementary to the minister: could he indicate how many wells were spudded following the granting of the licences?

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of ways to measure the activity in the energy sector, and of course the number of wells being spudded is one of them. In terms of the first quarter of this year, the number of wells spudded are up over 110 percent from the first quarter of last year.

But another very important indicator, of course, is the land sale bonuses. Last year, 1987-88, we had in this province a total of some \$760 million paid by oil companies in terms of land sales. And that, Mr. Speaker, was up 216 percent over the previous year and was the second highest recorded ever in the history of the province.

MR. SPEAKER: Might we have the unanimous consent of the House to complete this series of questions and also for the Minister of Education and the Solicitor General to supplement information to the previous question?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

MR. CHERRY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate what the price of oil has been in the last two or three days or as of this week?

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly better than it had been in the first few months of this year, and we are pleased that the oil prices have risen in the last couple of days to around the \$18 a barrel level. Of course, for the budget of this year we have been forecasting \$18.50 or \$18.60 U.S. as a price that we would plan our budget on. I think that in view of the expectations of analysts and of the industry, that's a very realistic number to look at for the rest of this year.

MR. PASHAK: I wonder if the minister would be prepared to tell the House, Mr. Speaker, how much this increased drilling activity has cost the Treasury of this province through grants and loans.

DR. WEBBER: The hon. member certainly can address this issue this evening. However, Mr. Speaker, we as a province took the initiative in 1986 to make sure that our oil and gas industry came back. Therefore, we announced a \$1 billion program that we were happy to announce at that time to lower royalty rates, a royalty-free holiday that got many people back into the field working . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister
Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister of Energy. In view of his enthusiastic report of how many wells they'll be drilling, would the minister tell the House whether or not he has any long-term policy as to sharing the pipeline and market capacities in this province between the synthetic oil sector and the conventional oil sector? How is he going to share that [inaudible] pipelines?

DR. WEBBER: In terms of pipeline capacity, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will probably recall that last year there was a significant increase in the capacity of the Interprovincial Pipe Line, some 54,000 barrels per day. That capacity has been taken up. In fact, in taking up that capacity, we were able to avoid a well shut-in situation for a while, but now with the Suncor plant coming back after the fire, we are seeing the capacity of those pipelines up to a maximum.

In terms of the future, I think one of the answers lies in the fact that if we can get upgrading to occur in this province, avoid shipping the heavy bitumin in the pipelines where you have to mix it with diluent, we would be able to free up excess capacity for light synthetic crude. That is one aspect that we are actively pursuing. It is the policy of this government to see that upgrading occurs here in Alberta rather than at the other end of the pipeline.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Education. Supplementary information, the Chair assumes, in reply to the Member for Little Bow.

Rural Population Decline (continued)

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I had a momentary lapse in my thinking when I responded to the question from the Leader of the Representative Party, but it was only momentary.

With respect to the concern that government has about the threat of rural school closures, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the distance learning project, which was part of my budget

last year and continues to be part this year, over and above the 2 percent increase of grants that we gave to school boards, which will ensure that we're using technology to expand the opportunities of all students, including those in the rural areas.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for letting me supplement

MR. SPEAKER: Solicitor General, with regard to question as raised by Edmonton-Strathcona, I believe.

Impaired Drivers

MR. ROSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 12 the member for Strathcona asked about the designated driver program instituted by the city of Edmonton police. I now have the information that it was a program undertaken in Old Strathcona in November of 1987. It was not evaluated by the police, but they have received positive comments from it and are working with the Alberta and Edmonton hotel associations and the Alberta restaurant and food association to make it citywide if there is enough interest.

MR. WRIGHT: Would the Solicitor General care to follow that up, to adopt it more widely if it turns out to be successful?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, we'd be pleased to follow it up. In fact, I think it's indicative of a voluntary personal commitment by the licensees and the police. If it is worthy, it might be worthy of expanding beyond Edmonton.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, a point of order, if I may.

MR. SPEAKER: Government House Leader.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, all members of the Assembly are well aware of the tremendous responsibilities that you carry, sir, for the order of the Assembly. I have noted with regret that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands has reflected upon the neutrality and impartiality of your position, and I would ask the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands if she might address that matter further in the normal rules and procedures of the Assembly.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, as he hasn't made the implications of his comments clear, I'll take it under advisement.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Chair assumes that there will be communication. The matter will be dealt with tomorrow.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I would move that the following questions stand: questions 148, 166, and 167, and then that motions for returns 152, 156, 163, 164, and 176 stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

146. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question:
How much money did the Alberta government give to Ducks Unlimited in each of the years 1983-87 inclusive?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I accept Question 146 and will be tabling a response.

I'd like to say that Ducks Unlimited is an international non-profit organization that's dedicated to the protection and enhancement of waterfowl habitat, and the province's Fish and Wildlife division works as a joint partner on many initiatives with Ducks Unlimited. As well, the Department of Career Development and Employment and the Department of the Environment have contributed to job-creation initiatives related to Ducks Unlimited projects. I'd like to point out to the House that the government funding to Ducks Unlimited includes significant amounts of cost-shared dollars. For example, in 1986-87 the total funding provided by the government was \$545,465, of which \$398,600 was cost shared, and the \$398,600 of cost-shared dollars was exceeded by funding from Ducks Unlimited.

149. Mr. R. Speaker asked the government the following question:

For each of the 1985-86 and 1986-87 fiscal years, where the government of the province of Alberta has paid private legal, accounting, or other professional fees pursuant to the operation of appeal panels or tribunals, public inquiries, or any other inquiries or proceedings commenced pursuant to legislation in the province of Alberta, other than proceedings of the courts in the province, provide the following information:

- (a) the total of such fees for each of the said panels, tribunals, or proceedings; and
- (b) the recipients of such fees and the amount received in total by each recipient for services provided to each of said panels, tribunals, or proceedings.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we have some difficulty in answering this question because of the extreme detail which has been requested. It's my understanding that there has been some communication between our two offices, and this question, once it can be redefined, will be presented again by the member.

153. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question:

What is the legal description of all parcels of Crown land converted from grazing leases to private ownership from January 1, 1986, to December 31, 1987, and the price paid for each parcel?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I accept Question 153. The grazing lease conversion to potential land was initiated in August of 1985, and the conversions were frozen on June 12, 1986, in the south-central part of the province and on March 2, 1987, in the rest of the province, pending the results of a government review of the Grazing Lease Conversion Task Force Report.

MR. SPEAKER: With due respect to the House, the Chair erred a moment ago with Westlock-Sturgeon. A brief comment by Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my main problem -- and this is the second question -- is being able to determine whether my

question has been answered. Does that mean that if they do not answer the whole question, in fact the question was not answered? In other words, Question 153: he mentioned that there were conversions. The hon. minister mentioned different dates of conversion in southern Alberta and northern Alberta, but...[interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order please. Hon. member, the Chair apologizes again. The Chair was right the first time. There is no opportunity, with respect, for the member that's raising the written question to then make a reply. Having examined the record as supplied by the minister, then the member has the opportunity to submit another question, and the Chair apologizes to the House. Thank you.

158. Mr. McEachern asked the government the following question:

For each of the 1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85, 1985-86, and 1986-87 fiscal years, where the commercial investment division of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund during the course of the year made an investment or investments in the common shares, preferred shares, convertible bonds, or other securities of a company or government, and where that investment is not noted in the schedule 5 document for the conclusion of that fiscal year issued by the Provincial Treasurer in conjunction with the annual report of the fund for that fiscal year, in the case of each such investment, what was

- (1) the date on which the investment was made;
- (2) the nature of the instrument of the investment -- common share, convertible bond, et cetera;
- (3) the name of the company or government issuing the instrument;
- (4) the cost of the investment at purchase -- at the date given at (1) above;
- (5) the date on which the investment was disposed of; and
- (6) the price at which the investment was disposed of -- at the date given at (5) above?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we will not be providing this information as requested in this written question. It should be a matter of record that on an annual basis we provide to the Legislative Assembly, the Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee, the annual information. We believe that is adequate in judging the rate of return on that section of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

160. Rev. Roberts asked the government the following question:

In instances where savings are directly attributable to the strike in early 1988 by the members of the United Nurses of Alberta in defiance of the Labour Relations Act, what amounts of money budgeted for expenditure were not expended by all Alberta hospitals in the aggregate for

- (1) employees' salaries, wages, benefits, and other like considerations;
- (2) costs ancillary to the performance of surgical and other health care procedures; and
- (3) other budgeted expenditures?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, we're not able to accept that question. The information which is asked for is not generally collected in that form and indeed might be very difficult to obtain.

168. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question:
How much money did each of the recipients of Alberta disaster assistance receive from the provincial government in 1987-88 following the Edmonton tornado of July 31, 1987, and who were each of those recipients?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased this afternoon to provide some information with respect to Question 168 which deals with dollars allocated to the tornado and related activities in the latter part of July 1987. It's difficult, however, for me to provide an individual breakdown, as there are some 1,400-plus applications in question. I believe there is a provision at some time in the future for specifics in terms of name and dollar allocation that would be published in public accounts. I would, however, like to provide to the hon. member a breakdown in terms of how we've estimated a calculated payout of \$60.3 million with respect to the tornado situation, and this information has been consolidated as of April 8, 1988. So that will give you the updated accuracy of that.

