

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

Title: **Tuesday, May 3, 1988 2:30 p.m.**  
Date: 88/05/03

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

**PRAYERS**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our Father, keep us mindful of the special and unique opportunity we have to work for our constituents and our province, and in that work give us both strength and wisdom.

Amen.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill 26****Motor Vehicle Administration  
Amendment Act, 1988**

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 26, the Motor Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 1988.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is directed at improving the safety of the motoring public by emphasizing the seriousness with which this government views impaired driving. The driving suspension periods for persons convicted of impaired driving will be substantially increased. It also introduces the use of new technology and provides additional authority to the police, the judiciary, and motor vehicle administrators to assist in the control and monitoring of persons who have been convicted of impaired driving. It also includes a provision to significantly increase the penalty for driving without adequate insurance and allows the courts to assess fines which more closely reflect the cost of insurance being avoided by high-risk drivers.

[Leave granted; Bill 26 read a first time]

**Bill 19****Marriage Amendment Act, 1988**

MR. ADY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 19, the Marriage Amendment Act, 1988, for first reading.

The purpose of this Bill is to change certain requirements for the registration of clergy to perform marriages and will delete the premarital certificate for a blood test.

[Leave granted; Bill 19 read a first time]

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bills 26 and 19 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders for second reading.

[Motion carried]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Stony Plain, followed by the

Solicitor General.

MR. HERON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly today, 29 grade 6 students from the Stony Plain elementary school. They are accompanied by their teachers Roberta Milner, Debra Butler, and Wayne Turner. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask that they stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce, through you, some people who have been instrumental in bringing forward ideas that might be used to fight impaired driving. I'd like to introduce in the members' gallery Dr. David Hewitt, who is the chairman of the Impaired Driving Countermeasures Coordinating Committee; Mr. John Mazurek, who is a public member of this committee; Mr. Jack Sager, who is a member of the committee, representing People Against Impaired Driving; Cheryl Anslow, who is a director of People Against Impaired Driving; and Mr. Len Blumenthal, who is the chief executive officer of AADAC. I'd ask that they now rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. CHERRY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, 43 students from the Kitscoty elementary school in our famous constituency now. Accompanying them are Melody Harris and Bob Gerhart, their teachers. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly today, 49 students from grade 6 from the Thorncliffe community school, who are accompanied today by their principal Mr. Ron McMullen and three staff members. I believe they are in both the public and members' galleries. I would ask that they rise and receive the usual cordial welcome of the Assembly.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

**Income Tax**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Treasurer. The Treasurer obviously misunderstood the thrust of my questions yesterday dealing with tax unfairness, because I was questioning the declining effective rate of the taxation on corporate profits in the Alberta taxation system. The Treasurer defended declining corporate income tax on the basis of declining corporate profits, which is clearly beside the point. My question to the Treasurer: on reviewing this matter, does the Treasurer share the concern over the declining rate of taxes paid by corporations, regardless of what profits they made? We're talking about the rate, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'd be glad to give the member a lesson in economics again if he wants to go through the process. I have a lot more to add about the strength of this province and the way in which our fiscal plan has accommodated expansion. I'd be glad to pursue that effectively. I know the Leader of the Opposition said he had 14,000 questions when he embarked on this process on March 4 or 5; it's the same question 14,000 times, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, what we get from the Treasurer is a blizzard of words, when we're trying to deal with a very serious matter.

My question again. The level of corporate profits in Alberta has now recovered to the levels that they reached in the 1970s, but the taxes paid on these profits have dropped by hundreds of millions of dollars. That's the point, and I'd ask the Treasurer will the Treasurer explain why Alberta corporations paid reasonable taxes in the 1970s and are not paying them now?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, that's just not true. We have already pointed out to you yesterday that obviously the profits of the corporations are driven by the economic circumstances they face, and if corporations, particularly those in Alberta which are driven essentially by the oil and gas sector, have a reduction in their income, obviously there's a reduction in their tax. Now, through the combination of the federal provisions for tax deductions, our own provision for tax deductions, obviously if you end up with no taxable income as a result of losses, you'll pay zero taxes. Therefore, it's to be expected that the total amount of tax collected in the province as a result of economic downturns will be lower than it would be if the economic strength of the province continued.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we have here is a balanced approach on behalf of this government, an approach which does two things: encourages investment by putting in place the tax regime which is attractive to risk-takers, which provides them with a rate of return, reward for the risk they must take, encourages entrepreneurial spirit -- something, as I said yesterday, which is unknown to the Member for Edmonton-Norwood -- but at the same time is balanced with the kind of tax requirements paid by the individuals. Individuals in this province are paying the lowest tax in Canada, no sales tax, and on balance that is one of the best tax regimes of any province in Canada. That's the pillar of our fiscal plan that we stand on.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, like I said yesterday, gobbledegook. Those are just not the facts. I'm talking about the rate. The Treasurer keeps trying to shift, but let me make it clear for him. Corporations made \$36.5 billion profit in Alberta from '77 to '81, and they paid over \$1.6 billion in taxes. In '82 to '86 the corporate profits were \$50.5 billion, and they paid only \$601.9 million. My question to the Treasurer: those are the figures; how does he justify these giveaways during the '80s with the amount of profits these companies were making?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that I haven't got the time to paint the picture. Maybe we could use cue cards here, so I could describe to the member how the tax system operates. Obviously, you should not assume that taxes are proportional across all taxable income made. Now, that's what the member is saying over there.

Now, Mr. Speaker, because the private sector likes to come to Alberta, likes the government regime that's in place since 1971, and brings investment dollars here, obviously because there's massive investment in this province, as we will see in 1987 and 1988, they have a tax shelter. [interjections] You invest in an asset, you depreciate it, you're taxed . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. It's awful difficult to hear up at this end of the room.

Supplementary.

MR. MARTIN: Yeah, that's what we're talking about. Obviously, they like to come to Alberta. I'd like to come if I didn't pay any taxes either.

What is happening in jolly old Conservative Alberta is that corporations get more and more incentives and credits while average Albertans last year got more tax hikes. Will the Treasurer advise the House why fairness plays almost no part in Alberta's tax policy?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, if you were to set and compare the Alberta tax regime against any other OECD country -- and I say OECD country -- you would find that the Alberta regime stands the fairness test against any other tax system put in place. I can assure you in terms of a Canadian comparison, which is our first test, that in fact we have the fairest tax system of any. Just last year this government took 500,000 low-income Albertans off the tax schedule. That's what we have done here. We have not driven investment away; we have protected disposable income in this province like no other province has. That's why retail sales are the highest in Canada right here in Alberta, and that's why the family income is the second highest. That's the fair regime, and that's why it's hurting across the way, because they know there's no challenge. When you have a government with no sales tax, that's the kind of message the people of Alberta understand because it certainly protects the regressive nature of most taxes which a socialist government would put in place.

DR. WEST: To the Provincial Treasurer. Acknowledging that we have the lowest provincial tax and no sales tax . . .

MS BARRETT: And no corporate tax. [interjections]

DR. WEST: Thank you.

Could the minister indicate the position he is taking with the federal government under the federal tax reform that essentially is bringing in a value-added tax, which brings a sales tax through the back door into Alberta?

MR. JOHNSTON: That's right, Mr. Speaker. It should be noted that the ND Party along the way is advocating a sales tax, by the way, and we're the one element of protection to that movement here in Canada. We're trying to get a fair way to assist the low-income people. We're doing it by protecting them from sales tax.

We're not sure how the value-added tax is going to work yet, but we're doing all we can to determine -- in terms of exports from this province, protection of manufacturers, protection of the grain farmers in particular -- that we understand fully what a value-added tax is. We're going to be sure that when we go to the debate with respect to the value-added tax, we're well prepared to protect those fundamental industries of this province, unlike the ND Party, who would simply tax and tax and tax and spend and spend and spend.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the value-added tax is a federal sales tax.

To the minister: can he explain just why he is allowing the corporations to get by without paying income tax when he realizes that in '86 alone 63 percent of corporate profits were transferred out of the province -- all corporate; not oil?

MR. JOHNSTON: Now, Mr. Speaker, seldom have I heard a

more ridiculous analysis. We expect more from somebody who has had some private-sector experience, someone who knows how large corporations operate.

I recall, Mr. Speaker, that his Liberal Party was concerned about the profits of the oil and gas sector and commissioned a very expensive group to review it. What did they find? They found that that very important sector of taxpayers in this province, the oil and gas corporations, in fact were reinvesting about 65 to 75 percent of their profits back into this province in terms of new exploration, new development, and jobs. That's where it went. Where did the rest of it go? The rest of it went to the Canadian taxpayers; some of it went to retire debt; others went to return to shareholders. That's the way the economic system operates, unless you have interference like the socialist party, the Liberal Party across the way would advocate, with some of the dire consequences if that ever happened to us again in this country.

MR. MARTIN: The government of the corporate welfare bums.

I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn.

#### **Ethane Fuels Industry**

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, once again the Minister of Energy is in the very difficult position of trying to resolve a situation that has arrived as a result of his government's own agenda. Past government policies helped create a situation whereby in order to support further petrochemical development, the government will have to inflict a penalty on gas producers. On the one hand, the Mulroney trade deal has restricted the government's industrial assistance options; on the other, a lack of foresight has left the government unprepared for a battle that has been brewing for years. To the Minister of Energy: is it not the case that the Mulroney trade deal's restrictions have ruled out the possibility of targeted assistance to Alberta Gas Ethylene and that now the government can only support petrochemical projects by taking away from producers?

DR. WEBBER: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PASHAK: I expected that answer from the minister.

As the disputes over upstream ethane extraction have been going on for at least five years, why did this minister not have a plan to deal with them long ago? Was he totally unaware of these problems when he took the job some two years ago?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, the government did have a plan, and the government gave instructions to the ERCB to follow up with respect to a number of requests from the government with respect to their policy. We now have the report of recommendations from the ERCB, and we are going to be consulting with the petrochemical industry and the producers in this province over the next short while before coming to a final decision, to see how we are going to make sure that the petrochemical industry in this province will have an assured supply of ethane in the future, an assured supply at reasonable cost. That is our plan and one that we're going to follow up on.

MR. PASHAK: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't see that in the ERCB recommendations.

Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister then concur with the board's recommendation that an ethane policy should

provide protection only for the feedstock requirements of projects that are already operating or are under construction or already approved? That's what the ERCB statement says; it says nothing about future plans and projects.

DR. WEBBER: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's the hon. member's interpretation of the report. This report is a report of recommendations, a set of recommendations that we're going to consider over the next short while before making a final decision on how we are going to see future development of petrochemicals in this province.

MR. PASHAK: Well, Mr. Speaker, final supplementary. The government appears to try to present itself as blameless in this matter. If that's the case, why do we have two key sectors of Alberta's energy industry at loggerheads with one another? In fact, why is this \$2 billion project that's been planned jeopardized by government action?

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure where the hon. member stands on all this. It sounds as though he's trying to ride two horses at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, there are two very important industries in this province, the one of the oil and gas sector and the other the petrochemical sector. We're wanting both sectors to thrive, and we'll be establishing government policy that will enable both sectors to proceed. In the past, as the hon. member referred to, there have been a number of ERCB hearings on both sides of the issue as to whether or not upstreaming should occur. The ERCB dealt with those issues on a case-by-case basis. They were difficult proceedings. Finally, we as a government decided that we were going to establish a policy that was going to possibly eliminate future hearings that were of that nature and establish a policy where investors can come into this province confident that they will be able to build their petrochemical facilities in the future and have an assured supply of feedstock.

MR. DAY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Does the minister's analysis of the recent ERCB recommendations show that, indeed, the petrochemical industry would be jeopardized if the recommendations were acted upon?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, that's a difficult question to respond to directly. Let me say that we are in the process of carefully reviewing the recommendations of the ERCB but add that in my personal view in 1974 the government of Alberta established a brilliant policy that permitted and encouraged an investment of more than \$6 billion in the petrochemical industry and resulted in the creation of thousands of jobs using, at that time, a product that was not in demand for any other purpose.

