

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Thursday, May 5, 1988 2:30 p.m.**
Date: 88/05/05

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. SPEAKER: Stony Plain.

MR. HERON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce an exchange student from Norway, Per Kristian Lundin. He is accompanied by my predecessor Bill Purdy, who prior to his retirement after 15 years served the Stony Plain constituency in this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, our guests are situated in your gallery, and I ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I request that the petition that I presented yesterday on behalf of Principal investors now be read and received.

CLERK:

We the undersigned request the assembly to urge the government to institute a committee to investigate the possibility of a plan to acquire the First Investors and Associated Investors assets from the receiver/manager Coopers and Lybrand. The purpose of this plan would be to expedite a distribution of cash to depositors, the majority of whom are elderly and unable to work.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 27 School Act

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured and privileged on behalf of the government of Alberta to introduce Bill 27, a new School Act.

This new legislation is the culmination of over four years of review, discussion, and consultation on a variety of issues fundamental to the education of Alberta's young people. I believe that this new legislation will provide a framework for our children's future. It will provide a clear direction to our education

system and a firm foundation for its future development and growth.

[Leave granted; Bill 27 read a first time]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table with the Legislative Assembly today a brochure titled Water Supplies Assistance Program. The brochure outlines the details of the major program that Premier Getty announced to the people of Alberta on April 21, 1988.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table with the Legislative Assembly today a copy of the speech that I gave in Boyle, Alberta, on February 3, 1988.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, in honour of this special day and Bill 27's introduction I would like to introduce a few people in the members' gallery and ask that they stand when their names are called. First of all, Mr. Harry Chomik, the president of the Alberta School Trustees' Association; Mr. Brendan Dunphy, the president of the Alberta Teachers' Association; Mrs. Nadene Thomas, the past president of the Alberta Teachers' Association; Mr. Larry Dufresne, president of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association; Betty Claydon, president-elect of the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations; Gary Kiernan, president of the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents; Orville Borys, president of the Association of School Business Officials of Alberta; Mr. Gary Duthler, president of the Alberta association of independent schools; and Sandra Smith, the primary legislative drafter for the School Act within the Department of Education.

I'd ask you all to greet them in this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition . . . Not the Opposition. Oh, well. I apologize.

Government House Leader.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, sir, and to Members of the Legislative Assembly today in your gallery, Mr. Francis O'Hara, chairman of the Edmonton Catholic school board; Mrs. Catherine Chichack, deputy chairman of the Edmonton Catholic school board and a former member of this Assembly; Mrs. Gagne, trustee, Edmonton Catholic school board; Dr. John Brosseau, chief superintendent; Dr. John Acheson, area superintendent; Ms. Donna Swiniarski, coordinator for community relations; Mr. Kevin Murphy, principal, St Basil Catholic elementary; and Mr. Dale Ripley, principal of St Gerard Catholic elementary.

Also, Mr. Speaker, in the members' gallery, representing the public school board of Edmonton, Mr. Don Williams, vice-chairman; Mr. George Luck, trustee; Mr. Don Massey, trustee; Mrs. Joan Cowling, trustee; and Mr. Dale McLaren, consultant, administrative support services. I would ask the members to accord those standing the usual warm welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: Once again, the Chair apologizes to the Government House Leader, but the Chair was in the midst of dealing with an important memo from the opposition at that exact moment.

Member for Stony Plain, followed by Wainwright.

MR. HERON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to introduce to you and members of this Assembly, two guests connected with education in the county of Parkland. First, Mrs. Vi Helm, chairman of the board, and Mr. Marvin Tkachuk, superintendent of schools. I would ask that they receive the warmest welcome of this Assembly.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, 43 students from the Irma high school. They have come today to see the government in action. The great little city of Irma, population 499, has the distinction of being recorded in the Department of Education records as being the first consolidated high school in Alberta.

They are seated in the public gallery; they are accompanied by teachers Al Jamison and Allan Beniuk and bus driver Alvin Valleau. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Labour.

DR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege today to introduce 37 students from Gerard Redmond school in Hinton. These are the people that the new School Act is all about; they are the students. They are accompanied by teachers Annette Sommerfeld and Kathy Holland and by parents Lynn Kerstein, Rene and Sue Werbicki, Yvonne Rink, Hiroko Kobayashi, and Lois Tunke.