In terms of the estimated cost of \$60.3 million, it's our calculation that basically the \$12 million will be provided to businesses, \$2.3 million to cleanup, \$3.3 million to re-establishment grants, \$12.4 million to job-retainment loans, and \$0.9 million will be allocated in interest. In addition to that, there should be \$11.5 million provided to municipalities, \$5.2 million to individuals, \$1.8 million to farm programs, \$5.4 million which will be allocated to various other departments of the government that were involved in this, and \$5.5 million to emergency utilities restoration to come to a total of \$60.3 million.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I can provide additional information with respect to this this afternoon. My understanding of the question being asked was that there's an opportunity to provide a verbal response, and I think it would probably be helpful to do that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. However, the procedure is that it has to be a brief response. The Chair agrees that that is a sufficient response, but additional information of a written nature could be tabled. Thank you.

170. Rev. Roberts asked the government the following question:

Shown separately for each month from April 1984 to March 1988 inclusive, how many

- (1) hysterectomies and
 - (2) tubal ligations
- were performed in Alberta hospitals?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, again I am not able to provide the answer to the particular question, because the information that's being requested is not normally gathered in the form it's being asked for.

171. Rev. Roberts asked the government the following question:

What is the government's best estimate of the cost of sending individual annual notices to senior citizens resident in long-term care facilities of the total cost of the care they had received that year, as recommended by the Mirosh committee?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the question in this case asks for an estimate with respect to a proposal that's contained in a discussion paper which has not yet been adopted as government

policy. Therefore, I do not have an answer to that question and do not expect one until such time as we might decide to move in this direction.

172. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question:
What are all the budgeted and actual costs as of April 1, 1988, associated with the liquidation of First Investors of Canada, including itemized costs of:

- (1) the Code inquiry costs to date and costs projected to completion;
- (2) legal costs of counsel to date and projected to completion, representing various parties to the Code inquiry if not included in the costs specifically attributed to the Code inquiry;
- (3) fees to date and projected for all receivers and liquidators involved in the dissolution of all member companies of the Principal Group?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, with respect to Question 172, we are not able to answer this question. Obviously, when a question asks for projections or some anticipated costs, it's difficult for us to provide that data with any kind of credibility. Therefore, we can't accept the question.

173. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question:
What was the cost of all advertising undertaken by the Department of the Environment from September 1, 1987, to January 30, 1988, to publicize the Swan Hills hazardous waste disposal facilities on television, radio, and in newspapers?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, Question 173 asks for the cost of all advertising undertaken by the Department of the Environment with respect to the Swan Hills hazardous plant, and the answer to that question is \$405.21.

174. Mr. Younie asked the government the following question:
(1) Will the government introduce legislation to amend the Environment Council Act to provide for the appointment of the chairperson of the council on the recommendation of the Assembly, following an open competition conducted by a special select committee of the Legislative Assembly; and
(2) What are the reasons for the government's response to question (1)?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, there are two questions being asked in 174. One, will the government introduce legislation to amend a certain Act? The answer to that is no. Question number two said: what are the reasons? The reason is that we currently have legislation, called the Environment Council of Alberta Act, which governs the process.

175. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question:
How many season tickets to Edmonton Oilers hockey games does the government own; what is the purpose for having these season tickets; who are those individuals who have used these tickets from January 1, 1986, until March 16, 1988; and why have each of these individuals been given these tickets?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the question is quite specific. It says, "How many season tickets to Edmonton Oilers hockey

games does the government own?" It gives time periods of January 1, 1986, to March 16, 1988. I can be equally specific that no department of government nor Executive Council owns any Edmonton Oilers hockey tickets or season tickets for that time frame, and accordingly, I am unable to answer the balance of the question.

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

154. Mr. Taylor moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing any reports or correspondence written by the Minister of Career Development and Employment or his department to the Minister of the Environment in response to the environmental impact study he reviewed on the Daishowa pulp mill, the latter study being filed on December 15, 1987.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, this government has had a tendency that when new or major projects are announced, the word "environment" in their concept is that it refers only to the physical one of the air and the water. In this particular case, where we have a native reservation and also a far northern community, Peace River and other communities around, I think it was most important that the environmental impact study had some input as to what kind of jobs were going to be created in both stages -- in the construction stage and in the operation stage -- whether it was the intention to train. The Minister of Career Development and Employment well knows the Alberta method has been to in general use local and native labour to do construction and bring in permanent people for the operation rather than the other way round. In other words, we have it backwards very often. I was very interested in finding out whether or not there had been any studies to show how many permanent jobs would go to the natives of the area and the people in small towns in the area, and if there is any type of split between native, Metis, and the non-native peoples as to how the sharing of the jobs will be done.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the concern of the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, and I can assure him that there has been substantial dialogue between my department and the Department of the Environment. In a very recent dialogue he points out something that is of absolute necessity when we look at large projects such as the Daishowa project and the impact not only environmentally but socially in the community, as well as on the job-creation side. It is a regular feature of the Department of the Environment's consultation with the Department of Career Development and Employment to determine the impacts on these projects and on others, and certainly with the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife and the Department of Economic Development and Trade. Anytime we see major projects going into particular areas, economic impact has to be assessed as well as the social impact and the job creation. We too, Mr. Speaker, must on a regular basis determine whether or not there are going to be labour shortages, just in what particular areas that must be addressed.

In the north, as the hon. gentleman has indicated, one of the firm policies of this department is to be sure that if there is an opportunity for native groups to be involved in the construction phase and the ongoing operation phase, in fact that does occur. As the hon. member will know if he's reviewed the documentation -- that is, public documentation -- Daishowa is in fact making moves in this particular direction. That speaks, Mr. Speaker, to the issue as to whether or not the consultation oc-

curs, and I can assure the hon. member that it does. I must say, however, that I do not think it is important for this minister or this department to set up the precedent of tabling in this House or providing to him interdepartmental correspondence. As the hon. member would know, there are hundreds of thousands of letters that through the course of a year are traded between departments, between ministries, and it just doesn't make sense to do that.

I must also submit to the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, that the proof will be in the pudding. Certainly as the Daishowa project does come on stream, the hon. member will see that the planning is good, particularly in the area of employment and particularly in the area of involving the native community in the project.

Unfortunately, as I said, Mr. Speaker, I do not think it appropriate to be providing interdepartmental correspondence.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a number of concerns that might be addressed by members of the opposition and perhaps government backbenchers as well, being able to review what reports the Minister of Career Development and Employment might have written to the Minister of the Environment on this. Certainly he mentions correspondence, hinting that it might almost be something of a personal nature. I think the implication would be obvious that what is being asked for is official evaluations by his department on what the effect of the project will be, not just on employment related directly to the plant but employment that will be affected in a number of indirect ways.

So we would be very concerned to see what questions he might have asked, for instance, or what concerns he might have expressed about the deficiencies in the EIA that we know have been causing the Minister of the Environment some concern and have been delaying the issuing of permits. It certainly would be good to see if the Minister of Career Development and Employment has been conveying concerns about potential environmental deficiencies in the plant's design and how those might affect native hunting and trapping, how those might affect tourism related to the environment and to nature. He might have been reviewing concerns about the logging itself and reforestation concerns and how that would affect a number of aspects of tourism in the area. He might well have been looking at in-plant operations and the effect it would have on the workers and discussing with the Minister of the Environment or asking for reports on testing that will be done on an ongoing basis on workers' health and safety related to dioxin pollution and other problems there might be in the plant. Those would certainly be something he should be very much interested in.

I really think it would be very important for the minister to give us some of those indications. If he has done a report on the potential -- and certainly the minister reads and goes through a number of reports on job-creation potential of many things -- perhaps he has reviewed the potential that certain government requirements for employment of native people in relation to both the building stages of the project and the permanent jobs related to his operation might have on native people so he could look at the ongoing impact within the native community of a government requirement that certain numbers or percentages be hired from the native population.

I think there are a number of concerns this minister should have been addressing to the Minister of the Environment, and

not seeing the information, we would have to presume that he hasn't been considering the implications of the project and making those representations and would, therefore, want to express our disappointment in that.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for St. Albert.

MR. STRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think this is a very important question. Certainly the Minister for Career Development and Employment mentioned some of the areas. One is that it is a major industrial project. Certainly it is going to have a significant impact economically on that region. It's going to affect native and local employment.

What I'm wondering is: what types of jobs are going to be created on that project, and has the minister done any assessments on that project to determine what types of jobs are going to be available? Again, I think we went through this in a question the other day that wasn't answered by the Minister of Career Development and Employment in regards to job creation in this province. I think it's very important that Albertans know what types of jobs are going to be created in this province so they can design their lives around what they're going to take in the universities or the technical schools.