Now, recently there is a demand for ethane, and that demand is particularly evident for miscible flooding and enhanced oil recovery. So there is a conflict between the producing industry and the petrochemical industry. Our Premier indicated last Wednesday that the policies that would be developed, subsequent to the release of this report and after consultation with the industry, would be to continue that basic policy that was set in 1974 that would encourage development of the petrochemical industry in Alberta without subsidies and on a basis that would create downstream activities in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Supplementary, Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Energy. The bottom line here is that the Energy Resources Conservation Board has disagreed with the government's brilliant, if I may use the previous minister's term, pricing policy, and now the petrochemical industry is in jeopardy. Why didn't the government take steps earlier to secure the ethane source needed for this integral part of our industrial policy, since the issue goes back to 1974-75? Why are we in this mess at the 11th hour?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member.

DR. WEBBER: I'm surprised that the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo is not familiar enough with the history of the energy industry to know the reasons and the answer to that question. The reasons are, as the hon. minister of economic development indicated, that at the time petrochemical development came in after the government policy was put in place, there was not a demand for the ethane. It's only after the enhanced oil recovery demands came about that there was the additional demand upon ethane in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Main question, Westlock-Sturgeon.

#### **Lubicon Band Land Claim**

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Premier. Like most Albertans, I think, I welcome the sense of justice and fairness that the Premier exhibited after meeting with the Lubicons here a few weeks back. You will recall that the Premier announced after coming out of the meeting with Chief Ominayak that we were going to reach a decision . . .

MR. CAMPBELL: Question.

MR. TAYLOR: Just take it easy. You're going to get a lot more than you bargained for. [interjections] Just wait till they quit rattling their chain a bit, Mr. Speaker. You stick one of them, and the whole cage comes after you.

Mr. Speaker, I'm interested in asking the Premier whether or not at this late date he has made any progress at all in talking to the federal minister of Indian affairs on his suggestion that there be a tribunal to solve the Lubicon affair.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, both through the government's negotiator and through our minister of intergovernmental affairs discussing matters with the federal government, we have been able to make some progress with the federal government. It is a complex matter, however, because the Indian band wish to take the position both that they are deserving of a reserve under treaty and at the same time that they have an aboriginal claim, and those two claims conflict.

Nevertheless, it's my feeling that we can narrow down the negotiations to a point that a tribunal could in fact give us direction that would allow us to come to a solution. The Alberta government is continuing to pursue that. We think we will be able to persuade members of the federal government, and I'm hoping that more progress will be made in the near future.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, supplemental to the Premier. While appreciating what the problems are, my question, Mr.

Premier, was whether or not -- and this is very important -- you were able to get the federal government to accept the idea of a tribunal.

MR. GETTY: As I just said, Mr. Speaker, yes, they would accept the matter of a tribunal if we could narrow the decisions down to those things that a tribunal would deal with. Then there was the problem of whether or not the tribunal's decision would be binding or whether it would be looked at as merely a recommendation. That matter provides problems even for the Lubicon Band, and we have to resolve between the various parties whether or not they want the tribunal to be a binding situation or whether it merely makes recommendations that each party can then respond to if they wish.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, supplementary. In view of the runaround the Premier's giving both the public of Alberta and the Indians, can he not take the case to the Prime Minister? Has the Premier talked to the Prime Minister about forming a tribunal?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I have talked to the Prime Minister about the whole matter of the land claims for the Lubicons. We have not gotten into the specifics of a tribunal with the Prime Minister. We are working with the minister of Indian affairs, and there is no runaround; I find that my discussions with both sides are good, straightforward discussions. There is a depth of suspicion between both sides and unhappiness from previous negotiations, but I think with all of us working in good conscience and trying to solve the matter rather than trying to make it more contentious, we'll be able to make progress.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, final supplementary. It seems like we're back to pretribunal days. We're not getting anyplace.

Could not the Premier give the House and the public of Alberta -- it's the public that wants to see this settled; there's a sense of justice, and outrage that our native peoples have gone without this settlement so long -- a deadline as to when he will demand that the tribunal be set in place? Can we not have a deadline on when that tribunal will be set in place?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can't imagine anything more foolish than that. What would be the benefit of establishing some artificial deadline? Because then if you're making progress and you see that in a period of time you'll be able to come to a solution, you would instead, if you follow the hon. member's reasoning, break off all negotiations because of some artificial date. I think that's a foolish way to do it. It may be the way the hon. member conducts his business, but it obviously is not the way that you'd get to . . . [interjections]

You'd think, Mr. Speaker, that if the hon. members don't have courtesy towards other members of the House in listening to answers, at least they could have some feeling of manners for those who are in the galleries who might want to hear. It's disappointing that after a question has been asked, they can't bring themselves to be courteous and show decent manners and therefore able to have the House conduct itself on a reasonable basis.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. PIQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, it seems that the real problem is the federal minister of Indian affairs. Why doesn't the Premier

suggest that the Prime Minister appoint a new minister or appoint an independent arbitrator to settle the whole issue?

MR. GETTY: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for the federal cabinet lies with the Prime Minister of Canada, not with the government of Alberta. As far as an independent arbitrator, that's the very matter, if the hon. member had been listening, that the leader of the Liberal Party and I have been discussing for the first part of the question.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Main question, Member for Little Bow, followed by Calgary-Glenmore, Edmonton-Centre, Calgary-Buffalo, Chinook, Edmonton-Glenarry, Edmonton-Gold Bar, and two others if there's time.

### **Construction Industry Collective Bargaining**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour. It's relative to the Construction Industry Collective Bargaining Act. The minister has allotted some \$170,000 as working funds for the two respective groups. I understand negotiations have broken down. Could the minister indicate what is the major difficulty at this point in time?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, there are two points in the hon. member's question. First of all, there was some funding offered to the parties. It was turned down by one of the parties, and therefore neither party received any funding.

The second, to do with the stumbling blocks in the process, I think we have to review how that process was arrived at. It was started in Bill 53 subsequent to quite intensive consultations with representatives of the Building Trades Council, contractors, and the investors who stimulate construction activity. All three parties felt that the system in Bill 53 would work. The two parties sitting at the table and the two federations have so far been fairly consistently unable to make the process work. That's the responsibility of the two parties, not of the government.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Would the minister indicate whether there is a possibility of amendments to the Act to try and remedy the situation, or is it just personalities, outside of the Act, that are the problem?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, members would remember that Bill 53 was based on a one-time-only approach and that it was hoped that if the Bill 53 proposals could be made to work, they might form the foundation for permanent legislation for the construction industry, allowing for the peculiarities of that industry compared to others. In view of the lack of success that there appears to have been so far because of the attitudes of both parties at the bargaining table, it is difficult at this time to see how the Bill 53 system could be continued in its exact present form.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. In terms of the moneys available as a working fund, is that money still available, or under the present circumstances has the government withdrawn that commitment to make the funds available?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, the funds were made available during the last fiscal year. Those funds, of course, went into a state of abeyance on March 31 and are no longer available. Neither

party has approached me about any future funding in the recent past.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the minister brought in Bill 53, and as he's well aware, there's a termination point in Bill 53. When is the minister going to accept his responsibility under the present Act and bring in a collective agreement, as he can, under binding arbitration?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, as usual the Member for Edmonton-Norwood has not been following the process as it's happened and has not been reading my remarks or the statements I've made in relation to this particular piece of legislation. The provisions for binding arbitration that the hon. member is referring to were discussed at length with both federations in the same room at the same time on two occasions. Both of the federations are aware of the intent of the government in introducing those provisions, and they were introduced with the concept that if the parties had achieved most of an agreement on their own part but were stuck on a relatively small number of items, then binding arbitration could be used to settle the issue rather than have the whole table come to a stop. The hon. member obviously has some weird understanding of the collective bargaining process, where he feels that in these circumstances a total agreement could be imposed by binding arbitration. The parties themselves have failed in the process. They have achieved almost nothing in the time that has elapsed, and that is their responsibility, not that of the government.

### **Cargill Plant**

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of the Environment. Cargill Limited is proposing a fully integrated meat packing plant near High River. As the minister is aware, there is considerable local support for this project, and major farm organizations, such as the Alberta Cattle Commission, have encouraged this initiative. Can the Minister of the Environment advise if he is prepared to allow this plant to proceed, and if so, are they also allowed to discharge their treated waste into the Bow River downstream from the confluence of the Highwood River?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the answer to the question is no. The Minister of the Environment will not allow treated effluent to come from Cargill into the Bow River.

MRS. MIROSH: The Alberta Cattle Commission has stated that this plant is being delayed by unnecessary bureaucratic red tape. Does the minister agree with this assessment by the commission?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago I had indicated in the House that we would not be permitting treated effluent to go from the Cargill plant into the Highwood River. We are not going to permit treated effluent to go from the Cargill plant into the Bow River. The government believes that the Bow River must be protected and that all of the efforts of the last five or six years in terms of improving the quality of the Bow River must be maintained.

There are basically four steps that Cargill has to go through. First of all, they have to complete an environmental impact assessment. They've done that. Secondly, they have to come forward with an application under the Clean Air Act. They've

done that; they've met those requirements. They have to deal with permits under the Water Resources Act and basically have concluded that. They also have to receive permits under the Clean Water Act, and that's been incomplete.

In terms of finding a solution for the effluent that has to be disposed of, the volumes when Cargill does commence operation will probably be in the neighbourhood of 450,000 gallons per day, and when they're in full production, it'll probably be 1 million gallons per day. We have to find a solution to the disposal of the effluent.

MRS. MIROSH: When would the minister expect a decision on whether or not this project will proceed?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, that decision could probably come about in a matter of weeks if a suitable alternative for the disposal of the effluent could be arrived at. There have been discussions on a continuing basis with Cargill as a result of consultations with not only myself but other ministers of the government. We're working on an almost daily basis, hand in hand with Cargill, in attempting to find a positive solution.

I believe very strongly that the effluent should not be able to flow into our major waterways. We have to maintain our efforts, again as I repeat, in improving water quality. If we could find an innovative approach to deal with the sewage, store it in a lagoon and perhaps use it for irrigation, that, I think, would be beneficial for agriculture in that part of Alberta and also beneficial to the protection of the environment in that part of Alberta, as well.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the minister has the report been completed or is there one in the process of being completed to indicate whether or not the withdrawal of the water through wells and the aquifers of that area, which is, I understand, where the plant is getting the water, will jeopardize the long-term water needs of the town of High River?

MR. KOWALSKI: Yes. In fact, such studies are ongoing right now, and an additional test well is currently being drilled in the High River area in consort with the town of High River.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary, Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister will the Alberta government make extra funds available either to Cargill or the municipalities to pay the cost of additional or adequate sewage facilities for this plant?

MR. KOWALSKI: Such a request has not been forthcoming to us, Mr. Speaker. What we're doing is working in an attempt to find an innovative approach to allow the effluent to be disposed of, as I repeat, in an innovative manner in that part of Alberta, recognizing our concern for water preservation, conservation, and management but also recognizing the importance of using that effluent for irrigation, if one can come up with a suitable, environmentally sound alternative.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. The minister indicated that there was water sampling and drilling going on at the present time to see what amount of water was available. Could the minister indicate whether or not the plant proceeds will still be determined by the amount of water

supply available for such a plant?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, without any doubt, Mr. Speaker, Cargill has identified the need to have a readily available source of water, and if such water is not available, there's no doubt at all in my mind that Cargill will have to make a decision that it can't build the plant. But my understanding from the results of the hydrological testing that is going on is that, in fact, there is a supply of water that Cargill will be able to tap in consort with the town of High River. There is a requirement that we have as a government to quantify that and verify that, and that's the reason for the testing that currently is going on.