Mr. Speaker, this group had the privilege of taking part in a tree planting ceremony on the west lawn with Mrs. Getty this afternoon and also had a meeting with the Premier. So they were indeed privileged. I would ask them to rise in both galleries and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and members of the Assembly, 12 members of the Unitarian Church of Edmonton. They belong to Univintage, a seniors' activity group within the church. They are an active group, but when I managed to catch up with them at lunch today, we discussed several topics including the term "senior citizens." They like the terms "elders" or "wise seniors" and "vintage citizens."

I would ask these vintage citizens and friends to rise in the members' gallery and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

User Fees in the Public School System

MR. MARTIN: To the Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker, because she wants to talk about education today; so does the Official Opposition. We have recently surveyed a number of Alberta school districts, and the results show an alarming increase both in the types and amounts of user fees that are being used in the province. Now, in view of the fact that Albertans already pay hefty taxes to provide for public education, does the minister not agree that additional fees for basic educational services should be abolished?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: No, I do not, Mr. Speaker, but I do agree

that the question of fees can become an issue with respect to access to education, and therefore the change in the Bill which I had the privilege to introduce today acknowledges that fact and provides an appeal for a parent where that fee is deemed to be too onerous, and that appeal is to the minister.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, appeal is all right, but there's a basic lack of funding of education in the province. I notice now we have basic fees, early childhood fees, tuition fees for courses, rental fees for books and equipment, and the list goes on. I ask the minister a simple question: where is the fairness of this? Because obviously this affects lower income parents much more than higher income parents.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, there is an important philosophical difference, I suspect, between the government and the opposition on this issue. Certainly the ability of a school board to charge a user fee for things like school textbooks instead of requiring that a parent purchase those books is in recognition of access to education. The difficulty that some may have in meeting those fees is exactly why the appeal was built in for the province, and we will have to see how actions occur under that new legislation.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, public education was meant to be there equally for people, regardless of their income. They shouldn't have to go through an appeal procedure: that's the point. Then obviously she agrees with user fees. She's already indicated that. But does she not agree that there should be some limit on these fees regardless of the appeal procedure?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, what we have embodied in this new legislation is exactly the fact that for the first time in our province's history, we have recognized the right of access of every single student in this province to an education, whether that student is Roman Catholic, whether he is Francophone, whether he is handicapped, or whether he is of native descent. That is a fundamental principle. Whether there should be a limit on user fees imposed on students is a question which I have every confidence school boards are reviewing. I do not believe there should be a provincial limit. I think the ability of school boards to represent their own constituency -- and recognize that some school boards do not impose user fees, which is certainly their choice. That choice is something we think is fundamental to the delivery of education in this province.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I think the minister is missing the point. It has to do with the funding from the provincial level, which has been going down. I point out from her own figures that in '84-85 \$90 million was collected in user fees. That's almost 5 percent of the operating revenue. That's a lot of money. I say to the minister isn't it a fact that declining provincial support for basic education has caused this proliferation in user fees?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is wrong on his first point. There has not been a decline in support for basic education in this province over the last 10 years. In fact, there has been an increase above and beyond the inflation costs and the education index cost. I am hopeful that those increases beyond inflation have been to the quality of education in this province, and I believe that, in fact, is the case. But to argue that funding is not rising in this province, which it

is, is fundamentally flawed.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo, supplementary question.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is indeed a serious problem, and last year in response to my question the minister indicated that she was going to review the magnitude of the problem being created for lower income Albertans. I'm wondering whether she can tell us whether in fact the problem has been reviewed and whether she can tell us when we'll see the results of that review.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: As usual, Mr. Speaker, the opposition likes to find one pat answer for a very complex issue. Certainly with respect to the manner in which education is funded in this province -- we have had in the last six months an exceedingly important debate on how that funding occurs. What I believe we've determined through that important discussion is a recognition of the inequities that exist not only on the fiscal side but on the program side. The new legislative framework which I was privileged to introduce today gives us an opportunity to address those fiscal and program inequities in a way that we couldn't do before, and I look forward to future proposals before this Assembly and our government as we work through this important issue.