I think one thing that concerns me and many other Albertans and many of the constituents I have in St. Albert is the question of the press release that was issued by Daishowa, indicating that one of the reasons they located their plant in the province of Alberta was that Alberta had a stable labour relations climate. I'm wondering who wrote that press release, Mr. Speaker. I think all members of this Assembly are certainly aware that the building trade unions in the construction industry have had an absence of a collective agreement in that industry for four years now. How we can say that Alberta has a stable labour relations climate when we have no collective agreements in the construction industry certainly is a puzzle to me.

The other question I bring is, I guess, a question in this regard. If we're going to build a major project in the province of Alberta, I would hope that we are not only going to build that job with people that live in that locality, and certainly natives that live there too -- provide jobs for them -- but also certainly provide jobs and priority of jobs for Albertans. Has Daishowa made any applications to the federal government or the provincial government for assistance in those applications to bring Japanese workers here if Albertans can't man that job? I would suspect that these are some of the questions we're looking at when questions and motions for returns are put on the Order Paper to get the information from the government. Again, that information in most cases is sadly lacking.

Now, I think it is important, and certainly I believe that Alberta moving into different developments in the forestry industry is a good thing for Alberta. It's going to create many jobs here for Albertans, it's going to diversify our economy, and I think it's a step in the right direction. But I think certainly when you get into environmental impact studies, with what we're putting into our water systems and our waterways, what we're putting into our air, who we're going to have working on jobs and what types of wages those people are going to have working on those jobs are all very, very important issues for this minister to look at.

The other question I guess I have -- and what I wanted to hear in the Legislative Assembly today is that we have a Minister of Career Development and Employment that is going to address policing trades qualifications in the province of Alberta.

Or are we just arbitrarily going to continue not policing trades qualifications? I know. Mr. Speaker, that the minister might deny that, but that isn't the fact. I think there is one union that had a lawsuit against the minister or the department for failing to police trades qualifications on many of the construction sites in the province of Alberta.

These are some of the things I'd like to see. Mr. Speaker. Certainly when these ministers get up to answer questions in the Legislative Assembly that are put on the Order Paper, I think they could do a lot better job of keeping us on this side of the House informed, and I guess that includes the few that they've thrown over here to join us -- but certainly Albertans.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, summation.

MR. TAYLOR: Yes, Mr. Speaker. In summing up -- and I'm sorry the minister took off, but I'm sure his PA system is working -- there are two issues involved here in the refusal to file any reports or correspondence written by the Minister of Career Development and Employment or his department to the Minister of the Environment in response to the environmental impact study he reviewed on the Daishowa pulp mill, the latter... being filed on December 15, 1987.

Mr. Speaker, to refresh the memory of the House, this was a project that was announced at the very tail end of January or early February. There seemed to be a very unseemly rush to put the Daishowa agreement into place. And we recall the embarrassment and the red faces amongst all those blue and orange faces when it was found out that all the Lubicon Indians had been forgotten when they announced the project. So obviously, Mr. Speaker, there appeared to be some sort of unseemly rush.

What I'm trying to get at here is that I asked the minister in the House as soon as we got under way in March whether or not as the environmental impact study requires input from all the departments, input had taken place. I turned my steely gray eyes from one minister to another to another during the question period, Mr. Speaker, we'll recall, and asked them whether their department had had any input and whether their department had. One of the departments had said that of course, naturally, his department had input. It was the Minister of Career Development and Employment. I rather thought it was one of those offhand remarks about, you know, "We're number one, we create more jobs than anything else" or "We do this, we do that." This government is rather prone to use the superlative when referring to any of their own actions.

I have reason to be very suspicious that indeed the Minister of the Environment and possibly the Premier and possibly the minister of forestry had rushed ahead, Mr. Speaker, with the idea of announcing a plan that would somehow or another take some of the sting out of the new House being called in in March and the fact that the government wasn't doing anything. So they were going to create all these jobs. In fact, I thought I might have even perceived a wink flying between the Minister of the Environment and the minister of career development when I asked the question whether he did, as the regulations say, have any input. Now, I suspect that the reports and correspondence that the minister now finds necessary to keep secret are probably just about as mythical as some of the studies this minister has quoted in the last couple of years. That's one of the first issues. I would really like to know whether indeed he was consulted and what did he say.

Now, the second part is the necessity for consulting. As some of the hon. members have already pointed out... I'm

sorry, Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to read from a few feet away here. I'm sure you have that problem, where it's too close to use your glasses and too far away to see.

The second point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that, as the hon. members for St. Albert and Edmonton...

MS BARRETT: Glengarry.

MR. TAYLOR: Okay, yes. She says yes. . . . said that an impact study that does not take in employment patterns is really not an impact study; it is [inaudible]. So at least I would expect that the Minister of Career Development and Employment would file or would agree to have a study or go through the process of trying to figure out, because we have three solitudes up in this area, which is more than we have in most areas of the province. It's not just an ordinary project where you go out and away. We have natives, which this province has already tried to sabotage and scuttle as far as the Lubicon rights are concerned. We have them as a group that have a right to participate in this area because of the land they're involved in, as well as the fact that jobs should be created. We have the Metis colonies -- which were created by the old Social Credit government -- that are just up the road a way, that operate as colonies and have a different type of economy than either the native or the non-native economy and, as I mentioned, the third area.

So if there was ever a need for imagination and a long-term policy and input from many people involved, it was in this area. Mr. Speaker. In particular, not only is it the relationship of who gets what jobs, but what will this plant and the type of jobs and the money that is coming into the area do to the social fabric and social structure of the community? Now, I know it's very easy, if we had the minister of social development here, just to say that all we'd have to do is counsel the parents. But there's a little bit more to it than that. We have a case here, and as has often been proved in many areas of the world -- and I've been in the development business myself -- that if you move in with a major project in a native or a semi-native area such as this, we could envisage creating a great deal of problems.

So, Mr. Speaker, I find it just absolutely amazing that he would not share with us any letters or studies. And as I say, I'm afraid to take this rather jaundiced view of the minister's answer in view of the fact that he has in the past done the same idea, quoted studies that appeared to be very hard to pin down indeed and, as a matter of fact, might have occurred in those hours between 5 and 6 in the morning when some people are wondering whether to get out of bed. You get that sort of halfway -- half on earth, half in heaven -- type of thinking that runs through your mind.

So I'd like to know whether the minister, indeed, has anything to back up the fact that he was able to tell us in the House that he had talked with the Minister of the Environment and had consulted with the Minister of the Environment as to the impact study prepared by Daishowa pulp mill filed on December 15, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

[Motion lost]

157. Mr. Taylor moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the loan guarantee agreement between the Alberta government and Ski Kananaskis Inc., submitted to the Minister of Recreation and Parks on

February 11, 1988.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, a guarantee was submitted to the Minister of Recreation and Parks, but I had the impression that the Treasury handles some of these.

Now, my request here is a very simple one, and it is that public business should be done in public. For this government to argue, and I'm sure they will try to argue, that private business should be filed -- why should anybody borrow money from this government if they don't want it to be known? I would suspect that nine out of 10, or maybe 99 out of 100 -- as I could tell you, when I was in business, if this government was willing to loan me more money than any banker, I wouldn't have minded if you'd published my name. So I think the government here, as so often is the case, is taking it upon themselves. I'm presupposing now, Mr. Speaker, that they will refuse to file the guarantee.

Now, I could save everybody a lot of time by sitting down for a second and finding out whether his answer is yes or no before I unload all four barrels on him. Is that permissible, Mr. Speaker; to find out whether he's going to go yes or no before I really go after him? It isn't, is it? Okay. All right. Well, I might as well unload 'em -- go after a bear as well as a rabbit here.

One of the things that bothers me about this government is the fact that somehow or other they think that the . . . I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. A note from the minister over there caused me to laugh. He has a sense of humour.

What bothers me is that this government somehow or other has taken it upon themselves to conceal the terms of guarantees and loans that they've made. Now, I don't understand it, Mr. Speaker, because I know that anybody that's coming to this government to borrow money -- being an old unregenerate capitalist of some years back, I really was not worried if my name was broadcast across the footlights of the world as long as I got a better interest rate and more money from whoever I was borrowing from than anyone else.