### Emergency Hospital Services

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I've just returned from the Royal Alexandra hospital, where a dear elderly friend of mine has just been admitted, largely because of a lack of preventive home care services. While I was there, I visited the emergency department at the Alex and counted 11 patients lying in beds in the hallways and the outpatient walk-in clinic jammed with over 30 people waiting for services. To the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care: now that the emergency unit of the downtown General hospital is closed, what extra monitoring and support is the minister giving to the emergency services especially at the Royal Alexandra hospital, which services all of central and northeast Edmonton and northern Alberta?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member may not be aware that the Premier and I will be participating in the opening of the new Mill Woods Grey Nuns hospital on Thursday afternoon of this week, after which time the most modern, up-to-date emergency centre in any hospital in Alberta will be fully open for public use. In addition to that, the member should know that the capacity exists in a number of other hospitals in Edmonton city -- University hospital, the Charles Camshell hospital, and the Misericordia -- to take additional emergency patients. The problem is one of making sure individuals are aware that there are other hospitals that have the ability to take their emergencies much more quickly and making sure there's a co-ordination of ambulance services in that regard as well.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, Mr. Speaker, since this report by the Royal Alexandra hospital and the Edmonton Ambulance Authority clearly shows how the closure of the General downtown will further exacerbate the Royal Alexandra's already strained load by up to 100 cases more per month, what direct intervention is the minister taking now to alleviate this crisis situation downtown in these next four years? They're not all going to go out to Mill Woods. It's going to be increasingly exacerbated downtown over the next four years.

MR. M. MOORE: First of all, it's not a crisis situation. It's only a crisis in the view of the hon. member who's asking the question. Surely, if you had everybody from northern Alberta coming to the Royal Alex hospital emergency centre, it would be a crisis situation, but the onus has to be on individuals and the Ambulance Authority to use the other facilities.

The member should be aware as well, in case he's forgotten, that we did announce just prior to Christmas a major upgrading program for the Royal Alex hospital. It will include some significant improvements to its existing outpatient emergency department.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, we know about how four years too late that announcement was, Mr. Speaker.

There is a crisis for Nel den Boar, who called our offices this morning to report that she went into the Royal Alex emergency unit last night around 7:30 with kidney problems and was still there waiting at 9 this morning with only a glass of orange juice to soothe her. What explanation does the minister have for this kind of situation?

MR. M. MOORE: I think, Mr. Speaker, before responding to that particular allegation, it may be appropriate for me to check with the hospital to ascertain that that in fact was the case. Oftentimes patients go into an emergency department and are observed, held, treated there without getting a bed for a variety of reasons. The past experience in the House has been that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre oftentimes raises cases like this without any foundation whatsoever, so I think I'd rather check before I respond.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I've also been in touch with some staff who are quite upset by the current mismanagement of the health care system by this minister. What explanation does the minister have for Dr. Helen Hays, who's left the General hospital with no explanation; Dr. Hedges, who left the ambulatory care clinic at the General after three days with no explanation; and now Mr. Richard Paterson, who's left the Royal Alexandra hospital . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Order. The third supplementary hardly follows on from the main question and the next two dealing with emergencies.

MRS. HEWES: A supplementary to the minister of hospitals and health care. There certainly is a crisis. I don't know who the minister can be talking with, Mr. Speaker. Considering that the Alex's expanded facilities are not going to be available for three years, what provisions is the minister prepared to offer the Alex to help them speed up that expansion and meet this demand?

MR. M. MOORE: Well, just to explain again, Mr. Speaker, there are in Edmonton city the Misericordia hospital, the Charles Camshell hospital, the University hospital, the Royal Alex hospital, and opening this week, the new Mill Woods Grey Nuns hospital, all of which have emergency departments. Now, from any point in this city it's not very many minutes to any one of those hospitals. What is required is a recognition by individuals that there are some emergency departments that are busier than others and a co-ordination by the Edmonton Ambulance Authority and by other authorities from outside Edmonton who bring patients into Edmonton to ensure that they know which hospitals have available beds and which hospitals have emergency departments with the least waiting time. That surely can be accomplished. It isn't a matter of building more when you already have enough.

MRS. MIROSH: In regards to this emergency backup and co-ordinated system with the ambulance, if there is in fact a long waiting list for emergency patients, can the ambulance transfer those patients to the emergencies that don't have this long waiting list?

MR. M. MOORE: Well, there's no reason at all why an am-

bulance system could not in fact transfer patients to another hospital where the waiting time was less. But it would be more important, in my view, for them to find out in advance which hospitals are best able to handle the emergencies and then advise patients who call the ambulance system that they will be taken to a different hospital. Now, we hear the story about, "My doctor is at the Royal Alex, and I want to go there," but if it is truly an emergency, then I don't think people should be too concerned about where they go.

### Alberta Wage Subsidy Program

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Career Development and Employment left the House with the impression that the Alberta wage subsidy program is available for student employment this summer. My office spoke with an employee of the department who informed us that last week this department was informing hire-a-student offices not to promote the Alberta wage subsidy program for student employment and in fact would penalize employers who made the mistake of hiring a student under that program. Later in the week it was reported that in fact the minister is considering canceling the program altogether. To the Minister of Career Development and Employment why has the minister canceled the Alberta wage subsidy program for student summer employment?

MR. ORMAN: I haven't, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MITCHELL: If he hasn't canceled it, then could he please explain why it is that his department is informing hire-a-student offices not to promote it, that employers will be penalized if they do happen to hire a student under the program? Is he changing his mind from last week, or is his department simply out of control?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the member is out of control. No such advice has been given to the hire-a-student offices.

MR. MITCHELL: Given that 50 percent of the Alberta wage subsidy program has been cut this year, is the minister saying that the wage subsidy program opportunities for students, even if they were to be able to stumble across them and get one, would be as widespread as they were last year, or are they not significantly reduced, at the very least, from last year?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the wage subsidy program budget was reduced by about 50 percent. As I've indicated on numerous occasions in this Assembly, when we are in a time of declining unemployment, I believe it is much more appropriate to move employment dollars into the area of training, for the labour market is requiring a high level of trained individuals. We as a government don't want to be providing wage subsidies when there is already a natural demand in the economy for employees. We believe that dollars are better spent in training. If the hon. member has a better suggestion, I'd sure like to hear it.

MR. MITCHELL: With 3 percent cuts to hire-a-student 50 percent cuts at the very minimum to wage subsidy programs, the likelihood, if you would reveal it, that in fact students can't have access to wage subsidy programs, no increase in STEP programs, what is this minister doing to come to grips with the problem of youth unemployment in this province, which is at 15

percent?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'll tell him what we're doing. Last year we had more students employed than in the history of this province.

#### **Grant MacEwan Community College Expansion**

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Advanced Education and is in regards to the recent announcement of the Grant MacEwan College campus expansion. Could the minister clarify if operating funds are being decreased in his budget to accommodate the building of this campus?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, no, they're not. It's important to clarify that, because there seems to be a misunderstanding in the House and outside of it that somehow operating funds are being used for capital purposes. The campus will be built with capital funds raised by the Capital Fund of the Provincial Treasurer through the sale of capital bonds to Albertans. That is entirely separate from operating funds within the department that are distributed to grants to the various institutions. I was amazed to see that the opposition critic for advanced education suggested that the funds allocated for the building of Grant MacEwan College would be better used for paying teachers more. [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: Just wait.

MRS. McCLELLAN: I'm very patient.

MR. SPEAKER: The member is more patient than the Chair. The Member for Chinook.

MRS. McCLELLAN: One final supplementary. I would like the minister to explain the economic impact of this project on the city of Edmonton.

MR. RUSSELL: Well, Mr. Speaker, again that's an important spin-off benefit from this project, because we estimate that each year this project is under construction, there'll be 1,200 man-years of employment provided. Again, I'm surprised that the position of the Official Opposition seems to be in opposition to this important project for the city of Edmonton.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Advanced Education. In light of the fact that we are functioning quite adequately now with rented facilities throughout the city with the Grant MacEwan College system, is this a change in direction for the government, that we're going to start looking at large capital expenditures? Why are we going that route rather than renting, the way we are at present?

MR. RUSSELL: Well, Mr. Speaker, the present downtown situation of Grant MacEwan College is in rented office space which

is not appropriate, although they are managing. Certainly their options for growth are severely limited there. Looking at the college system throughout the province, I think it's important that we get this last important link in place in downtown Edmonton.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, given the government's inclination to cut ribbons and put plaques on buildings, can the minister assure us that when this campus goes ahead -- and we look forward to its contribution to the postsecondary education system in the Edmonton metro area. Can he give us an assurance that they will have the operating funds they need so that they can operate quality service programs for the students of this province and we don't have to face cutbacks and chiseling once the buildings open?

MR. RUSSELL: Well, certainly, Mr. Speaker, those funds will be there; otherwise, the project would not be going ahead. Like any capital project, whether it's hospital beds or classroom spaces, the capital facilities and the support funds for operating go along with them.

I'm interested to see how the members now are scrambling to clarify their positions, because the position taken by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods is certainly quite different than the position taken by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly when he was a member of the Edmonton city council.

MR. CHUMIR: In light of the minister's last answer, perhaps he could explain why there are no support funds available to Mount Royal College in order to allow spaces to be provided for their expansion, which just recently took place.

MR. RUSSELL: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure on what basis the hon. member is making that supposition.

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MR. WRIGHT: I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Fine. However, Edmonton-Centre predates you.

MR. WRIGHT: Very well.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order *Beauchesne* 316(e), where it's prohibited that any member impute motives to other members of the Assembly. I don't know; after listening to your prayers every day when we come in here, Mr. Speaker, asking us to serve our constituents and the honour and the privilege it is for us to serve our constituents and to in fact say that in the prayers which began our proceedings today and then to hear the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care impute motives to me about making up things or bringing cases into this Assembly which are untrue is, I think, clearly out of order, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I do have a number of -- I can't help it if I go out and visit with people in real situations in the real world and the minister may have to be stuck in his offices over here, but I want to bring to this Assembly the legitimate cases of legitimate constituents whom I have understood to have legitimate concerns that they want me to stand up for. If that has to do with emergency concerns in hospitals, then so be it. To have this minister break Standing Orders and *Beauchesne* and to impute motives to



me, that I'm making things up or fabricating them in some illegitimate fashion, is not only a violation of the order but is not listening to your prayers, Mr. Speaker, which you offer at the beginning of each session.

Thank you.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I will undertake to investigate the allegations that were made by the hon. member today, and if they prove to be accurate, then I would certainly apologize. The reason for my remarks was that frankly the record of this member being accurate with regard to these things is extremely poor. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. If the House would like to calm down, we will listen with due courtesy to all members of the House equally.

Thank you.

MR. McEACHERN: It's not a very nice of him to say that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, members should be careful with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre. He's such a sensitive, timid soul that if you treat him too hardly and harshly, he'll be running to the media complaining that he's not being treated well enough. [interjections]

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order. Speech number three: timid and foolish. Whenever he runs out of things to say, those are the two words, Mr. Speaker. What we've learned . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

With respect to the purported point of order, which might have more overtones of privilege than that but really at this moment seems to be within the nature of general complaint, having listened also to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care that he has indeed volunteered to look at the record and to check out the case, the Chair regards this as being in the neighbourhood of a complaint that the two members will deal with themselves outside of the House.

The Chair now recognizes Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My submission is that it is out of order for hon. members to refer to persons in the gallery. I believe that is notorious parliamentary custom, but if reference is needed, I cite page 433 of *Erskine May*, 19th edition, under the title Reference to Strangers.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it may be that the hon. member is referring to comments I made as a general statement that if the members didn't have the good manners to respect certain courtesies to members in this House, surely they should have the manners to not yell and drown out conversation so that people who are watching this Legislature could know what was going on.

MR. MARTIN: If the Premier wants to get up and again call people timid and foolish, he should at least speak to the point of order. He seems to feel he has licence to get up and talk about whatever he wants, when he wants. He's just a member in this House, the same as any of us.

MR. SPEAKER: With due respect to the Leader of the Opposition, it was indeed the Premier who made reference to conduct before. [interjections] We're not under discussion, hon. member. The Premier did indeed acknowledge the fact that he was the one to have made the general comment.

The Chair will also take under advisement the reference of *Erskine May* as given to us by Edmonton-Strathcona. The Chair would also then have to make note of the fact that from time to time various members on all sides of the House seem to make references with regard to the galleries -- it has been done before -- and certainly with regard to the television audience or radio audience of the House.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I move that questions on the Order Paper and motions for returns on the Order Paper stand and retain their place.

[Motion carried]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair would pose a question to the House leaders of all the political parties in the House that perhaps sometime in the near future there could be a response to the issue of how written questions and motions for returns are to be dealt with in the House.