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville.

Ethanol Fuels Industry

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A recent example of this government's constant favouritism of the oil industry over agriculture was the pathetic sight of the Minister of Agriculture trying to defend his government's practice of 5 percent loans to big oil projects and 9 percent loans to farmers.

Now, another clear and regrettable example of this kind of discrimination is the two reports released recently on the grain-based ethanol industry in Alberta. I'd like to ask the Premier if he's aware that the calculations and assumptions in these two reports are so seriously flawed that their assumptions are essentially worthless.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd certainly ask the hon. member to point out to me afterwards his arguments with the report. As I recall, when the minister tabled the report, he said that these were done to answer certain narrow specifics, and as a matter of fact, he was continuing to have additional work done because he wanted to also look at broader possibilities for ethanol in the province. I'm sure that his continuing look may well take into account any arguments the hon. member wants to make.

MR. FOX: Well, supplementary, then, to the minister. Is the minister not aware that the report done in conjunction with his department, the Department of Energy, Economic Development and Trade, and the Alberta Grain Commission, studied further by some high-priced consultants, contains calculations that throw the analysis out by millions of dollars in their calculations

of cost to the government and net benefits to agriculture?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, yes, we are aware that there is a minor error in the report as it relates to foregone revenues. If I can respond to the hon. member's first suggestion as it related to our support, I've had individuals indicate to me their appreciation for the \$2 billion program that we offer to the farming sector, which is unparalleled in the country as it relates to any sector -- just to indicate to the opposition members the strong support this party does give to the rural economy within the province.

As it relates to the ethanol report, again the Premier was correct, right on, whereby we indicated we are going to examine other avenues. Regretfully there was an error in this report. Mr. Speaker, this is part of our ongoing discussion process, whereby I indicated I wanted to see it on the agenda when we meet with ministers of agriculture in July in Toronto, whereby hopefully we can develop a national consensus as it relates to the ethanol industry within Canada and within this province.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, the minister can try and hide behind the \$2 billion program if he wants, but the specifics here are that their calculations are out by millions of dollars, and the net benefit to Alberta agriculture is seriously underestimated. I'd like to know if the minister, if he is saying now that he's prepared to scrap these reports and start fresh, realizes also that the Touche Ross report does not even consider the fact that ethanol develops renewable sources of energy at a time when we need it, that it provides regional economic . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. We're now into the third supplementary question in this supplementary.

Thank you.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, our analysis was done on the basis that in the event that we are to offer support to the agricultural community, we want to see the agricultural community receive that support. The impact is not at all on what will relate to the agricultural community; the impact is on our budgetary implications and the foregone revenue. That's where the error is, and again this hon. member uses this Assembly to distort the facts, which he's so great at doing.

MR. FOX: If the minister is saying that he accepts a report that doesn't take into consideration the creation of economic development in rural areas, diversification of agriculture, and the fact that it would insulate our grain industry from world conditions -- if he's saying he's not willing to consider those and yet assume that the industry doesn't stand a chance in Alberta and isn't worthy of government support, I'd like him to justify that. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Minister of Agriculture.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as the Assembly's aware, I never said that whatsoever, and again we're having a distortion of the facts by the hon. Member for Vegreville. I received the reports. There was nothing that would have made me happier -- and I indicated that on a number of occasions -- if this ethanol production would have worked to the advantage of the agricultural community. If we're going to spend somewhere in the vicinity of \$40 million, we want to see a flow-through directly to the

agricultural community and not have it siphoned off by a number of other industries if it's not to benefit. [interjections] I was kind enough to listen to the hon. member; maybe he'd be kind enough to listen to me.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue with our analysis. We've indicated that we're going to have public meetings throughout the province, which are going to be sponsored by Unifarm, so that we can receive the information from those interested groups and in turn relay the information that we have developed over the last number of months. In addition to that, we are going to put it on the agenda with the agricultural ministers across the country, because there is nothing that would make me happier if this would prove to be a viable operation and would return net benefits to the agricultural community.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, while reminding the House that I said the report was too shallow and inconsistent when it came out, I'd like to address my question back to the Premier. Since the main economic advantage is tied all to taxation and not to actual cost of producing ethanol, is the Premier prepared to ask the national government to forgo their excise tax on fuel in order to make ethanol an economical fuel?