So I feel that the government is taking a position that is really most unreasonable. First of all, I feel that if it was known that the government would release the package of what the loan guarantees were, you would get less of this chummy-chummy business that you have with the Pocklington setup and with the group that's headed up by former cabinet minister Mr. Zaozirny. All these things that are done in the back rooms have a tendency to blacken the names of the people that are asking for the money, because it looks most suspicious. And I believe that this government's action in refusing to table guarantees, Mr. Speaker, is counterproductive. In other words, they are making it embarrassing for a businessman to ask for guarantees or loans. Because the government refuses to put out the information, the worst will be suspected by many of the speculating public as to the type of arrangement that was arranged.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the guarantees are very important as to whether they run consecutively with the other loans that have been made, whether they are paid off first or whether they are paid off last. It's a huge ultimate liability that could accrue to the Alberta taxpayers, and this government has now gone up to nearly a billion dollars -- I believe over a billion dollars -- in accumulative guarantees. That's getting up to maybe 25 percent of the liquidity, or what some people feel is 25 percent or a third of the liquidity, of the heritage trust fund that in an economic downturn could suddenly be called upon by all these people. Because I can assure you, as someone familiar in this area, that

whoever grants a loan doesn't waste any time trying to collect from whoever owes the money if they have somebody like the Alberta government on the guarantee. They take what is called a line of least resistance, and a banker will appear at your door within minutes after that man has defaulted on the loan, asking for the guarantee. To say that these are sort of maybe like Kathleen Mavourneen types of agreements -- you know, "It may be for years, and it may be for ever" -- is not correct. It's one of those things that could come home to roost in a very, very quick time frame.

So, Mr. Speaker, I feel that taken with the fact that this is a tremendous liability, this is just an example and is setting a precedent for up to a billion dollars in guarantees that are out there. The fact that the names of the businesspeople that make these loans are blackened or sullied by the fact that the government may have made a cute deal, plus the fact that the public out there would like to know whether friends make a bigger difference as to who gets the money, it makes it a necessity, in my mind, that this government release something as simple as a loan guarantee agreement between the Alberta government and Ski Kananaskis Inc. submitted to the Minister of Recreation and Parks on February 11, 1988, and if he does not have it in his hands, that he request that the Treasurer turn it over to us.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the hon. members decline the request of the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon to file this document.

On April 15, 1987, information was made available to Albertans by way of a release that described this undertaking, which involves a loan guarantee by the province, executed by the department of economic development, to assist in the construction of the quad lift at Nakiska. The amount of the guarantee by the province was \$2 million, and the contribution by OCO toward the project was approximately \$2 million, and Ski Kananaskis Inc. was the company that was the recipient of the guarantee. So the information was provided to the hon. member over a year ago by way of a public release of the information as to the amount of the guarantee, what the purpose of the guarantee was, where the equity came from, the company that was the recipient of the guarantee.

We have made it a practice, Mr. Speaker, not to table in the Assembly commercially confidential documents. But I think the hon. member, when mentioning that we do not release the names, is simply wrong. The name of the company that is the recipient of the guarantee is Ski Kananaskis. The amount of the guarantee is known. The project for which the guarantee was established is known. The participation of the government by way of \$2 million out of \$4 million is known. All of these factors are known.

I know that the member may not have been reluctant at all to have had details of his company's business in front of the general public, Lochiel. But that would be his own personal preference. We have made it a practice to not table in the Assembly commercially confidential information unless we have obtained the agreement of the company that's involved, and we'll continue that practice. But as a part of our policy we make full information available on the nature of the commitment, nature of the undertaking, what the project was for, and we'll continue to do that.

I think that the hon. member has adequate information in

order to make a judgment on the policies or programs of the government, either to criticize or to react positively. The Olympics were a tremendous project, a wonderful success, that placed Alberta in the forefront of the world, and this project was a part of the XV Winter Olympics, to provide an opportunity for people to move up and down the hill. And the government participated by way of a \$2 million loan guarantee.

So the information has been made available, was publicly made available on April 15, 1987, and we'll continue to function in that consistent way where we make information available. But commercially confidential information will not be filed in the House, Mr. Speaker.

MS BARRETT: With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, to the minister, the fact of the matter is that not all details of this deal were made public April 15, 1987. The terms and conditions upon which that loan guarantee was provided were not referred to publicly and have yet to be referred to publicly.

The minister argues, you know, that one would not want to betray the commercial confidentiality of this sensitive issue. Well, Mr. Speaker, I point out to the minister that it's not like they've got a natural competitor in that particular area. They basically exercise a monopoly, compliments of the Alberta government, which, over about the last five or five and a half years, went ahead with this single-minded determination that they were going to develop a particular mountain in a particular park for the Olympics, even though experts from a variety of disciplines and interests advised them that that was not the best location. When they found that even private business understood that there were real problems with this, what do you think the government did, Mr. Speaker? I'll tell you. They decided, well, by God, they were going to go it alone, and if they had to put up taxpayers' money, then that's the way they were going to do it.

The public of Alberta wasn't able to stop them from doing that. By the time it got rolling, it was all too late. But I think the taxpayers should be told just what it is that we've got on the line in this whole venture. I'll tell you what I know, Mr. Speaker. After the 1988 Olympics all I saw on TV was how the Kananaskis ski operation was going to have to go for massive ticket sales, lowering their daily price for the lifts. And even still they knew that they were going to end up deeply in the red at the end of this year.

Now, I don't want to raise an old argument. It's too late to raise the old argument that the government made a massive mistake in developing this particular area. It's too late; it's done. I think what we have to do is hope that the investment now will pay off and that Kananaskis itself is going to pay off in the long run. But the one way we're going to know that, Mr. Speaker, is if he releases the documents and shows us the conditions upon which Ski Kananaskis Inc. was entitled to the loan guarantee agreement; what it is that Ski Kananaskis put up as collateral, for instance, under that agreement. I think Albertans ought to know how their money is being spent. It's too late to undo the development, but I think the minister would do well to come clean with the facts thereafter.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise to tell the minister that there's no good reason why he shouldn't release the documents asked for in this motion, and in fact there are very good reasons why he should. It's obvious that when

the taxpayers' dollars are involved, the government should tell the taxpayers of this province exactly what is involved, and in detail. The press release that the minister referred to gives the highlights, a couple of points, brags a lot about what a wonderful thing this is, and says, you know, "Look at this wonderful thing we did." It does not tell the people of Alberta the details about the contract, and we should all have access to the fine print.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do not understand why the minister is reluctant to put this forward. If you're talking about a private company making a private deal with a private bank or something like that, that's one thing. But when a private company takes taxpayers' dollars, then the government has an obligation to tell the taxpayers what's being done with those dollars, and in detail. And nobody is asking for what the negotiations were all about in detail. What we want to know is the result of those negotiations; what was the final agreement that was made. It does not seem to me unreasonable that the minister would table that document in this Assembly so that we can all have a look at those details. This problem has, of course, been before us before, and we've told the government that before.

There are a couple of other problems associated with loan guarantees in general. We should know how many loan guarantees we have. We shouldn't have to do like the Premier said in reply to a question from the Member for Little Bow the other day about "Oh, well, you know, anybody can make a list" sort of thing. We get a press release now, we get a press release again; we get an order in council now, we get an order in council again. When is the government going to account for the taxpayers' dollars in some detail, making a specific list of the kinds of commitments this government has made with taxpayers' dollars to the entrepreneurs of this province under a number of different guises? In one case we don't even know who we made the loan guarantee to. The company has refused to name the principals of the corporation, so that we don't even know who's getting the money. That is absolutely scandalous, Mr. Speaker, that a government thinks it can operate in that manner and get away with it.

Mr. Speaker, this whole business of loan guarantees is a rather funny one. We had some questions in the House the other day to the Treasurer about what guarantees do we have of our guarantee. So the Treasurer went at some length to try to explain that we claimed all the collateral we possibly could for the loan guarantee. Now, Mr. Speaker, that does not make any sense; the concept does not make any sense. Loan guarantees is not a great way to go, let me say. I mean, it's not saying that one would never use it, but it's not exactly a great way to promote activity in this province. And to try to claim that somehow those loan guarantees are somehow guaranteed in the agreements is rather absurd, it would seem to me.

Now, let's just take a look at a particular circumstance, for example. If a company can borrow money from a bank and has enough collateral to borrow that money, then it does not need a loan guarantee from anybody, including the government. It has enough collateral to go to the bank and say, "Okay, we want a loan," and the bank gives them the loan because they've got the collateral to ask for it. Once you pass the point where the company wants a loan greater than the amount of any assets they have as collateral, then the bank's going to say to them: "Well, you're going to have to get somebody else to back you up. So go to the government, and if they're willing to put up some money in a loan guarantee, then maybe we'll give you the loan." So now if your company is already oversubscribed to the capital

it has in asking for its loan guarantee, what is the point of the government sitting here trying to tell us that they somehow can protect that loan guarantee by asking him to put up his personal this, that, or the other thing? He hasn't got any collateral left, or he wouldn't have had to come to the government for a loan guarantee in the first place.

So know that when you do a loan guarantee you've put up a lot of money that is not free from risk. There is not a lot of collateral backing it, or else they wouldn't need the loan guarantee from the government. So I don't know why we got into those kinds of crazy explanations the other day of trying to say, "Oh, but we make sure we do get collateral to back up the loan guarantee." It's nonsense. Of course you don't. Even the Treasurer admitted the other day that he's concerned about the level of our loan guarantees in this province, and here we have an example of a minister who has a loan guarantee contract and he won't even tell us the details on it.

Mr. Speaker, that's not acceptable. The government must come clean as to what it's doing with tax dollars. Any person or corporation that takes tax dollars has to be prepared for public scrutiny of that contract. I see no reason for this government to reject this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: St Albert.