Might we have unanimous consent to return to the introduction of guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

## head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes first the Social Services minister, followed by the Member for Vegreville.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my privilege today to introduce 40 fine young grade 6 students from the Three Hills school. I haven't met them yet, and I'm looking forward to meeting them right after question period when we go outside the House. They are accompanied by Joe de Beaudrup, teachers Eunice Schulz and Ken Leaf, and parents Joyce Stankevich and Cori Laturnus. I'd like them all to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. FOX: [remarks in French]

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce 24 exchange charges visiting with families in the Vegreville district. These students are from the beautiful province of Quebec, and I'm happy to welcome them to the Alberta Legislature. [a submitted]

Mr. Speaker, these exchange students from the province of Quebec, visiting in Vegreville, are seated in the public gallery. They're accompanied by a couple of teachers, Mr. Denis Dagenais and Mr. Gaetan Martineau, and three people from Vegreville, Len Caister, Carol Cruickshank and Orest Zubritsky. I'd like them to rise and receive the warm and generous welcome of the members of the Assembly.

## head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

206. Moved by Mr. Gogo:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of Alberta to designate a portion of federal government funding for enhancement of child care options to parents who choose to care for their children in their own homes.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, it was just about six weeks ago, in the throne speech on March 17, where the government said: "My government is proud of the continuing commitment of its citizens to long-standing values. Honesty, integrity, self-reliance, compassion, and a love of family, of home," et cetera, are a commitment of the government. It was just, I believe, two weeks ago when the Deputy Premier, in presenting the white paper on Caring & Responsibility, which was a social policy for Alberta, commented on the dozen principles, the second of which "must support and strengthen the role of the family in Alberta society." It's in that context that I move the motion today dealing with the subject of day care. Some people refer to it as child care; some people refer to it as a lot of things. I think Alberta can be very proud of the day care system they have in this province. It's the future with which I'm concerned, and I would hope by the end of the day other members would be concerned.

Last fall, Mr. Speaker, we dealt with an item that has serious implications for the whole day care system, and that was called Meech Lake. This Assembly adopted that resolution unanimously. One of the most important principles of the four principles involved in Meech Lake regarded the federal spending powers. We had heard for many, many years where, for example, in the hospital system and other systems we had conditional grants that, if we spent enough money and spent it in certain places, we would get a refund of 50 cents on the dollar. This government got away from that in terms of municipal grants some time ago, but the government of Canada continues along that line. And certainly one of the fundamental principles we passed with regard to the Constitutional amendment, which must be passed by all provinces by 1990, deals with that very important item: federal spending powers. It applies to day care because at the present time the financing provided by Ottawa has some strings attached to it, and I wish to speak today to what, hopefully, this Assembly could do to convince the government of Canada to amend its spending powers in such a manner that the people in this province who wish to raise their own children in their own homes would receive some consideration of the day care dollars spent.

Mr. Speaker, many hon. members are well aware of the changes we've had in our society over the past quarter century, certainly the past 35 to 40 years, where at one time people looked after children in their homes as a norm. As a matter of fact, churches at one time had a very prominent place in our society in terms of social assistance. But as times change and as times evolve, we recognize, certainly since the Second War, that more and more mothers have gone into the work force, and as a result -- in recent years anyway -- of changing economic times, to many people it certainly wasn't possible for them who wished to stay home and raise their own children.

It's in that context that we so often hear in our society a person's value to society is based in direct proportion to the monetary rewards they receive. The higher they're paid, for some reason they are more important than other people. That just seems to be the norm. We seem to be turning into a materialistic society and we tend to judge people. I'm not quarreling with that, but at the same time we hear the throne speech, we hear the social paper talking about family, and then we hear

people saying that the most important person in society is the homemaker, the homemaker being by definition male or female, generally the mother, who chooses to raise a family within the home. We say that person is the most important person, and at the same time that person receives under our present system absolutely no financial consideration whatsoever for raising those children.

I think that presents us with a dilemma, Mr. Speaker. When we look at Alberta with its day care system -- as I say, it's second to none in the country -- we provide now in Alberta some \$37 million to pay for day care spaces alone. That's the bricks and mortar. That's for the space they occupy. And we provide that assistance to some 24,000 children. So there's about a 20 percent vacancy rate existing now in the province. Now, not only do we pay for that space, Mr. Speaker, which amounts to a pretty substantial amount of money, \$1,541 per child irrespective of someone's income. So a millionaire, for example, could have a child in a day care system and we're spending over \$125 a month on behalf of that person, while at the same time, according to our policy in Alberta, we will not pay for a person who chooses to raise their children at home, because our policy says that our community day programs, our day care systems, are intended for "pre-school children whose parents are employed." "Employed" by definition means a T-4 slip, I assume. I say that, Mr. Speaker, because, as we all know, some of the hardest working people in the world are those who work within the home raising children. So there's something to do with that definition that we should probably think of again. Or secondly, "attend an educational institution, or where the parent or child has special needs." That refers to, I think, perhaps a physical or mental disability.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have obviously many Albertans who, because of need, simply cannot afford. So we have a subsidy program, and that subsidy program at the moment I think is not only needed; it's important. It pays out some \$27 million now to just over 12,000 parents in Alberta who have children in the day care system. Again, that's based on need in terms of earnings, but only if they meet the conditions I just quoted -- i.e., be employed outside the home where they receive a T-4 slip or receipts or attend an educational institution. So if one were to look at it, Mr. Speaker, a parent attending an institution not only receiving the day care space, \$1,500 a year, not only the subsidy, which amounts to -- and I submit it's fairly generous, because if you earn \$1,500 a month and you're a two-parent family, you still receive about \$140 a month in terms of a subsidy. I know many people who don't earn that kind of money who look after their children at home. So if one looks at the total, we're presently spending about \$5 million a month in Alberta in day care for some 24,000 youngsters or children in the day care centres.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

I should point out that that \$1,541 a year that we pay, irrespective of income, for day care spaces comes to \$1.8 million a year; let's say for the sake of argument, \$2 million a year of the \$60 million or \$65 million total. One would wonder if that, first of all, couldn't be put to better use -- just that \$2 million -- to those Albertans who choose to stay home and raise their children.

Now, I know members are concerned about day care standards, training for day care workers. There are all kinds of concerns. But putting that aside for the moment, I want to deal only

with the question of those who would like to have the freedom of choice, to be treated equally. We keep hearing that we're an equal society, we want to treat everybody equally. Yet on the one hand, when it comes to day care, we don't treat them equally. First of all, we pay out some \$37 million in day care spaces, not recognizing for one moment those who provide day care spaces in their own home; then we provide this, I think, much-needed subsidy. The area I particularly want to zero in on, Mr. Speaker, is the proposals now coming out of Ottawa with regard to day care or enhanced child care services. That's the gist of the motion before us.

It would be interesting, I think, to members to look at the current statistics in Alberta in terms of who is who in the family structure. My information says that of the families in Alberta with one parent at home -- a one-parent family, single-parent family -- there are some 29,000 in Alberta. Of families with a husband and wife -- that is, the unusual situation with both spouses with children in the home -- there are 323,000 in Alberta out of our less than 2.5 million people. Then in terms of parents who work outside the home, where one parent is involved in the labour force, there are 113,000; where two parents are involved in the labour force, 140,000. It's those latter two categories, those people now receiving benefits through the fact that we're spending \$37 million in renting these spaces on behalf of their children.

The government of Canada, Mr. Speaker, in discussions with the Minister of Social Services and, I might add, in public information, has said: we're prepared to undertake a major initiative in child care in Canada. They've done that, I assume, because it's needed, in their view. There may be differences across the country, but notwithstanding Meech Lake, this would apply across the country. The proposal the government of Canada is talking about is that they would provide some \$5.5 billion in day care over the next seven years. The breakdown of that would be \$3 billion to create 200,000 new day care spaces in Canada. Obviously they're not talking about Quebec, where the birth rate is zero or less. I don't know where the great birth rate increases are. Certainly Alberta is one of the leaders. I find it a little puzzling where we now have in Alberta some 31,000 day care spaces with only 24,000 occupied, a vacancy rate of some 20 percent, and we're seeing now a federal initiative to create some 200,000 more. It just sounds like government for some reason.

I remember 1970-71. Hon. members who are farmers will remember. We couldn't sell the grain, so Ottawa came out with that program called LIFT, the lower inventory for tomorrow. If you put your land into grass, you got \$10 an acre. Of course, anybody who made any money obviously did opposite to the government and cleaned up. So I'm a little concerned, Mr. Speaker, when Ottawa says as a condition \$3 billion of that money will go if you create 200,000 new spaces, leaving it up to the provinces to do when we already have a vacancy rate of 20 percent.

They also promise, Mr. Speaker, to spend \$100 million in research in day care. I would hope to hear from other hon. members as to what that \$100 million would do in terms of research, unless it's going to fund some people within the university sector to do more studies. I had thought that's one area that frankly we didn't need many studies on, that under our present system if you met the criteria -- i.e., you worked outside the home, you had children, or you attended a postsecondary institution and you wanted to enroll your youngster in a day care system -- that was probably all that was needed. But perhaps hon.

members in the debate will indicate to me why they would need \$100 million research. I'm frankly a little puzzled.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, they also propose that anybody who has children under the age of six would receive \$4,000 in a deduction in terms of reducing taxable income, or if the children were age seven to 14, \$2,000. But that would only be applicable to those who work outside the home, not those who chose to stay at home and raise their children. So we start adding up the figures: a total of \$5.5 billion over seven years applicable only to either the children in the day care system or the parents who put their children in the day care system, \$3 billion of that to create new spaces to the number of 200,000 across the nation, \$100 million into research, increasing the tax deduction by some \$4,000 per child for those under six or \$2,000 for those age seven to 14. Then they would get on, Mr. Speaker, to say that they don't want to leave out those who raise their children at home. They're prepared to pay in the form of a \$200 tax credit. They're going to study that for two years, but are pretty determined they're going to give them a tax credit of \$200 if they raise their children at home.

Mr. Speaker, looking at the amount of money we now spend -- for example, \$1,541 per space. If you're earning up to \$1,500 a month, another \$140 a month; that's \$1,500 a year or better. Then in addition to that, giving them a \$4,000 tax deduction per child -- and we compare that to those who choose to stay home and raise their kids, and we're going to give them a \$200 tax credit? First of all, we make the assumption that they're taxable. In other words, if they're not taxable, it still costs just as much to raise the child. But that's what they're prepared to offer.

Mr. Speaker, one has to look at this with a bit of a jaundiced eye. It seems to me that if we feel as strongly as we say we feel in the throne speech from March 17 about the importance of family, and if we feel as strongly as we said in the white paper introduced by the hon. Deputy Premier -- "strengthen the role of the family in Alberta" -- then I would find it extremely difficult for this government and this Assembly to sit back and say we'll accept what Ottawa's proposing.

Now, I look around the House. I've been here a while. I know many of the members, and I know those whose spouses do not work outside the home. They stay at home and raise their children. I wonder how they view this proposal by Ottawa. It would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that the motion is only asking for equality, to treat people equally. I quoted numbers a moment ago to hon. members about husbands and wives -- i.e., families with children, over 323,000, compared to single-parent families numbering 29,000 -- and it becomes obviously and painfully clear that the resources of the country are probably not sufficient to give them equal opportunity in terms of finances. I recognize that. That does not for one moment change the gist of the argument.

The fact of the matter is that we have in Alberta people who are dedicated to the family concept, who recognize this province was built by families. The family unit, as we heard so often, is the basic unit of society, and yet even we as a government are not treating them equally. One can say, "Well, there are many reasons for that." But we do treat our day care systems in a very, very substantial and meaningful way financially. But I think what's at issue and what members of the House should decide today is, are we prepared to be a partner to the Meech Lake agreement that says: no longer conditional funding by Ottawa; federal spending power will be equal to all provinces who meet the objectives of a program -- that is, providing proper

upbringing for children -- and at the same time to tolerate their proposals, which in essence are saying, "We're prepared to spend this much on one side but nothing on the other."