MR. GETTY: Well, the problem with the simplistic way of looking at it like that, Mr. Speaker, is that just doing that won't do it. That doesn't make any sense, because if you do what the hon. member's just suggested, you will not make it an economical fuel. It takes a far greater look at it and a much more detailed assistance program in order to have that happen.

MR. TAYLOR: All you have to do is get your hand out of the farmers' pockets.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon, you've asked the question.

MR. GETTY: I also want to comment, Mr. Speaker, on the opening question in this line -- I have a chance with the supplementary -- where the hon. member refers to a 5 percent interest rate compared to a 9 percent interest rate. Again, that's a fallacy. That is not a comparison of a 9 percent to a 5 percent. In fact, the 5 percent interest rate is a basic interest rate plus a considerable amount of upside potential flowing to the government, which may be far more than 9 percent as the project develops.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture: in the minister's study of the question of using ethanol, what is the experience in other jurisdictions where they have been actively using gasohol in some of these other jurisdictions?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we've done a fairly in-depth analysis as to other jurisdictions, whether it be Brazil or the United States, and there's deep and serious reservations as to the production of ethanol. In some areas it has proved successful, but in other areas it has not. Quite frankly, as much as I hate to say it, the negatives appear to outweigh the positives.

MR. DAY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture and to get back to the main question, which the opposition has strayed from: can the minister tell us, in light of the fact that Alberta government programs give farmers the lowest input costs of any in Canada, over what period of time are the 9 percent loans and the 6 percent loans available to farmers?

AN HON. MEMBER: It's unrelated.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the program that we announced so many months ago, July of last year, is a 20-year program. There'll be insured rates at 9 percent for 20 years for those within the farming population who wish to exercise it. Under the associate minister we have the beginner farmer program, which effectively offers 6 percent interest rates to our beginning farmer population. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The comments are indeed correct that the supplementary did not deal with ethanol. However, we don't need all the extra prompting, thank you.

Husky Oil Upgrader

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my main question today is to the Premier also. Back in the '70s the Premier was a very major part of the present government of the day that came up with a rather interesting deal with the petrochemical industry, apparently promising them access to natural gas in Alberta. Now the chickens have come home to roost in that the petrochemical producers want the government of the day to force some of our natural gas producers to deliver their natural gas in order to extract the ethane from it. My question to the Premier involves this and the particular semisweetheart deal that has been worked out with the Nova group for the heavy oil upgrader. Is it possible at all that we are in some sort of secret agreement here to make up for the fact that the ERCB has ruled that the gas producers don't have to turn over their gas? Is he compensating Nova by making a loan here in the heavy oil upgrader?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker, and I think the hon. member should carry his argument against the upgrader out to Lloydminster and tell the people out there that he's against that project and also the people of Alberta who want to see their heavy oil developed and produced in the future -- such a magnificent resource.

The member is referring to the petrochemical industry. I should draw his attention to April 27, also to a question from the Liberal caucus, when I outlined at that time, long before the ERCB report, the policy of the government with regard to petrochemical development in this province. That is that we will not allow the jobs to be shipped down the pipeline to other parts of Canada or to the United States, that we will have that resource upgraded here in Alberta. That is our policy, and it's going to continue to be our policy. The Energy Resources Conservation Board in this report has done as the Minister of Energy said the last time he answered the question; that is, that this is a set of recommendations. The government makes policy.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the public of Alberta are disturbed that the backs of the producers are the ones that are going to carry the subsidy.

But to go further, Mr. Speaker, has the Premier made a similar deal, knowing that the upgrading now appears to be just around the corner, can be upgraded at the wellhead -- is he thinking of some other similar type of deal with the upgrader people, forcing the heavy oil producers next to deliver to the upgrader?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, no I'm not. But I will con-

firm one thing, and that is that we're going to have heavy oil upgraded and we're going to make sure that we have the jobs in Alberta. We'll make sure that we're going to have that resource play an important part of our future development, and we're going to make sure that our resources in the petrochemical industry are also upgraded in this province.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, what does the Premier intend to do to force the heavy oil producers to turn over their oil to the upgrader if they do not want to do so?