MR. STRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think Motion for a Return 157 calls into question the whole concept of loan guarantees. I think, again, just to repeat what my colleague said to the minister, we even have a Provincial Treasurer who is concerned about the amount of money that the Alberta government's offering and giving out in loan guarantees. I think certainly if the Provincial Treasurer is getting concerned, perhaps more people on the front benches and the back benches in the Conservative Party should also get concerned.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

It seems that almost everybody, every owner that's coming to the province of Alberta in any major industrial construction project or any major venture, is coming in to this government and lining up at the Provincial Treasurer's office for a loan guarantee or some type of oil royalty, writedown, or gift.

MR. NELSON: That's baloney, and you know it.

MR. STRONG: Well, if you want to say something, why don't you get up and say something, Stan?

AN HON. MEMBER: You sit down.

MR. STRONG: I'm not finished.

But it seems that we've got a few million of taxpayers' dollars being given up in loan guarantees here to Ski Kananaskis. Now, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade stood up and said that it's not our policy as a government to offer up to the public view a commercial venture, because it should be secret. Well, that might be true, and probably is true if that owner is going into a bank or making other financial arrangements to get his or her money for any particular venture. That's not the question here. The question is that we, on behalf of the Alberta taxpayer, are offering up public dollars in the form of loan guarantees and the public are the ones that are going to take the loss.

Now, these are public funds and this government has a commitment to Albertans and to the population of this province, whom they represent, to disclose all financial dealings, financial arrangements, financial loan guarantees, or anything else they're using public dollars for.

The minister also brought up the Olympics. I don't think we stand here and condemn the Olympics. I think certainly the Olympics were a great thing for Alberta, a great thing for Calgary. Nobody's saying that it shouldn't have been done. The problem is loan guarantees, and the Olympics have nothing to do with loan guarantees from this government and disclosure of all financial details in regard to those loan guarantees.

Again, if we look at the Peter Pocklington arrangement I feel -- certainly as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, because I get questions from many of my constituents in St. Albert that say to me -- and they're businessmen; some of them are smaller businessmen and some of them are larger businessmen -- where do you get in line to get money from the Alberta government? Now, if we have a policy as government, if these Conservatives have a policy as government, then certainly not only what is it, but where do you fill the form out to qualify for it? [interjection] We know what it is; it's cash. Now, where are those forms? Where is the public access to this government to say, "Well, maybe I should come and see the Provincial Treasurer to get a loan to buy a new car," and get that underwritten by this government. Or perhaps the leader of the Liberal Party could go in and ask the Provincial Treasurer for a bailout for his failed firm.

Are these determinations made, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of who's got the political connections, who's got the political clout, who contributes money to the Tory party? Is that how these arrangements are made? [interjections] I believe it. Because somebody over there finally said the truth: believe it. I do believe it; it's one of the reasons I'm here trying to get rid of them all.

There has to be a public policy established and set by this government that gets into total access and freedom of information; that if we are going to, indeed, spend public dollars, that we as Albertans know who's getting them, know all the financial details on how they got them, what interest rates they're paying, who's going to get paid back first, because I as an Albertan don't want to be left in last place, because I know what you'll do. You'll increase my taxes and the taxes of a lot of people in this province who don't feel they should pay.

Now, let's start setting some policy, and let's make that policy accessible to every Albertan in this province, not just your friends or your supporters or people who contribute money to your party, because that is not the policy I want to see and it's not the policy Albertans want to see. Let's disclose.

AN HON. MEMBER: Make your union wage available.

MR. STRONG: Anytime you want to see it, you just come and ask me. As a matter of fact, I'll give you copies of my T-4 slips, and I'm dam sure you wouldn't give me yours. We'll trade them.

Mr. Speaker, it's not as if we on this side and in this party condemn the use of loan guarantees as an economic tool for the advantage of Alberta and all Albertans. The thing that we're opposed to is secret little loans: \$67 million to Peter Pocklington, another \$100 million out of the Treasury Branches that our Provincial Treasurer, this Houdini here, gets up and says, "That's arm's length." I didn't just fall off a turnip boat, Mr.

Speaker. Anybody naive enough to believe that had better go and see a psychologist. I'm lucky; I've got one sitting beside me. I asked her the other day, "Do you really believe that?"

Now, that's the whole question of these loan guarantees. They are a useful economic tool in this economy to promote Alberta, promote Albertans, and promote fairness for all those Albertans in the system that we have here, democracy. Now, why won't the minister disclose all of the financial dealings in regard to this little venture? Because I would certainly love, as an Albertan, to go into his office and get a couple of million dollars underwritten by him, or whoever, in the Tory party. But I don't know where the lineup is, and many other Albertans don't know where the lineup is. I mean, this government can't even give supply contracts, labour contracts to Alberta contractors. Where do you line up for these loan guarantees? I'd sure like to know.

We on this side want full public disclosure of any loan guarantee or any financial transaction of this government, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's about time this government accepted their responsibility and commitment to the taxpayers of this province. If they had any integrity, they would disclose fully all of the financial dealings of this government and start openly being a government that truly represents all Albertans, because they've failed miserably over almost two years now, since I've been in this Legislature: totally failed miserably. It's time to start doing your jobs.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The time for debate for this motion has expired.

MR. TAYLOR: Do I get a chance to close debate?

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. It's 4:30. I'm sorry; the debate has expired.

head: **PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS**
OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS
(Second Reading)

Bill 203
Quality Child Day Care Standards Act

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to proceed to second reading of Quality Child Day Care Standards Act, Bill 203.

The purpose of this Act is to amend the Act that deals with day care facilities, which is called the Social Care Facilities Licensing Act, in such a way as to bring the standards required for day care and day care operators and staff in Alberta up to reasonable standards.

The Bill falls into two parts, if hon. members care to look at it. The first section, 3.1, being what is to be added to the Social Care Facilities Licensing Act, deals with physical standards: the ratio of space to children, the ratio of staff to children, and what must be provided in the way of facilities. Now, that is the less important half of the Bill, important though it is, and I will leave others to comment on that half of it. Suffice to say that reasonable accommodation must, of course, be provided for children, and there is some difference of opinion, doubtless, as to exactly what that consists of.

The second part, 3.2, is much the more important because it deals with the qualifications of staff. The present standards in

our day care facilities required under the Act -- it's actually to be found in the regulations -- are completely deficient when it comes to staff. The sole requirement is that the person be 18 years of age or over -- I'm not talking about the operator of the facility; I'm talking about the people who take care of the children -- and that's it. Indeed, younger ones can help, and that's fair enough. The general idea is, and I've heard it said by a government member, that the basic requirement is not formal qualifications but an attitude to children that's warm and loving and motherly or fatherly, one might say. Well, that's fine. That's important, doubtless. But what I wish to impress upon members at a little length, Mr. Speaker, is that qualifications indeed are important, formal qualifications, and not merely being a decent sort of care giver that can naturally, one thinks, look after small children.

The reason is basically that our rate of learning decreases from time of birth to the end of our life. Our ability to learn quickly actually decreases fairly constantly, so that the younger you are, the quicker you can learn. Now, the younger you are, the harder it is to learn complicated things, but the actual rate of learning follows that path. Consequently, at the preschool era and in the first year or two of school it may be thought that it's simple to do because the tasks and information learned are simple tasks and information. But that is deceptive, because these are periods in a child's life when they are learning a great deal of basic skills and information. The best people to impart that are those who are trained to understand what they're doing. I don't denigrate the need for care and compassion and all that sort of thing, but I wish to emphasize to hon. members the real need for formal training for care givers in this situation.

I will put before members, Mr. Speaker, the answers to three questions for their consideration, especially of this half of the Bill. First, what constitutes a quality early childhood teacher? Secondly, why are such teachers essential for excellence in day care? Thirdly, how do we find and produce such teachers?

As I was saying, there's a lot involved in being a competent quality day care professional. It's generally thought, at least many people think, that the proper attitude to children is enough, but if you consider such matters as the following, I think you will reach a different conclusion. Do you think, for example, that everybody knows how to record children's growth and development and to select appropriate methods for doing this recording? Do you think that everybody can develop goals for children as a group and then establish goals for each child individually? Do you think that any warm human being who is no more than a warm human being can plan environments or stimulate language development? Can anybody develop long-range program plans? Can just anybody minimize the spread of communicable diseases among preschool kids? Do you think that anyone who is just a warm person can recognize the signs of possible child abuse and take appropriate actions when suspected? How many people do you think are able to assist children with special problems to deal with those problems? And on it goes: the ability to establish and implement budgets, to select and assess equipment, to implement procedures, to select staff, and so on. So it is not enough, Mr. Speaker, simply to stipulate that the only requirement is that the person be 18 years of age or above.

The next question is: why are these teachers essential for excellence in early childhood programs? I've said that this is the time of the greatest development for children in terms of pace, and that is true. You probably remember the old axiom attributed to the Jesuits: give us a child before it's five and it's

ours forever. That illustrates the abiding permanence of what a preschooler learns, and if they get off on the wrong foot at that time, then it's hard to get them on the right foot later on. So that emphasizes the need for the training that I am talking about, Mr. Speaker.