Mr. Speaker, what do people think about this? Well, in the constituency of Lethbridge-West I had a poll taken and the exact wording of the resolution between hon. members put to the citizens of Lethbridge-West. Sixty-four percent said they agreed with it, that a portion of the federal funding would be used for those families in Alberta who chose to raise their families at home. Two percent said no, and 28 percent said they were undecided because they really didn't understand the resolution or needed more information.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there are groups in Alberta who have spoken out for this principle, and I'd like to simply mention them now so hon. members are aware. There is the first group called REAL Women, who are realistic, equal, and active-for-life women. Hon. members may well recall this group who had made an application to Ottawa for a grant from Mr. Crombie, the former minister dealing with women's issues in Canada. They were turned down. These were people whose objectives are:

to affirm that the family is society's most important unit, since the nurturing of its members is best accomplished in the family setting;

and to support government and social policies to make homemaking possible for women, who out of necessity would otherwise have to take employment outside the home.

There are their objectives. They made an application to Ottawa for a grant and they were turned down. They couldn't find out why, but when they reapplied as a lesbian society, it was granted. Hon. members will recall that; it's just 18 to 24 months ago. That's their view, Mr. Speaker, and they're supportive of this motion.

The second group would be a group -- and frankly, I had not heard about this group previously -- called Kids First, centred in Calgary. They feel this should be done, Mr. Speaker. The Alberta Status of Women Action Committee, which many hon. members are familiar with, support this in the context that they want women treated equally. The Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association -- now, this group, Mr. Speaker, have no quarrel with the motion, although in fairness they put as their first priority day care standards, and I wouldn't argue with day care standards having to be high. Then, Mr. Speaker, a group I'm quite familiar with, and I'm sure there are other members of the House who are: the Alberta Federation of Women United for the Family. They feel, based on their brief before hon. members, that their fundamental position is that the day care initiatives are penalizing those parents who choose to stay at home and care for their children. In other words, the lack of equality.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, a couple of people who are kind of close to us as members of the Assembly: Mr. Getty, the Premier, and I quote -- it's not a bad idea periodically to quote your Premier. He gets a little strong in terms of his language. We know where he stands with family; I learned that shortly after arriving in Edmonton in 1975. If I may, I would simply quote from a comment the Premier made in one of our daily papers:

The province may pull out of the national day-care plan if the policy doesn't offer more to parents who keep their children at home.

Someone else who feels very strongly about this, Mr. Speaker -- and I don't want to put her on the spot -- is the hon. Minister of Social Services. The Hon. Connie Osterman has said time and time again, and I think it's based mainly on the

fact that the hon. minister is a parent, has raised children, and is well aware of the needs and desires of Albertans . . . The minister would dearly love to have a program whereby some of this funding from Ottawa could be spent on those parents who choose to raise their children at home.

So, Mr. Speaker, in summary, I think there's lots of evidence as to why it's important. I think there's lots of evidence to indicate that this province was not built for those who chose -- and it started mainly in the Second World War -- to go out and work outside the home. I've no quarrel with those who choose to work outside the home and use the day care system; that's their prerogative. But I certainly feel strongly that those who choose to stay home should not be penalized. And for people earning \$1,500 a month to be able to get, and I'll simply close on the amounts, \$1,541 in terms of the day care space this government pays for -- that's the taxpayer of Alberta; secondly, a subsidy if they're earning that money with two parents at home, \$140 a month or again about \$1,500 a year; thirdly, a \$4,000 tax exemption per child: Mr. Speaker, I think it's a very rich program. And I'm not begrudging them that, but surely I think we as an Assembly, with the new spending plans of Ottawa about to be announced, should do all we can to urge the government of Canada to fight for the equality it talks so much about and enable some of those funds to be used by parents in this province who choose to raise their own children at home.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the comments of my hon. colleagues. Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to entering this debate and talking about issues that affect my constituency, approaching the problem in a little different aspect than the Member for Lethbridge-West and relating to the problems in a small rural town where there may not be day care available to people and the problems that are faced by people there and, indeed, problems that are faced by those in the rural area, outside of a small town. I agree with what the Member for Lethbridge-West has said so far, and I think he's brought forward this motion and outlined it extremely well on the problems that are faced on both sides of this problem. I don't think I need to go into the background of it any more than he's covered.

Firstly, I'd like to relate it, as I said at the start, to small towns and how it affects small towns. I live in Bow Island. We recently had a day care open there, about six months ago or thereabouts. It was the first day care that we've had, I believe 20 or 25 spaces. So this was the first time people in that town had the opportunity to have children in day care. Previous to that, everybody made their own arrangements. My wife works part-time. We have to make our own arrangements looking for people to look after our children, and we have done so so far. In small towns, I think, where the major employer is a hospital or other institution that works on shifts, even to have a facility such as a day care doesn't get you through the full 12-hour shift. If you're on a 12-hour shift or if, indeed, you're on a 4 to 8 shift in the afternoon, you have problems. So here we're faced with a problem of people working part-time and having somewhere to put their children. I think they fall into the motion of the hon. member in that they, in reality, are being looked after at home for the majority of the time where one parent may be working part-time. It may either be half-time or only a few shifts a month, but indeed they are being cared for at home the majority

of the time, or in somebody else's home, as often happens in small towns, either by family and/or by friends.

There's also the other aspect of "What help is it to those people?" Well, we have the deduction on income tax, as does anybody, or a child credit tax, as does anybody. That's the end of the assistance. What about those that live on a farm? It takes two to run the farm; the husband and wife together have to work as a team to run the farm. This situation may happen on a farm, or it may happen in a small business that a couple is trying to build, where the children are in the back of the business, either helping -- maybe they're too small to help -- or just being looked after in the business. I'm sure that those members that had businesses in cities or in small towns probably started out that way in building it together. On a farm you may have a child in the cab of a tractor with you; the mother may be running the tractor while the father is doing something else. What benefit do they have? How are they assisted? Well, Mr. Speaker, they're assisted to the extent that they make money, they pay income tax. That's it; they pay. They have no way at this present time of getting advantage out of the system because they stay at home, they look after their children, or they take their children with them to their business and look after them there. They have no way of accessing the system to get assistance. Should this be, if we pass the motion by the hon. member? In his debate he gave us some suggestions of how we could access the system. I'm sure other members will give other suggestions toward a way we could access the system to help those people.

Mr. Speaker, we sometimes hear comments that are against those who stay at home to look after their children, vis-à-vis pitting those that stay at home to look after their children against those who, either by choice or by necessity, have to go out and work and have a second income in the family. I don't believe in that. I don't believe people should pit one against the other. Whether you're at home looking after your children full-time or have a full- or part-time job and you're looking after your children in the off-hours, those groups that say it's degrading for people, in most cases women, who stay at home and look after their children I think are dead wrong. I believe the highest call in any profession is the time you spend looking after your children and bringing them up to become useful members of society.

I know the time I spend with my children is enjoyable. Granted, sometimes it gets on your nerves, and sometimes you really wonder . . . But in the long run, when all is said and done, it's enjoyable, and I'm sure we all like doing it. In this profession, as we all know, we have limited time with our families, so we try to make the best use of the time we have so that it's enjoyable and we can set those children in a proper perspective to be useful members of society.

Some of the times I enjoy the most are the times when my wife works and I'm at home and able to arrange my schedule that I can stay home. Men always call it babysitting; women call it effective parenting. It's a good time, even if you do have to do the washing and the ironing and have to put clothes away. It's an enjoyable time; it's time that you spend with your children and with your family. I believe it's very essential that each parent has to spend individual time with children so that they develop a bond with those children.

How does this all affect the motion and the effects of the motion? Let me just outline, for example, our personal case, and I think this is a situation where there will be many people in this same level of income. In our case, if my wife worked full-time -- and mind you, because of income it might

vary -- with three children the total subsidy in the family could be \$680 a month, with the first child at \$190 and the second two children at \$245 apiece. You can see why people that don't have access to such facilities as day care question you, and at least question me in my constituency: "Is it fair?" We're not saying that we should have money to look after our children, but is there a different break that we can have in that we stay home full-time or part-time to look after those children? Is there a better break in tax? Is there a better break in other things that we could get because our taxes are going toward paying that subsidy that other people are able to access either because of location or because of different circumstance. So we are constantly asked that question, "Is there a better system that we can have a fair shot at our way of looking after our children and our way of family life?"

If my estimates are right, in rough terms the total provincial budget associated with day care, looking at the subsidy portions and those for operation, et cetera, of day cares, is about \$62 million to \$65 million. So we're looking at a considerable amount of money. If it's accessing approximately 20 percent of the children, to be fair to all sides, however it would be paid out, we could be looking at about \$680 million in this province to make it fair to everybody -- maybe one shouldn't say "fair" -- make it equal to everybody; that may not necessarily be fair. But to use the same numbers, to spread it around to 100 percent of the families the cost could be in the neighbourhood of \$680 million. So we are talking a lot of money and involving a lot of people, Mr. Speaker. If my rough arithmetic is right, the amount of money spent on day care in this province would equal about 10 cents per person per day.

In my family, for example, we would be looking at \$2.50 a day. Multiply that out and we're -- what? -- \$42 or something a month to go into the system. So you can see why people stop and think about these amounts. Then they think about what they're doing, and they say, "Is it fair?" and "Is it right?" I'm not saying we should cut it all out. All I'm trying to say this afternoon is that I support the motion the Member for Lethbridge-West has put forward in that I believe he's trying to bring some sort of fairness to the system and spread it around throughout those that are looking after their children at home, and that he's trying to see that they get an even break on this situation.

I would urge all members to support this motion. Thank you.

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

MS LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly support the spirit of this motion. However, I think the mechanism by which the recognition that mothering of children is part of the most important work done in society is not to be done in the way that this motion would recommend.

I'd like to first respond to a couple of the comments the Member for Lethbridge-West raised. I think we really do have to look at this motion in the context of family. What is a family? A family consists of a constellation of people living together in nurturing relationships, and that may be one or two parents, and one, two, three children -- 2.5 as we hear is the Canadian average -- in extended families, and other people that are in that context of nurturing within that family. I think the central core issue in family is the condition of nurturing and caring and supporting, and we have to ensure that we are com-

mitted to a family structure that recognizes that. I think it is an important point to recognize that we do need child care alternatives for mothers who are home full-time, and I thank the member for that recognition. That's very important.

We also have to be concerned about women in the rural areas, as we have heard, as well as women that work shift work and women that work part-time. What we need are alternatives and choices for all parents. Because we're not only talking about mothers; we're talking about mothers and fathers. In some cases they're mothers and fathers in relationship with each other, and sometimes it's single mothers or single fathers. So we have to recognize the variety of constellations that constitutes a family.

When the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West says that we have a surplus of spaces in Alberta, the problem with that is that anyone can set up a day care in Alberta for profit, and because there is a lack of concern for standards in regard to training, many people do. It's very hard to keep track of that, other than that the size regulations are met. What we need to be doing is committing ourselves to quality, nonprofit day care, where we have some sense of what is going on.

[Mr. R. Moore in the Chair]

In terms of the research dollars that are required under the proposed funding, I think the problem we see is that there's a great deal of question around the impact on children of being raised in child care facilities. It seems that just about everybody that does research comes up with a different answer. So I think the research is trying to deal with that criticism. I think what is not being carefully noted when research is being done is the quality of child care that is being studied, so that we get all sorts of results because the quality is not something that is being controlled for. And I'm not sure that we need a lot more research. Certainly there is research on the impact of good day care. There has been research done on the difference between for-profit child care facilities and nonprofit child care facilities, and if anyone would like to know more about that I have a most excellent book written by a Canadian woman on child care facilities.

I agree that the \$200 tax exemption or tax credit is an insult to the work that a mother does in the home or that a father would do in the home. But I think it's important that if we're going to recognize the contribution of mothers at home to society, it must not come out of the child care moneys. That is the concern I have.

REAL Women were turned down for moneys from the Secretary of State because, of course, they are not committed towards creating a society in which women have equal rights, and the mandate of that money was to go to groups of people working for equality and choices for women. They did not fall under that mandate; they have another mandate. So I think that when there is a complaint that they didn't get that money, it needs to be recognized that they were not working for the goals and objectives of those programs. Again in the same way, the Alberta Federation of Women United for the Family see day care as penalizing stay-at-home mothers, but they do not want choices for women. They want to enforce an old stereotypical role on women and do not recognize the reality of the society we live in.