MR. GETTY: I'm going to get a baseball bat and hit them over the head. Mr. Speaker, the company has already entered into contracts. If they are able to have the upgrader go ahead with the support we're giving them, they've entered into contracts for supply already.

MR. TAYLOR: The heavy oil producers may not think the baseball bat is that funny, Mr. Speaker. This is the Premier that has made some foolish deals in the past.

Well, can the minister, then, give the assurance that he will not put more money into the upgrader than what is already guaranteed in the loans? Can he assure the taxpayers of this province that in his almost insane desire to have an upgrading plant, we're not going to use the heritage trust fund to put in money that can't be raised from the private sector?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker, I will not make that commitment to the hon. member. I'm always prepared and our government is always prepared to invest in the resources and the future of Alberta. We are not going to have the hon. member's position -- which I'm sure we will explain to the people in Lloydminster and other parts of Alberta -- that he's not prepared to support resource development in this province. Our government is.

Business and Community Development Grants

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Career Development and Employment. Recently the minister announced a \$15,000 grant to a Rocky Mountain House resort to finance a major expansion. Now, I would like to know from the minister: what are the guidelines in place as to who gets these grants and who doesn't? Is it just an ad hoc committee? Is it the minister's discretion? What are the guidelines as to who gets the grant and who does not get the grant?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I didn't hear the project, nor did I hear the program he's referring to. Maybe he could repeat it.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, it's that alphabetical one, ABCD, and the grant was the \$15,000 grant to the Rocky Mountain resort project.

MR. ORMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Alberta business and community development program has been a very successful program. There have been a number of initiatives from one end of the province to the other. The program is designed to break out the labour component in building facilities, business development, community development projects to encourage the use of local labour. Now, if the hon. member has a particular concern about one of those projects, I'd be pleased to look into

it. I'm not familiar with his concern.

I can say that in terms of review of the project, the applications are made by the particular community or business. They are reviewed by the department. In this particular case they would be reviewed by the northern Alberta regional office and then referred down to the office here in Edmonton, to my office, for a final review, Mr. Speaker.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my apologies. I guess the minister didn't understand or didn't hear what I first asked.

Is there a policy in place, or do you, sir, make the final decision about who gets it and who doesn't get the grant? That's the bottom line.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, there definitely is a policy, and as a matter of fact, there's a very distinct set of criteria and guidelines that are published. All members from both sides of this House have constituencies and communities that are accessing this program. The decisions are made as they are on all of our other programs; that is, if the community or the business meets the guidelines and job creation is generated in the particular community for the development of the project, then it is reviewed on that basis.

Again, Mr. Speaker, if the member is getting to something specific he has a concern with, I wish he'd bring it to my attention, and I'll try and deal with it.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to do the minister a favour. The quickest way to get your butt kicked out of this place is not to treat everybody fairly. That is inviolate.

The question and the concern that I have, Mr. Minister, is: are all businessmen eligible for this program, or is there a chosen one or two? Because programs should apply to all people and all sectors, and it bothers me that somebody has to make the decision about one person getting a grant over another person. I want to know what the policy is so that everybody is treated fairly and equally.

MR. ORMAN: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the member is indignant about something. He obviously has a burr under his saddle. If he is aware that there is not fair and equitable treatment within any of my department programs, I would hope that he makes those awarenesses to me immediately so I can deal with them, rather than beating around the bush.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I'm not beating around the bush. I'd like to ask a further supplementary, and again I will try and teach the hon. rookie minister about the facts of political life. If you have 100 applications, Mr. Minister, and you accept one, you've got 99 people mad at you. Never forget that. So the policy that I want to know from the minister is: does it apply to everyone? Is everyone eligible to get this grant? Because only two people so far that I know got grants, so there are probably 99 people who didn't, and you've got 99 mad at you, two happy. You're never going to be around too long with that ratio.

MR. ORMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think I've been a minister longer than the hon. member has. I'm willing, though, to benefit from his vast knowledge in and around government, but I would certainly encourage him to do a little better research. To suggest that there have been two grants under that program is ridiculous. I myself have signed off probably in the area approaching 100, from one end of the province to the other. The

guidelines are published, and they're available. As a matter of fact, they're printed on a green sheet, Mr. Speaker. I have the members from all sides of this House come to my office or pick them up at the career centres or at our regional offices and find the guidelines. If he wants a set of the guidelines, he could have asked me, but to suggest that there are inequities in the program I think is ridiculous.