For example, take language development. The growth in this area between the ages of one and five is phenomenal. To do the best for our preschool children, the ones that are in day care, you must be able to foster this development competently. We have here a wonderful tool for getting all citizens in Alberta off to an even start. We all know that those who are well-off can afford the sort of quality child care and education that will give them a start, once they get into school, ahead of others. So those who come from impoverished backgrounds, Mr. Speaker, will have a really hard time catching up. The government, to its credit, in this province does provide reasonably good funding for day care compared to other provinces, but it is not widespread enough, and it is unfortunately much too much geared to subsidizing for-profit privately run day cares without adequate controls that the money will be put to good use.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I wish to emphasize that the lack of controls on the quality of the people taking care of the children in the day care negates the purpose of that financial help put out by the government, because it can be used, as I say and repeat, as a wonderful tool for equalizing opportunity amongst our growing young people, because it's very hard to make up that lost time. So we need to know that the people who are looking after our preschoolers are good language models, are able to stimulate the children and provide situations and materials and activities that encourage language growth. They need experiences to tie the language to. Quality teachers provide appropriate experiences, answer children's questions, ask children questions just to get them to talk more. These language skills, as with so many skills at this age level, are very, very important because they are the foundation of other skills.

Mr. Speaker, I don't for the moment suggest that there aren't many workers in day care facilities, particularly in this city and doubtless in other large cities in Alberta, who fulfill all these requirements, but there are no standards apart from one of age, and so the variation is enormous. That does not have to be. The subsidies that are provided and the subsidies that certainly we ought to provide are perfectly capable of being such as to sustain well-trained teachers. The fact that there are, in fact, such well-trained day care workers employed in Alberta shows that to be so, yet we do not have the necessary standards.

Another reason why quality teachers are important for preschoolers is that young children do not learn the same way that adults or older children learn, another very important observation, Mr. Speaker. You can't give them a book. You can't tell the children, "Read chapter 13." You have to instruct them yourself and provide the materials of a visual nature but not of a reading nature, except perhaps simple words, to forward this development.

Another reason for having quality teachers in preschool programs is that some very large research studies recently done have shown that the key component in distinguishing quality day care programs from inferior ones, Mr. Speaker, is that the staff had some training in early childhood education or child development. It's not the amount of floor space you have or how many blocks of Lego you have and all those other things, important as they are in their way, and which the Act and regulations do provide for more or less adequately now in our province; it's whether your staff has been trained in early child-

hood care giving.

If I can quote from the report of the last federal task force on child care in Canada, which states:

Caregiver qualifications is an important ingredient of good care. Child care experts agree that specialized training related to child development and early childhood education should be a requisite for at least part of the staff of a child care centre.

That's what we propose in this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I've referred to the fact that all it says in our regulations is:

No person under the age of 18 years shall be solely responsible for the care or well-being of children in a day care facility.

The regulations do not go beyond that. But it might be thought, well, it's impractical to lay down even the standards that we propose in our Bill, that are as follows:

No child day care centre may operate unless it has a full-time on-site director who has

- (a) completed a minimum of 2 years of study and received a diploma or equivalent degree in early childhood development from an educational institute recognized by the Canadian Association of Community Colleges or the Canadian Association of Universities and Colleges, and
- (b) at least 1 year's experience in a child day care centre.

And secondly:

Every person who is a full-time director of a child day care centre shall have completed or be engaged in study for a post-diploma certificate in day care administration in a course of studies undertaken and completed at an educational institution recognized by the Canadian Association of Community Colleges or the Canadian Association of Universities and Colleges.

And that

Every child day care centre shall have, for each group of children as specified [above] at least 1 staff member who either has a 1-year diploma in early childhood development or education, child and family studies, education or related field as set out in the regulations and 1 year's experience at a child day care centre, or a 2-year diploma in those fields.

I was saying that it might be thought that it was too tall an order to specify that. It isn't, Mr. Speaker. It is possible in a short space of time, if not already, to get those qualified people qualified as stipulated in the Bill.

The fact is that other provinces do have similar regulations. Our province is, by quite a margin, the one with the fewest qualifications -- just the one I mentioned. The number of graduates being turned out from the colleges I mentioned or universities is perfectly adequate to meet the requirements and would be greatly multiplied in number, Mr. Speaker, if the requirements in Alberta were as stipulated. Then there would be the incentive for them to do that. Across Canada that has been the trend, and we are lagging behind because, I believe, our people in charge just believe that a certain attitude is sufficient for those who give care.

I conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker, by saying that to require quality day care care givers along the lines I have suggested is an opportunity for us to equalize opportunity. . . . [some applause] Yes, I'm glad you agree, Member for Stony Plain. . . . between Albertans so that they will not enter into the school system handicapped, so that the rich children will have a better chance of succeeding than the poor.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Calder.

MS MJOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a very important Bill that my colleague from Edmonton-Strathcona has

introduced today, Bill 203, the quality child care standards Act. I think it's important that this Bill be given discussion in this House, because we are sponsoring this Bill because we advocate higher standards, especially in the area of training. I think this Bill, if people read through it, demonstrates a commitment to children and also to families. But it's not only the Official Opposition that is concerned about standards in this province, and especially when it comes to the area of training and our concern with improving our child care system. It's also many parents, many child care workers out there, many social workers, community leaders, educators -- the list goes on and on -- many organizations.

The Official Opposition has introduced this Bill before, and although it has been revised this time around, it still is essentially the same and deals with essentially the same components. This Bill has been introduced three times altogether since I've been here, and still we see no action on the part of this government in implementing some training regulations. We see no improvement in standards through legislation, and I think it's long overdue.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to get into a discussion on why we need day care or why we don't need day care, and I think there are probably some members in the House that would still feel that it's not necessary that we have it. But it's very clear that we take a look at the number of single-parent families and families who need child care, for whatever reasons they are, that it is definitely a need, and that we must support those families in caring for their children. Times have changed, family structures have changed, and I think most people recognize this. So as long as we have child care centres operating in the province, we have to have proper care for our young people. We have to make sure that they're given respect and they're given high quality care, because, after all, their well-being is at stake.

Mr. Speaker, that's what this Bill is all about. It places our children as a priority, and it demands that we treat them with respect and with the importance that they deserve. This Bill, through regulations, will call for such things as full-time on-site directors. It increases the space required for play from the current 2.5 square metres to 4 square metres. But like I've said previously, the most important element in this Bill, I feel, is that it requires that child workers be trained. I think that is something that is embarrassingly absent from the regulations that this province has right now, and also seriously absent. The Bill would ensure that every full-time director had a minimum of a two-year diploma, that they had at least one year's experience in a child care centre, that they have knowledge in day care administration, and that each centre have staff who have been trained in early childhood development.

Mr. Speaker, we want child care workers to obtain diplomas and degrees. And it's very important -- this is a clause in the Bill -- that they obtain these degrees in "an educational institution recognized by the Canadian Association of Community Colleges or the Canadian Association of Universities and Colleges," because anyone can offer a course in early childhood development, give out a certificate, and say that they are trained. Because we are committed to the very best for our children and we respect the women and men who work in this field, we must insist that if individuals are going to have training, it must be done at a credible institution where those qualifications can be transferable to other institutions and also to other provinces.

But, Mr. Speaker, why are we the only province in this country that does not require any training?

DR. WEST: Because it's a free province.

MS MJOLSNESS: Because it's a free province, the Member for Vermilion-Viking says. Well, let me tell you what we're doing in this province because we do not require training for staff. I don't think it makes sense, because what we're doing is playing with the lives of our young people. Perhaps later the Member for Vermilion-Viking will get up and tell us why we require people who work with our children that are over four and a half years old to have training and yet under four and a half years old we require them to have no training whatsoever. Perhaps he can explain that to me later.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't make sense for us not to require any training at all. We want our children to, like I say, have the best, because in these early years it is very crucial for them to develop in a very positive way. We're talking about group care; we're not talking about a mother who is at home with her own children. We may be talking about 10 two-year-olds perhaps all wanting the same toy. It's not the same as a mother at home with perhaps one two-year-old or two two-year-olds, as may be the case for Edmonton-Centre, or perhaps three. But no parent would be at home with 10, and this becomes a different issue.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're dealing with children in groups and we're dealing with people working with children that aren't their own, and this requires special skills. These tiny people are developing in very rapid ways. They are growing physically; they're growing intellectually. They are developing personality, and they're developing ways to deal with their feelings and deal with their anger and whatever. These, like I say, are very crucial years for these young people, and we have to respect that; we have to acknowledge that. Certainly trained staff would bring some guarantees to the system and to good care. It would bring proper care to our children.