So I think we have to then look at this motion and say, "What does it mean for us and for parents?" I believe we must recognize that all parents, mothers and fathers alike, want what is best for their children and that they must have choices as how

to provide that which they see as best for their children within the context of their lives and that they need alternatives in order to fulfill the responsibilities that they feel most deeply for the nurturance and care of their children -- these choices must be based on real alternatives -- and that in setting up these choices one group does not benefit at the expense or loss of choice of another group. I think we have to provide the kinds of choices that meet the needs of children in a variety of situations, and that the fundamental flaw of this motion is that it does pit mothers who choose to stay at home against mothers who choose to be in the paid labour force for scarce dollars. I think that is wrong.

Quality child care, Mr. Speaker, is a societal good, and funds going to child care is the mark of our society's valuing of children. Funds for quality child care should not be the solution to poverty in the family, either of families, of mothers, or of children. Funds for child care should be funds to provide quality child care.

The need for quality child care is a reality in this society. Fifty-eight percent of mothers of preschool children work, for a variety of reasons. There may be economic reasons. We know that in 50 percent of two-income families, if the mother did not work or if both parents were not working, then the family would fall below the poverty line. They may also work in some of these two-parent families where one partner is unemployed and has to have child care so that person can go out and look for work. Mothers may work for reasons of career development because they have committed themselves to a career and much education, and they know that if they're out of that labour force for a number of years, their careers will not develop for them in the way that they would choose.

They may also work for reasons of economic security, developing a career in case the marriage does not last. We certainly know that in the case of divorce, women's financial status drops dramatically while men's financial status rises dramatically. So there may be economic security that is being sought in case the marriage does not succeed. But the other thing is for economic security in one's old age, because we do not have pensions for women who have not worked in the paid labour force nor adequate pensions for women that have worked only for a short time in the paid labour force.

We also know that women work because they are the sole supporters of family. We know that many women do, in fact, live in poverty after having spent many years in the home caring for children and husband in their old age, and that may be because of divorce or because of death. And women may choose to work because of personal choice of how they wish to spend their lives. We do not ask a man, because he is a parent, to limit the choices as to how he shall live his life in the same way that the people who oppose women being in the work force, such as REAL women, would suggest that women's lives must be limited.

We cannot turn back the clock to what many consider more ideal times. Betty Friedan in 1964, as well as many social scientists, including mental health workers, revealed that those were far from ideal times for women in the home. They discovered the cost of the isolation for these women and the cost of their thwarted aspirations. They saw the cost to society of these women's unused potential, both for these women as well as for society. And they saw the cost in the traditional role being forced on women, the cost of stereotypes which held that a woman's place was in the home and that children must be raised by mothers in the homes.

Times have changed. Economic reality is that women work

not for pin money or for the fun of it or because they're bored, as we were told in the past -- and they certainly did not in the past -- but out of the many reasons that I've already mentioned: economic necessity, in many cases, or for the development of career or the establishment of financial security. Social reality is that women can and should contribute to society in the same way, in the same realms of endeavour, as men can, and that's in law, medicine, or engineering -- even in politics some days.

Psychological reality does not support the belief that children must be raised by their mothers. Many of the claims that child care harms children come from the investigation into child care that is substandard, that does not have well-trained, qualified workers, that has too many children for each worker.

But another reality has also changed, and that is our understanding and our knowledge of what happens to some women and their children in the traditional family constellation. It is a sad and painful reality in this society, in this province of Alberta, in this city of Edmonton, that one in nine women is assaulted by her husband -- that is 11 percent -- and that children are physically and sexually abused in the family. We need to recognize that. We need to recognize that women and children have a right to live in nonviolent, nonabusive environments; indeed, that they have a right to live in nurturing families.

So our belief of the traditional family of mother and father and 2.5 children as the only real family is out of step with our times, whether we like it or not. And we know that children are not destroyed by single parenting and divorce. What destroys them is the turmoil and even the violence that precedes the ending of a traditional marriage structure and often the turmoil and violence that may follow after that ending, as well as the poverty that they often come to live in at the ending of a traditional family structure.

We would hope that all children could be nurtured by two loving parents, but in far too many families one parent -- and it may be the mother in some cases and the father in others -- is violent, abusive, or irresponsible. And that is reality; it is a reality that we have to acknowledge. To acknowledge that reality is not to endorse it or to promote it, but we need to recognize that reality if we are going to deal with it in a humane and effective way.

One of the ways we deal with this reality is to provide alternatives to mothers and fathers and their children and not judge a family in terms of the kind of family it is, whether it is a two-parent family with a stay-at-home mother or a two-parent family with both parents in the work force or a single-parent family with a mother or a father. What we need to judge is the quality of relationships and the nurturing that occurs in the family situation.

I would also argue that quality day care is a societal good for the children and parents in the paid labour force. It is not a luxury item. It is not a frill if we value our children, and it is not to be traded off for some other good, however that is determined or defined. Many people, including stay-at-home parents, say to me, "Why should I pay for this program through taxes when I -- or we, my family -- do not benefit from it?" Well, in a democratic society, Mr. Speaker, we share the costs of those programs and initiatives that benefit society at large whether or not we benefit from them individually. For example, people pay for education whether or not they have children now, in the past, or will have children in the future, and whether or not they themselves were educated in this country or this province. They may not have any direct benefit from the education system, but it is considered a societal good, and we pay for it. All of us share

the cost. People share the cost of health care whether they are healthy and see a doctor only once every five years after he yells at them or if they suffer from serious illness or chronic illnesses. We share the cost without consideration as to the life-style, whether we smoke and drink and overeat or whether we are ascetic and do not indulge in any of those vices, if you would call them vices.

In a democratic society we may even be forced to pay support programs we abhor, such as military spending on the development and testing of offensive weapons. We do not say, "Well, we'll spend more on chronically ill persons and take money away from the education of other people." Yet, as in this motion, we pit people with different needs against each other. We recognize the need for child care for the children of parents in the paid labour force, and we cannot shortchange these children. We cannot deny the reality that men and women participate in the labour force for a variety of legitimate reasons, and we cannot turn back the clock by insisting that women should stay at home.

We need to then address the needs of mothers or fathers who choose to stay at home. I am deeply concerned about women who are at home and who say to me or write to me, "It is at great sacrifice." I worry about the care children receive from a parent who feels they are sacrificing to be with their children or their child. Too often such feelings of sacrifice are accompanied by feelings of resentment, and if that resentment is against the child or children in question, then I worry about the quality of that child/parent relationship. So we have to ask, "What is the nature of the sacrifices of mothers at home and mothers in the paid labour force?" because many mothers in the paid labour force also believe that they are making sacrifices. And how do we remedy that, beyond reducing child care funds and paying mothers to stay at home out of child care funds?

If the parent works out of a sense of economic necessity and would rather be at home, then we must remedy that situation through programs such as a guaranteed annual income. If staying at home means impoverishment, we must address the issue of poverty, again through adequate income support programs.

If a mother works in order to continue and develop a career and would rather be at home, perhaps solutions, to her, would include job sharing, part-time work, which would also require quality child care that is flexible, something we heard about earlier. We need to extend maternity and paternity leave benefits for both natural and adopted children, because we need to recognize that for adopted children there needs to be a time for bonding. And I am in favour of such programs that would allow for the bonding not only of the mother with the adopted child but also bonding with the father of the adopted child, because I believe that needs to happen. If the mother's sacrifice is in terms of lost career opportunities, payment to stay at home will not remedy that problem. Rather, the above solutions that would allow her possibly to stay in touch with her career are what we need to be looking at.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

If a mother works to ensure financial security, pensions, et cetera, in their senior years, then we need to remedy that with pension programs such as homemaker programs and programs that adequately support women, including divorced and never married women. We need to rid ourselves of the discrimination against senior citizens on the basis of marital status; that is, whether or not they are divorced, widowed, or single. If the

mother at home feels that the sacrifice is in terms of financial security in one's final years, then that issue must be addressed in the ways that I have mentioned.

If the at-home mother sees her sacrifice in terms of isolation and thwarted social participation, we need emergency and short-term care, parent/child drop-in programs, part-time nursery programs, and those kinds of things. We need to address those kinds of solutions. None of these solutions should be achieved at the expense of children of mothers in the paid labour force.

If mothers stay at home because of inadequate child care options, and we hear of that, we must remedy that too. Because this motion will only exacerbate that problem.

If mothers want to be paid to stay at home to give their work some status in what we've heard is a materialistic world, then I think there are other ways we need to recognize that contribution to society. Certainly I was an at-home mother in the years long before feminism was around and rampant, and my work was not recognized. I was treated like a second-class citizen. If I went to a meeting and I spoke up, I was not heard. If I was in a restaurant with children, I got second-class treatment. That had nothing to do with feminism; that had all to do with how society values mothering in a real way. So we have a motherhood statement that is rarely accompanied by action in the real world. We need a change in attitudes towards mothering.

Another way that we could recognize how important caring for children is is that we would require qualified child care workers and we would pay them a decent wage. Even the best I've heard that's been recommended for them is an insult when we think of the value that child care and child rearing provide to our society. I think any woman who has at one time been a mother and then has later been a woman carrying a briefcase knows the kind of recognition she gets in either one of those roles. This kind of treatment will not be remedied by paying people to stay at home and mothering.

Something else. This motion, I believe, shortchanges children in that it does not [address] reality as it now does exist nor does it address the needs of mothers at home. If we want to support families, including mothers at home, we need other initiatives. One of the things that I've been screaming about for many years, including before I got in here but certainly since I've gotten in here, is the social services assistance requirement the healthy mother of a healthy four-month-old baby is considered employable and should be out working. I think that's outrageous. If we value mothering, then we will allow mothers to stay at home with adequate social assistance allowances. I worked with families where the father was away from the home because he had assaulted the children, and the kind of social assistance the mother got was punitive and humiliating. If we value mothering, we will allow those mothers to rebuild those families with enough financial security that they're not always balancing the clothing budget off against the food allowance.

So I think that if we value mothering, we'd better put it into some of our social policies, too, so that we recognize that some families, where mothers want to be at home or where fathers want to be at home -- we make that possible for them, and we don't have a lot of empty rhetoric about being committed to families, and then if the family doesn't come up to our standard mother, father, and 2.5 children, they're really in trouble. They cannot nurture because no mother can nurture when she can't figure out how she's going to pay the rent or the telephone bill or get shoes for her child or pay for the pictures coming home from school or the next field trip. That is despicable, as far as

I'm concerned: our treatment of mothers like that.

Mr. Speaker, we need to recognize that parents want what is best for their children. The government should not be determining how parents should fulfill their responsibilities. Mothers as well as fathers need choices so that they can fulfill their responsibility for their children. We do not help mothers to do that by playing off the interests of one group of mothers against another group of mothers. I would therefore ask that the hon. member recognize the pluralistic nature of our society, the variety of life-styles, the changing social and economic reality of our society, and that he work to create alternatives that really address the needs of our children and their parents.

Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Red Deer-South. Pardon me. Member for Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: I won't take the mistaken reference as an insult, Mr. Speaker; rather, a compliment.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to address this motion today brought to us by the Member for Lethbridge-East.

AN HON. MEMBER: West.

MR. DAY: West. I believe *Hansard* will show very clearly that this motion in no way pits one group against another, that this motion was well considered, well thought out by the member, and well presented. I have to admit that I appreciate the fact that he was not bringing it forward from the point of view of trying to pit one group against another. And I have to find some of the remarks from the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore irresponsible, in terms of trying to take a good motion that I would think all members could heartily support and trying to make it out to appear that the member was using it to pit one group of parents against another group of parents. Also, I think *Hansard* will show that as the Member for Lethbridge-West presented the motion, and indeed as all other members except the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore presented their motions, they did not pit one women's group against another. Yet the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore specifically attacked at least two groups that I heard of, REAL Women and the Alberta Federation of Women United for the Family, wrongly stated that those groups are not concerned about equality for women, and used it as an opportunity to attack other women's groups.

So I am saddened and grieved that one member of the Legislature so far who has spoken to this motion has used it to try and ride a particular hobbyhorse and do some browbeating. But I am pleased to see that so far all other members have seen it as a positive motion which really enhances the roles of all parents, and I intend also to take that approach. The motion was formulated to increase the possible choices that parents can reasonably make regarding child care. I think it's very important to keep that in mind.