Mr. Speaker, a person who goes through a course at Grant MacEwan, for example is screened before they are accepted into that particular course. Then when they enter into this particular course, they learn about different ways of dealing with children and they learn about the ways that children grow and the way that children learn. They have the skills to deal with children in a positive way. When we're talking about, for example, discipline, they would learn alternatives to perhaps spanking. They would learn those alternatives. They would know that there are other ways of dealing with children and working out their problems. I'm not saying that many workers don't have the best interests of the children at heart, but of course many, like I say, are not aware of alternatives.

Mr. Speaker, when you have owners of day cares -- and let's face it: in Alberta it's a business -- that have no background in early childhood development and they are hiring people who also have no background in early childhood development, you are going to encounter some problems. There have been a lot of organizations that have documented various experiences, negative experiences, that they have had either with their children being in day cares or going into day cares and seeing the kinds of things that are happening. One parent observed, for example, that there was very little parent involvement in the day care that they were involved with, that their child was going to. We believe very strongly that parents have the ultimate responsibility to raise their children, and they have to be involved in that

process. That is why we need parent involvement in the centres; they need that input because they have ultimate responsibility. Trained workers, I believe, acknowledge and understand how important that parental involvement is.

Another observation that this parent made was -- and these are just examples -- that sand, water, and painting were not allowed because the director worried about the mess. Another concern was that the children were eating suckers for snacks. They had no discipline policy at this particular day care, and the staff often resorted to name-calling.

AN HON. MEMBER: Just like at home.

MS MJOLSNES: Is that what you do? You name-call to your children?

And, Mr. Speaker, the list goes on. In this province we only require that workers be 18 years of age, and that's it.

Now, this is a common concern, that in addition to this, there is not adequate monitoring taking place, because where we do have regulations, in many cases they're not being followed. I remember discussing in a classroom of grade 6 students about day care. They wanted to know what we do in this House, and I was talking about this particular Bill. I said that the only regulation we do have in this province is that child care workers be 18 years old. Well, one student put up her hand and said: "Well, not in the day care that I was in. I had 12-year-olds taking care of me when I was in that day care." At the time I thought, "Well, does she really know what she's talking about?" But I did recognize what she was talking about, because that has been a complaint that has come to my attention on a few occasions. It has been reported, but again we're dealing with this government who believes in secrecy, and we never know if any action has been taken against these day cares if we do make complaints. I don't know if this incident just happened once or whatever, but it is a concern out there.

I believe strongly that if the staff were trained, they would enhance the care tremendously throughout the system. They would identify where there were things going wrong, and they would correct those. They would also identify weaknesses within the system, and they would have the ability to strengthen it. They would also contribute significantly to the monitoring of the system as a whole. Trained child care workers become absolutely a crucial component of a system of child care if we're intending to offer those children quality care. [interjection]

Now, the Member for Vermilion-Viking keeps telling me that this is state control. Well, I'd like to bring to his attention that this government's own women's advisory council made recommendations that we have weaknesses in our day care system. Their very first recommendation, Mr. Speaker, the very first one in their report in October of 1987, was that we need training; we need training requirements for our child care workers. It was the government's own advisory council that said this. The report goes on at great length, making the case for the need for qualified child care workers. As well, they recommend that . . . Well, they had a lot of things in their report, a lot of concerns. They made a lot of recommendations besides that particular one.

In the second section of their report they also discussed low wages for workers, which is another issue that we have to deal with. But they stated in their report that this particular council, set up by this government,

supports a regulated, good quality, affordable and easily accessible child care system in the Province of Alberta.

Then they went on to state in their report that

Albertans are concerned about the adequacy of provincial day care standards for staff training and emergency training.

They talk about

the monitoring and enforcement of existing standards and the availability of information about individual child care facilities.

They talk about the wages that workers are getting and about "the accessibility and options available" in regards to child care.

In the second section of their report they talk about wages, and they state -- and this is right in the report -- that

in Canada in 1984, the average salary for a child care worker was \$14,212.00 [a year], which is 30% lower than is earned by the average industrial wage earner or animal care worker on a government farm.

Now, Mr. Speaker, is this how we illustrate how important our children are to us? Wages are pathetically low for child care workers, and I think that sends out a message.

Now, we've heard from various government people that if we institute and require training, the cost will go up. Well, you're dam right wages will go up and costs will go up, and I think it's long overdue. These people are doing a very important job, and traditionally this type of job has not been recognized for what it's worth. I think it's time that we recognized how important it is and that we paid these people decent wages. When we continue to pay them at the low wages that we are, we're making a statement. First of all, we're saying that what they're doing is not important. Second of all, we're saying that what they're doing is simply babysitting or custodial work. Now, I happen to disagree with both of those. I think we're also saying, Mr. Speaker, that our children are not a priority, that they're not important. The Official Opposition objects strongly to this type of thinking. We recognize how important their job is, and we recognize that their wages should be a lot higher.

They're also working under a lot of poor working conditions. Again, that's another issue, because staff turnover continues to be high. Certainly if workers are happy, then they will give better care to the children.

There are many organizations and parents and child care workers who have expressed their concern in one way or another. Even though we have recommendations now from the Advisory Council on Women's Issues and they have made recommendations to the province, the province still continues to do nothing, continues to dismiss the recommendations of the advisory council, and continues to refuse to make changes. We need improvements. I think the time is long overdue. We need training requirements. We need accountability, which is almost nil. The monitoring is weak and sporadic. Parents have little input in many of the centres that are taking care of their kids. The wages are low, and the working conditions are poor in many cases.

We do have some very high quality day care happening in the province, however. I would recognize that, and I think that this is very important, because high quality, good quality care can support families and strengthen families. But the key is that it has to be high quality. Mr. Speaker, even when a parent is at home, they can benefit from child care services outside the home. Again I stress that it has to be high quality.

I think the government has a responsibility to ensure that quality is high and that our children are not placed at risk. Now, I would suggest that with a lack of training requirements in this province -- the only one in Canada -- I would say that this government, because it refuses to act in this area, is concurring in the notion of placing children at risk. Their nonresponse in this area signifies to me that they endorse putting children at

risk. I'm appalled by this, and I'm talking very seriously now. I think we're going to pay for it in the years to come. Now, if they truly believe that children are a priority and that they are not putting children at risk, I would ask that they all support this Bill today, or that they stand up and at least give their words of support to this Bill, and that they implement higher standards, especially in the area of training.

Thank you.

[Two members rose]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Order please. I believe the hon. Member for Lacombe caught the Chair's eye.

MR. R. MOORE: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Just a comment to begin with. It's unfortunate that I haven't the Member for Vermilion-Viking to coach me here, but I'll try and make out for my time.

Anyway, quality child day centre standards are something I think everybody in this House is interested in and supports: top quality day care standards. I congratulate the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona for bringing it forward. I only hope it wasn't because the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods made some very unsubstantiated statements about day cares in his area not being fit for animals to live in. I hope it was from a sincere belief that we do need these standards. I'm sure it probably was, but I just wanted to clarify that.

Now, in day care or in anything when we're dealing with people, we must always remember that in government we must remain as flexible as possible so that we can react to the changing times as quickly as possible, to what the needs are and so on. We as legislators must be concerned that we don't bring in that legislation that slows down the process to react, especially where there are children involved. We must be able to react very, very quickly.

Now, Bill 203 brings many areas into legislation, into an Act; they amend the Act. And I would like, if you'll bear with me, Mr. Speaker, as I go over each section here that the hon. member in his Bill 203 would like to add after section 3 of the Act, to relate to existing regulations, which are just as effective as the Act in governing how things go in this province, and to illustrate that in the regulations all these points are covered to a greater extent than what he proposes to place in his amendment. Coming back to what I said first of all, we must be flexible if we are to react to things as they arise. In regulations we can react immediately. A government as concerned as this government can react immediately, but when you go back to an Act to react, it's got to come back through the legislative process and might take years before we can react. So we've got to be careful that we don't trap ourselves into putting things into an Act that should be in regulations and covered adequately in there. That's what I propose to do here in the next few minutes, Mr. Speaker: go over each section of this Bill here and then take a look at the regulation.

Under Bill 203 it says that the following be added after section 3:

3.1(1) Every person applying for a licence for a child day care centre shall satisfy the Director that he will have the facilities and the capability of complying with this section.

I move over to the existing regulations, and I'll read:

4(1) An applicant for an initial day care facility licence shall provide...

And this is what's in existence today. I heard over on that side

the insinuations that there were no standards. You got the idea that day care people were a bunch of -- whatever they are. I want to go back here now. They must provide, and this is the law that we abide by, the regulations are here:

- (a) evidence that the following has been obtained:
 - (i) zoning approval from the appropriate municipal planning authority,
 - (ii) building approval from the Building Standards Branch, Department of Labour...
 - (iii) a satisfactory fire inspection report from the Provincial or District Office of the Fire Prevention Branch... and
 - (iv) a satisfactory health inspection report from the Local Board of Health or Health Unit within which the day care facility is to be located...
- (c) an emergency plan satisfactory to the Director and an inspector appointed under *The Fire Prevention Act* that includes
 - (i) emergency evacuation and fire drill procedures,
 - (ii) arrangements for alternate emergency accommodation, and
 - (iii) arrangements for transportation to alternate emergency accommodation;
- (d) a written description of the day care facility's proposed program;
- (e) a plan of the day care facility showing dimensions and use of rooms.

Mr. Speaker, it goes on:

- 5. On receipt of an application for a licence to operate a day care facility, the Director may conduct an inspection of the proposed day care facility to ensure that it complies with this regulation.

Now, don't you think this satisfies away more so than that one that is proposed?

We go on. In the next part of Bill 203:

Every person providing day care in the child day care centre shall provide an environment that is conducive to the health, safety and well-being of every child therein.

We can't argue with that. But let's look at what's in effect right now. Remember:

... an environment that is conducive to the health, safety and well-being of every child therein.

Number 7 of the regulations: this is what's in effect now. It has been indicated by that side that we are neglecting people.

7(1) A day care facility shall comply with the following:

This is what's in effect now. It has been indicated by that side there that we're neglecting people.

- (a) no room or space to be used for child care purposes shall be located more than one storey below the ground;
- (b) no room or space that is accessible only by ladder, folding stairs or through a trap door shall be used for child care purposes, other than play equipment including lofts and climbing apparatus;
- (c) subject to clause (f) net floor area shall be provided for playing, resting or sleeping of not less than 2.5 square metres per child in all day care facilities;
- (d) ceiling height in all day care facilities shall be not less than 2.3 metres;
- (e) children may be permitted in the kitchen area only while under the supervision of staff;
- (f) as of August 1, 1982, net floor area shall be provided for playing, resting or sleeping of not less than 3 square metres per child in all day care facilities except nursery schools, which shall have a net floor area of not less than 2.5 square metres per child...

8 A day care centre and nursery school shall also comply with the following:

Now, we see how conducive the environment is, Mr. Speaker. I must give you the rest, because I want you to understand how terrible conditions are out there as they're described from across the floor. I want to carry on on that one, because we're con-

ducive to the environment, and I want to go on that.

(a) water closets and lavatory facilities that are in accordance with regulations under *The Alberta Uniform Building Standards Act* shall be provided in a convenient location, accessible from individual rooms and adjacent outdoor play space;

(b) bathroom fixtures shall be easily useable by children.

9 A day care centre shall also comply with the following:

(a) each room used for child care purposes shall have a layout conducive to easy and effective supervision;

No corners they can get lost in.

(b) there shall be adequate accommodation for administration, interviewing, food preparation, maintenance and records, staff lounge and an area for staff to change their clothes;

(c) the kitchen may be used as a staff lounge except for those times when food is being prepared or consumed and it shall not be used as a playroom.

It goes on now. I'm giving you environment and facilities as drawn out in Bill 203.

10 A day care facility shall comply with the following:

(a) all furnishings and equipment shall be maintained in good repair and be free from sharp, loose or pointed parts;

(b) furnishings and equipment shall include:

(i) a quantity of tables and chairs in proportion to the number and size of children enrolled in the day care facility,

(ii) safe, suitable play materials and equipment, both indoor and outdoor in sufficient quantity to offer the children enrolled in the day care facility a variety of activities;

(c) cupboard and other storage space easily accessible to children shall be provided for indoor and outdoor play materials, equipment, clothing and supplies;

(d) individual lockers, cubbyholes or hooks easily accessible to children shall be provided in a lighted area and arranged in such a manner that each child's clothes and personal effects can be kept separate from those of other children.

11 A day care centre and family day care home shall also comply with the following:

I'm still on it, Mr. Speaker; bear with me. I'd like the citizens of Alberta and the people over there who say conditions are so terrible to understand some of the things we have here in Alberta to protect our children, which we value very, very highly.

(a) a separate crib which meets the standards established by the Cradle and Crib Regulations under the *Hazardous Products Act* (Canada) shall be provided for every child under 19 months of age;

(b) a cot or bed or sleeping that of a suitable size shall be provided for every child 19 months of age or older;

(c) double deck or multiple tier beds shall not be used for children under the age of 6;

(d) sleeping space for children under the age of 19 months shall be sufficiently separate from older children to ensure quiet sleeping accommodations;

(e) when in use, cribs, cots, beds and sleeping mats shall be at least 0.5 metres apart;

(f) cribs, cots, beds and sleeping mats shall be furnished with blankets to provide and maintain adequate warmth for the children while sleeping;

(g) cribs and play pens shall not limit the child's field of vision.

I think that covers the "environment that is conducive to the health, safety and well-being of every child." I don't know what else we could cover, Mr. Speaker. It's right there in the regulation.

Now, let's go to the next section. This is an interesting one.

(3) The ratio of staff to children and the size of the child group shall not exceed:

(a) for children up to 18 months, a staff:child ratio of 1:3...

and so on. I want to cover a lot of these points. I'm going to run out of time. I'm going to have to cut down a little bit. But that is covered under section 33 of the regulations, and under section 33 it sets out the whole thing:

The following minimum primary staff to child ratios within day care facilities except nursery school shall be in effect at all times except while the children are having meals or naps...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Chair hesitates to interrupt, but we should be on the principle of Bill 203. The Chair's getting a little bit concerned that perhaps we're discussing matters that would normally come up in (Committee of the Whole.

MR. R. MOORE: Well, I take your advisement seriously, Mr. Speaker, but I just wanted to point out that we do care about children and we want to go on every one of those sections and read the regulations. They're there and cover to a far greater extent.

There's one very important one I wanted to come to. It was dwelt on very heavily by the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona and the other speaker:

(3) No child day care centre may operate unless it has a full-time on-site director who has

(a) completed a minimum of 2 years of study and received a diploma or equivalent degree in early childhood development from an educational institute recognized by the Canadian Association of Community Colleges or the Canadian Association of Universities and Colleges, and

(b) at least 1 year's experience in a child day care centre.

That's an interesting one. That's a very interesting one. I was raised in a home -- there were five of us. I'm afraid I must be terribly abused because I was raised in a home that -- I don't know what my mother's education was. She had lots of qualifications, though, I'll tell those people across there. My wife and I raised our kids. They all turned out good, so we must have some qualification. We haven't got all these diplomas and everything. It doesn't mention anything about compassion and warmth and love and that it comes from a person being a mother. You say you're going to take a proven mother that's raised six kids out of there and put in one of these educated academics. I can't buy it; I just can't buy it. Where did love and that go? And when I look around this House, Mr. Speaker, I look at every one of you, I want to look you all in the eye, and I'll guarantee you not one of you was raised by a person who had "completed a minimum of 2 years of study and received a diploma or equivalent degree in early childhood development" So whatever you are, you're not fit or something, because we aren't fit to hold our kids in play school unless they have something like this.

So unfortunately, I don't know what goes on here. Dam it all. I wish I had another half hour, but I'm running out of time. Anyway, that is one thing I just cannot agree with: that we replace people -- we're talking about day care centres -- with people with tremendous education. That complements, but they do not anywhere say that a person who has gone the experience route of raising children and is doing a successful job and is a proven mother can run a day care centre, because they've got to have this. Now, that may be what the socialists like -- they like bureaucratic control right down into the homes -- but I don't buy it.

I want to go on. I just wonder if there's a conspiracy here or

something developing out of the socialist side. I remember the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore making the famous statement about home being the most dangerous place for a woman to be. Now, we suddenly have them coming forward: well, in day care -- they don't say it, but I'm getting the feeling they don't feel that's the place for a mother to be. So I think that what they're doing is trying to get all the people that really feel and love and that out of the homes, get them out of the place here, and replace them with bureaucrats with high academic standards, people out of touch with reality. I never saw an academic yet that was in touch with reality, Mr. Speaker. They live in their land of theory. But boy, when it comes down to children, you can't beat the mothers. I speak for every mother in here. They're the best. I don't buy this. [interjections]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Now, just quickly, as time is short, I would say that as all sections of Bill 203, as well-meaning as it is - I'm not criticizing or anything else; it's well-meaning -- are covered to a far greater extent in present regulations, I just say that this is an exercise . . . I don't know why it was brought forward. I hope it wasn't because of the reason I spoke of before, that you believed the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods. I hope it wasn't that, that you believed him. I didn't believe him, and nobody else over here believed him. Hopefully that wasn't it. Or that it wasn't brought forward as political grandstanding to show "we care for children" and this side doesn't. I hope that wasn't it. I just say again -- and I want to underline that and repeat it, Mr. Speaker -- that all sections of this Bill are covered to a greater extent in present regulations, and I see no purpose to be served

by this Bill, absolutely none. It just takes away the flexibility that we as government and people have to react quickly to changing times. Putting it into the Act is a backward step and a serious injustice to children and future generations of children.

Mr. Speaker, because of the time I move we adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: The member has moved adjournment of debate. Those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion carries.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House adjourn until 8 p.m., when it will reconvene in Committee of Supply with the estimates of the Department of Energy.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the Deputy Government House Leader that the Assembly adjourn until the Committee of Supply rises and reports, does the Assembly agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

[The House recessed at 5:28 p.m.]