We're aware that on December 3, 1987, the federal government issued the long-awaited child care strategy. As a matter of fact, that was a statement of intent. That particular strategy has not been formulated yet in law, and what the Member for Lethbridge-West is asking is that we as members of this Assembly would use this motion to urge the federal government to consider both women who stay at home and women who are in the workplace. Very simple, very positive, and one which I would think all of us could wholeheartedly support.

Basically, the strategy that's being put forward by the federal



government at this point is offering some assistance to women. First of all, we'll look at parents in the work force: tax deductions in a maximum amount of \$4,000 for children aged six years and under and \$2,000 for children aged seven to 14. Up to these limits parents will be able to claim a deduction for any receipted child care costs. Up to \$4,000, Mr. Speaker. For those parents who do not have receipts -- in other words, they have an informal type of child care agreement -- or for those parents who keep their children at home, what is offered? A whopping \$200 in the form of a child tax credit. And as the Member for Lethbridge-West has brought out, that automatically assumes that that family is making enough income that they are paying taxes. So on the one hand, if you have your children in day care, you have a maximum of \$4,000 offered in terms of tax credits. If you keep them at home, how level is the playing field? Two hundred dollars is offered. I would suggest Mr. Speaker, that this represents an unfair playing field.

Regardless of the number of families in which two parents are members of the labour force, there is still a significant number of families in Alberta -- as a matter of fact, in the country -- who have decided to make economic and career sacrifices in order to raise their children themselves. Again I'll reiterate, Mr. Speaker, that I am not pitting one group against another or saying that one decision is more honourable than another. I'm simply saying that one decision is being financed by government at a much higher rate than the other is. The simple fact is that in most of these cases the parent who remains at home is the mother, and these women feel that they've been substantially ignored by the federal government's recent child care initiatives. I wholeheartedly agree with them.

Now, if we look at the provincial scene, we'll see that the status of child care in Alberta is quite unique, because we have adequate numbers of child care spaces. In fact, as of November '87 there were 31,577 licensed spaces and only 24,170 children enrolled in such spaces. I'd like to make a reference to remarks made, again by the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore, in looking at this vacancy rate of 20 percent. The member said that she feels that high vacancy rate in Alberta, 20 percent is because the parents are concerned about the poor standards of our day cares in this province. Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I'm shocked that she would say that. I have traveled this province. . .

MS LAING: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to clarify what I said. [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: That's not a point of order.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, the House very quickly recognized that a point of clarification is indeed not a point of order, and I appreciate that.

Not only the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore but the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods stood in this Assembly one day and talked about day cares in this province not fit for animals. I think the combination of their two comments on day cares in this province is an insult to the day care operators in the province of Alberta. I have had the opportunity to visit probably hundreds of day cares in this province. Overall I can say that I'm impressed with the admirable level of care and love and instruction that goes on in these day cares. I would feel very insulted if I were a day care operator in this province and was subjected to the type of remarks that we hear from the members of the opposition. I have not run into one person in the province

of Alberta -- not one -- who has said to me, "I don't put my kids in day care because I think the standards are poor or inadequate." I have not run into one, so I'm interested where the member digs these people out of.

But the simple fact again is that there is a 20 percent vacancy rate right now in the province, and if we accept the federal initiatives as have been presented to us, in fact we will have to create more empty spaces.

Now, currently this particular province does not have any specific programs which are designed to encourage or help parents to stay at home with their children. Now, that's very interesting for us as a government which very clearly declares and says freely, as we travel around, that we are a government that supports the family and we recognize the importance of the family unit. We say that as a government, we put that in our election pamphlets and brochures, and we state it at public meetings and forums. We say that we are a government that supports family, and yet we do not have any specific programs designed to encourage or help parents stay at home with their children. I think, as we look at this particular motion, we can see that if we were to pass this and if the government were indeed to encourage the federal government to balance out this inequity for parents who keep their children at home, we would actually be taking some steps to encourage parents to stay home, and we would be backing up the statements that we very boldly proclaim at all times, that we are a government that supports family.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I don't think our solutions to parents staying at home should be limited just to child care subsidies. I would like to see us investigate the whole area of informing parents about home business programs where they could run a business right out of their home. We encourage incubators in different cities, where businesses can start in an incubated setting, and then once they are strong and moving, they are out in the community. We could expand that and talk about business programs at home; we could talk about career training at home; we could expand the whole area of home careers, with the computer age fully upon us and bringing to us all kinds of possibilities. We know that computer terminals installed in home settings is already done by a number of businesses, and parents could be informed about this trend, whether it be secretarial skills that could be done at home or accounting. I think if we were to really begin to fund it or see dollars directed towards these areas, good old private initiative would take over, and I think we would see a multitude of suggestions and programs, business oriented, that could bring money right into the home and could be run very effectively by women or men staying in the home. Also, it needs to be made available to women that, for instance, they can get a college degree while they stay at home. Athabasca University offers excellent programs that can be attained while being at home.

I believe also that women should receive economic counseling when they're making the decision to put their children in a day care or to stay home. If they're making that decision simply on economic considerations, they need to have some economic counseling, because up to a certain amount, the amount that a woman makes while she is in the workplace can actually turn out to be a negative income when you take off child care costs and all the other costs that are associated with being out of the home and working. So if a woman is making the decision strictly based on economic consideration, I believe we should make available to them economic counseling and things for them to take under consideration in that particular area. There is some concern that those who choose to utilize the formal day

care system are being provided with the unfair advantage of having the associated costs lessened, while parents making other choices are not. Women -- and fathers, if they're choosing to stay home -- need to be fully advised of the consequences of their decisions from a fiscal point of view.

It's interesting. As we look at other jurisdictions both in Canada and the United States we see that there is not one other government that has any type of policy or legislation in place to address this problem, not one other province. We could be very progressive in this particular area. We could be unique in all of Canada. We could be trend setting and forward thinking by coming up with suggestions to the federal government and also initiatives on our own as a province that would facilitate women who want to stay home but feel they can't because of economic considerations. There's a strong feeling that the money directed towards parents at home would definitely lead to more children being under the supervision of their own parents at home, and I believe this should be encouraged. That possibility should be encouraged.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

I'm haunted by the questions and response of a woman made at a meeting in Red Deer which I attended. It was to do with day care issues. I believe the Hon. Connie Osterman was present at that meeting. This woman said that at the present time she was staying at home and raising her children and choosing not to put them in day care and go to work. That was her own personal choice. But she said that she was almost being forced by the economic considerations that were being made available. She felt she was being forced to leave the home, put her children in a day care, and she didn't want to be under that pressure. Her statements and her concerns haunt me, Mr. Speaker. I believe we should take into consideration the concerns of women like that and urge the federal government to balance out their day care policy.

A different group, the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, takes the position that if women want to stay home, that's fine, but they feel their children will be no better off in parents' care. The Alberta Status of Women Action Committee takes what I think is a positive view and looks at the fact of allowing women the right to make their own choices. They're trying to promote the well-being of all women, including those who work outside the home and those who do not. I believe that particular view is a healthy one, and I can certainly support that. So we're looking at balancing out that playing field. And that woman's comments at that meeting, for me they answer the question: would parents choose to remain at home if it were economically feasible for them to do so? I believe they definitely would, as many have suggested to me that they would. Therefore, we've got to take into consideration the unfair playing field and the economic disadvantage which women choosing to stay at home are faced with.

At present many homemakers feel that their contribution is not being recognized as valuable to society, and the assistance provided by this motion would go some distance to answering this concern. We are in a day when we're looking at people's self-esteem and their self-worth, especially for women who are staying at home. They look at the fact that a government would give significant dollars in terms of subsidies if they were to put their children in day care and yet nothing if they keep them at home. That has to challenge a woman's self-worth and her self-esteem, and it has to make her think: "Well, is this choice

that I've made really worth anything? Because governments, governments made up of men and women, don't seem to recognize that I need assistance at home also." So really this motion also has to do with a woman's self-worth.

I appreciate the Member for Cypress-Redcliff pointing out very clearly that the motion does not state which parent should be encouraged to stay at home. This motion is not a sexist motion, Mr. Speaker. The decision is left to the parents: wherever they choose, whomever they choose to care for their own children. I also appreciate the Member for Cypress-Redcliff commenting on the fact that he knows what it is to stay home. He even said that he enjoyed some of the chores, like laundry and changing the children. I think that's admirable. I know his wife will be excited to read that in *Hansard*. My wife also reads *Hansard*, so I've got to be a little more careful. Though certainly I know that I have shouldered the diaper-changing responsibilities in my home over the years, I will also have to go on record as saying that I have never met a dirty diaper that I liked; I never did enjoy that particular chore or task. For women, especially a woman without a husband to support her in the home, who faces all these tasks day in and day out, I believe they need to know that governments indeed recognize, and the public recognizes, that what they're doing at home is very valuable.

Statistics Canada indicates that in Alberta there were 222,000 Albertans who did not participate in the labour force in 1981. I think we can assume that a majority of these Albertans were probably absent from the wage-earning population in order to take care of their children in their own home. This motion seeks to acknowledge the existence of that group and to halt some discriminatory measures that this group has recently been subject to.

On a personal note I can think back to when I was, well, preschool and then going to elementary school. I can't remember an afternoon where my mother was not home. Now, there must have been afternoons where she wasn't home; I just can't remember one. So obviously, I have some personal experience in terms of what that meant to me at that age of my life. But again I'm saying very clearly that this motion is not pitting one group against another group or a mother who decides to put her children in day care and go to work against a mother who decides to stay at home. It's not pitting one against another. But as I look back to those years, as I said, I can't remember an afternoon where my mother wasn't home. I can remember a lot of afternoons where I came home and, at the age of five or six or seven, had what I thought were some pretty big problems, and right there in the home was a counselor waiting for me and somebody who could assure me that it wasn't the end of the world.

I can remember living in a small upstairs flat. I can remember the fact that at that particular time we didn't have much in the way of furniture. We couldn't afford a television. My father took a bus to work. I can remember those things, but at that age that wasn't a big deal to me. It wasn't a debilitating factor in my social growth. I didn't see a problem with the fact that at that time in my life, as a child, I didn't have much materially. And going back, if I analyzed it, I would say we were probably below the, quote, poverty line.

But I learned through the years that wealth is not something that you're given instantly or can demand instantly, and that a lovely home and two cars in the driveway and television and a VCR -- and incidentally, Alberta has more VCRs per capita than any other province in the country -- these things are earned over a period of time. Yet many of our politicians today would go out, probably in an effort to seek votes, and tell people that they

just have to demand more of government and they can have their material needs met and gratified in an instant way. I've found through my experience with my family, how I was raised, that wealth is something that is worked for and accumulated over a lifetime but not demanded instantly and that indeed the so-called poverty line is really a matter of relativity. Because in our home we had much of what I look back on now as being rich and wealthy, yet in terms of material goods we had very little.

I can't help but wonder what my mother would have done in those days if she had been offered what many women are offered today, in terms of this unfair advantage and what's offered to them in terms of tax credits by the federal government here in their proposal if they would put their children in day care and go to work. And I wonder if, against her own will, she would have found herself doing that. It would have been easy for her to do. She was a woman with a university degree and who had been a professional career woman before being married. I just wonder if, under the pressures of living in that little upstairs flat without very much in terms of material goods and being offered a fairly substantial tax credit, against her own will she would have felt the pressure to succumb to that.

It makes me wonder how many other women are out there today in Alberta -- I know I've heard from some, and I mentioned the meeting that I attended -- who are saying, "I really want to have my career at home, but I feel I'm being economically pressured to go outside the home to attain that." So, Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of that group, which I believe is large in this province, and to complement that group also with the mothers who make the choice on the other side, to put them on an equal playing field and to say to those women, "You are all valuable in the eyes of government, and you all deserve equal treatment for the tremendous job you're doing, wherever you choose your career to be," that's why I ask that all members would support this motion.

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a couple of comments. The motion as it reads looks very supportable, but I would like to make some comments and ask some questions about it, perhaps for clarification.

Mr. Speaker, we have all reviewed the federal proposal with interest and look forward to hearing more about how or when or if anybody plans to implement any part of it. That program speaks to tax credits, and everybody here today has mentioned child tax credits. I think we have to be clear that what we should be talking about is whether we're talking about non-refundable tax credits, which simply means an amount of tax that needn't be paid, or if we're really talking about refundable tax credits, which suggests that you would receive a cheque in the mail from the government for the difference between your tax and what the credit was, or in fact if we're talking about a diminishing refundable tax credit, which would have even greater benefits to low-income families. I have been more or less content to leave the tax matter relative to child care to the federal government, and I would hope that in that regard what we would be speaking to our federal counterparts about is the possibility of a refundable tax credit or a diminishing refundable tax credit, which would have the greatest benefits to families who have the greatest needs. I just think we need to be clear on what we're talking about.

Mr. Speaker, there's really no activity or profession that we

engage in that is as important as parenting. I don't think anyone in this Chamber doubts that. It's a very valuable experience and one that most of us have enjoyed with pleasure and delight and continue to enjoy. But let's be responsible in how we talk here and how we make decisions and how we put systems in place that will in fact support family life, support parenting in all forms. I would take it from the hon. member that there is no editorial comment being intended here on changing family life. Whether by necessity or choice there should be no substantive tilt in how a family must deal with the needs of parents and children.

Mr. Speaker, of interest: Judge Rosalie Abella in her report of two or three years ago made some very interesting comments about homemaking and its value in society. I would commend that report to all members if they haven't read it, because I think it speaks to some of the questions and issues that have been raised here this afternoon.

We need to ask ourselves, "Why do women work anyway?" Of course, they work for all the same reasons that men do. They work for money, and they work to support their families, and they work for personal growth and development and for self-esteem and self-determination: all of the same reasons exactly as men do. Our objective is to allow for free choices in families and between parents in a family.

I think what we're talking about here, what I thought the motion was really addressing, is helping families who are perhaps close to the break-even line. I saw a kind of directive in the motion that suggested that we would be helping those families who are close to that line of, "Do I have to go to work?" to stay at home. I wonder if there's an underlying thought here that we are really, through this motion, trying to encourage women to stay at home. I'm not sure, as I read it and have listened to the comments, what the real objective of the motion is: whether we're really trying to encourage women to stay at home, whether we're trying to save money. There are some other underlying things here, but as I've said, I don't believe that the member intended any sort of editorial comment on changing family life.

What we must avoid is putting into competition different parenting needs and styles. I hope that that certainly forms no part of the thinking behind this. But we must ask ourselves: "What would such a situation mean for children? Would it improve their circumstances?" There's no data that says that they're going to be better off if mother is at home. I went back to work when my youngest was two, and I don't think our children were in any way deprived by that at all. In fact, I would defy anyone to say that that occurred. I do feel that there is a fair amount of evidence that suggests that children under two are better cared for in the home or in a home setting than in an institutionalized day care, and I think we might well support that kind of idea.

But is the notion in this motion, Mr. Speaker, that Alberta -- because it isn't urging the government of Canada; it's urging the government of Alberta. Is there a notion here that Alberta should in fact use cap funds or transfer funds from the federal government to compensate stay-at-homes? And if so, in what form? Is that to be a grant? Is that to be a tax refund? How is that to be transferred? Is the notion here that Alberta supports the idea of a guaranteed annual income? If that's what's behind it, then I applaud it. I think that's very commendable. That's the kind of progressive move that I believe we should start to think about in our progressive provinces and should try to transfer those ideas to our federal government. Another question: is

their intention that there will be more money overall, or is it simply a different division of funds? Are we going to take funds from the present system of day care and transfer them to people staying at home, and are we hoping that somehow that will even out?

Mr. Speaker, I think we should be concentrating here on quality child care, whether it's in the home with mother or father present, whether it's in a family day home, a community nonprofit, or other form. I would like to see the description of child care options include some other methods. We in Alberta have not really addressed ourselves, except through the family and community support programs, to other needs of families. We have concentrated on -- in fact, over 75 percent, I guess, now of our child care is commercial. In the city of Edmonton alone it's 91 percent commercial; these are for-profit commercial centres that offer day care.

When the member stood up and said "second to none," I permitted myself a small smile, because that simply is not the case. Those of us who have made any study of the matter know that not to be the case. Alberta standards are the last when it comes to certain parts of our needs for child care. I regret that, and I think the hon. Minister of the Environment does too. I would hope he does. I don't like to be in that position because I think it is an indicator of how we value certain parts of family life and children's life and development.

But, Mr. Speaker, if we're talking about options in the sense of respite care for parents who are desperate, respite care for parents of children who perhaps are disabled or difficult to manage, if we're talking about inexpensive, day-to-day care for parents who are very hard up, operating in poverty, working poor parents who never have an opportunity to go shopping, to meet a friend: if we're talking about those kinds of options that support families and family life, then I have no quarrel with the motion. But I don't believe that was the thrust. If we're talking about after school care, nobody mentioned it. We've done nothing in this province about supporting after school care except to say: "Oh, that's a municipal choice. The municipality must decide." Therefore, after school care is in competition with information programs, with seniors programs, with any number of other programs -- and perhaps not fair competition at that. These are the children who perhaps are most greatly in need of the kind of care and concern that the Member for Red Deer-South mentioned. . . .

MR. DAY: North.

MRS. HEWES: North. Ah, I beg your pardon.

. . . that the Member for Red Deer-North mentioned regarding someone to be there for him after school, but we put no energy as a government into after school programs.

Mr. Speaker, we've not talked in this motion about the particular needs of women who are isolated. Perhaps they don't need day care, perhaps they don't want to go back to work, but they are isolated women who have great needs for social encounters, social opportunities, and we don't provide any kind of acceptable program to help that to happen. Are we talking perhaps about the particular needs of immigrant women who find themselves shut away in many of our communities with no access at all? Yet when we speak of child care options to parents, I don't think that's what was intended. If that's what the member intended, then I certainly commend him, and I would fully support such an idea.

Mr. Speaker, we sometimes forget that people who have

children in day care also contribute to day care through their taxes and will continue to do so long after their needs have changed. I believe that we need desperately to review Alberta's plan and proposal and methodology in day care. I believe we have been deficient for too long in our balance between commercial and private nonprofit and community day care centres. I think we have been deficient in our capacity to monitor and evaluate and cause day care centres to be accountable to their publics. I think we need to immediately change our standards for those who work and serve in day cares and to put programs in place that will allow the people who are presently in day cares, who are in many cases grossly underpaid, to have upgrading of their training so that they're in a far better position to serve their constituency and also support in their own family.

If we're going to review Alberta's plan, Mr. Speaker, and if we're going to think through what we're planning to urge the federal government to do in the way of diminishing refundable tax credits, let's be very sure that at the same time we do so within the context of an improved quality so that we have the best use of our dollars and that at all times we keep children at the centre of our discussions, that we not try to influence disproportionately families to stay at home as though that is the moral and proper thing to do as opposed to making a free choice. Let's at all times be relevant to the times that we live in and support parent choices to be responsive to family needs. I would hope that the House will concentrate on some of those ideas rather than simply on insisting that we support mothers who decide, presumably because it's a better choice, to stay at home.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Chinook, followed by Edmonton-Glengarry.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak briefly in support of this motion.

The last two or three decades have seen a tremendous change in the composition of the work force and indeed in our attitudes towards men's and women's roles in society. Most women now work, whereas 20 years ago most did not. Besides making it possible for women to work, one of the major accomplishments of the feminist era was to focus attention on the need for quality affordable day care in order to make it easier for women to work, whether it be for financial or personal reasons. Part of the responsibility fell upon the government, and over the years in this province it's injected a great deal of money into creating affordable quality spaces. Most agree that this is a laudable effort.

Today women who choose to go out and work are no longer chastised as neglectful mothers, and day care is no longer considered a social evil that will produce undisciplined, insecure children. In fact, some experts believe that day care helps socialize a child and makes school and other future social activities easier to cope with. These are big changes to have occurred over such a short period of time. Overall I would say that most of the changes have been positive, but the rapidity with which change occurred perhaps has left us all reeling.

What's evident now is that feminism overlooked the contributions of parents who chose to stay home and raise their children. Perhaps in our rush to legitimize the working women we went too far and caused women who chose to stay home to lose respect in the eyes of society, and now we must grapple with the unfair status that we have assigned them and attempt to change it. It's ironic that feminism sprang from the kitchens of

North America and made significant gains on behalf of homemakers, particularly in the area of recognizing women as equal contributors to the household, thus entitling them to half of the assets in a marriage, but in many respects this left behind the very women it sought to help. Feminism won respectability for working women but perhaps at the expense of those who do not.

Mr. Speaker, feminism is about choice, about giving more women alternatives for themselves and about their families, but its biggest drawback is that it does not speak for all women, women who feel that the best care is given by a parent.

Parents who forgo a second income to stay at home and raise children make a huge sacrifice, and I'm afraid we as a government are not doing enough to support them. By virtue of subsidizing day care, we in fact encourage people to use these facilities and inadvertently promote one form of child care over the other. It would be presumptuous of this government to believe that child care workers can replace parents.

Mr. Speaker, the main concern here must be the welfare of the child, and oftentimes what is best for the parent is best for the child. It's important that parents be content with their child care situation. If the parent is not able to stay home with the child because of financial reasons - or, for that matter, if you're not able to work - then the resulting guilt or resentment may lead to stress within the family unit. In other words, parents are often forced to make arrangements which neither meet their needs nor the needs of their children.

All children should be raised in the best possible circumstances. If a parent feels that he or she is best equipped to provide that care, then we should look at ways to facilitate parental home care. Our recent social policy statement reiterated the importance of the family and this government's commitment to supporting it. If I may quote from the statement:

- Government policies and programs must recognize the paramount importance of the family as the basic unit of our society and the diversity of family structures, and must support and strengthen the role of the family in Alberta society.

I think the best way to help families is to provide them with options. In providing adequate day care facilities, we've fulfilled the needs of one sector of society, though we should continue to look at other ways that would allow parents, both mothers and fathers, to spend more time with their children. This could occur in job sharing, jobsite day care, flextime.

Now we must look seriously at ways to meet the needs of the roughly 40 percent of women who choose to stay home and the other men and women who would like to but cannot afford it. Based on 1981 census figures, 62 percent of all female spouses work. According to one study done in 1984, 69 percent of employed mothers of children under the age of three had full-time jobs. It's anybody's guess as to how many parents would choose to stay home given the opportunity, I think the numbers would be significant. Many child care experts agree it's important for parent and child to be together as much as possible during the first 18 months of life.

Last December's federal child care strategy acknowledged the eligibility of stay-at-home parents to some kind of assistance, but the proposal fell short of providing meaningful help. The strategy suggested a \$200 increase in the child tax

credit for every child six and under for parents who have no receipts, meaning those that care for their own children or who use informal systems of care. An extra \$200 tax credit hardly begins to defray the costs of staying at home, and it's too insignificant to affect a parent's decision to stay home.

I join with the Member for Lethbridge-West in arguing that tax credits and deductions, even larger ones, are not the answer, that in fact they are regressive. They're useless if you have no income and increase in value as income increases. The intent of this motion is to help those who need it most, and I believe that direct taxable income supplements will have the greatest impact.

All parents, regardless of socioeconomic status, should have access to the same options. We've made high-quality medical care and education available to all Canadians. Our next challenge is to develop a child care system which discriminates against no one. I do not think this motion in any way undermines the accomplishments of the women's movement by forcing women back into traditional roles. This motion is about creating alternatives, not reducing them. This is a progressive idea whose time has come. In many ways I see the recognition of homemakers as a step in the natural evolution of the woman's movement. The pendulum has come back to the centre after swinging to both extremes. It recognizes the importance of nurturing and the necessity for both parents to become more involved in child rearing. Child care isn't or shouldn't be a zero-sum game where the gains of one group are at the expense of another. I think all families stand to gain by the recommendations put forward in this motion in that all families will have accessible child care options which best suit their situations.

I strongly support this motion and ask the Assembly to consider seeing that child care options are expanded to meet the needs of all parents in this province.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the time, I would beg leave to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Chinook, those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, if it meets with the approval of the Member for Chinook and all of the members in the Assembly, I would move that when the House adjourns this afternoon to return at 8 o'clock this evening, it do so in Committee of Supply with the estimates of the Department of Recreation and Parks.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the Deputy Government House Leader, those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion is carried.

[The House recessed at 5:25 p.m.]