If he has a particular instance that he feels somebody has not been dealt with fairly, please bring it to my attention. I'd be pleased to deal with it. It's a very successful program, and we've been pleased with it. It's a significant job creator in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister of career development: since there are guidelines and criteria clearly published, could the minister please indicate why it is that ministerial involvement would be required in the review and approval process? Under what circumstances does the minister overrule the criteria that are set out clearly for the public?

MR. ORMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's always appropriate that in the event there are projects designated by the department or approved by the department -- it's important that I review them to see that they don't conflict with government policy. I don't expect the individuals in the department who are reviewing the project to necessarily make those judgments.

I can say, Mr. Speaker, that of the approaching 100 of those projects that have been sent to my office, I have not refused one, and I do review the press release that announces them. Again, it's been a very successful project. The response has been fantastic from the business and the nonprofit organizations in this province. So I'm really quite perplexed. If there's an example of an abuse or a misuse, I'd be pleased to deal with it. The guidelines I'll be sending to the minister as soon as I get back . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister.

MS BARRETT: This is a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. I wonder if he'd answer the question that was originally put to him, that being: on what basis does the minister, who has acknowledged that he signs the agreement for the program, prioritize? On what basis does he actually approve or disapprove those applications?

MR. ORMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I did not say that I sign the agreement. The agreement is a contractual arrangement between our department and the individual applicant. I simply see that each project goes across my desk, to determine whether or not it conflicts with the policy of this government. Of the applications that have come across my desk, none of them has. If there is a concern that somebody has been refused for a particular reason, pleased to look at it. It's not unlike any of the other programs that are of this nature.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Edmonton-Highlands, followed by Calgary-Buffalo.

Proposed Ethane Plant

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's becoming

painfully evident to Canadians and to Albertans especially that included amongst the implications of the Mulroney trade agreement is the fact that Albertans can no longer use our natural resources as leverage for economic development, which has resulted in small producers effectively subsidizing the proposed Nova ethane plant here in Alberta. Because of the Premier's close involvement with Nova I wonder if he will now agree to absent himself from the cabinet when it decides this very important critical matter.

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MS BARRETT: Well, supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I remind the Premier that he and his government are facing a major decision here and that he's got to mediate between small producers and Nova. Under the circumstances can he now appreciate the public concern with respect to his decision to seek favours from Nova?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I have not sought favours from Nova. Frankly, if the hon. member wants to review the government's policy, as I stated, on petrochemical development, she will see that there is not a great problem for the government.

MS BARRETT: A lot of small producers don't agree with the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, my question really is: is the Premier now prepared to disperse this horrible cloud of suspicion, his perceived conflict of interest -- and particularly under the circumstances of government needing to make a decision -- by offering to pay Nova for that free flight that he requested some weeks ago?

MR. GETTY: This huge cloud, Mr. Speaker, is one that certainly hasn't been apparent to me. As a matter of fact, there hasn't been one Albertan who has raised it with me, and I travel and talk to people all over this province. As a matter of fact, I have raised that issue with them, and they've said to me, "We believe that when an Albertan needs help, we're prepared to help; other Albertans are prepared to help." Frankly, that's the way this province was built.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary.

MS BARRETT: Ah, yes it is, Mr. Speaker. Does the Premier honestly expect Albertans to believe that he can seek favours from a company over which his own government has decision-making authority yet claim that no conflict of interest exists, or even perceived conflict of interest?

MR. GETTY: It may well be that certain people would be susceptible to that, Mr. Speaker, but not in this government.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, in view of the Premier's repeated remarks that the government makes policy and the ERCB only makes recommendations, is he prepared now to tell the House whether he is going to support the ERCB recommendation or whether he is going to have some other recommendation to make?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I've already explained to the hon. member the petrochemical policy of the government. As far as the report, the hon. Minister of Energy has already said to the House that he is going to meet with the producers, small or tall,

and he will also meet with the petrochemical developers in this province and see whether they have any particular input for him on the report. But it will be the government that develops any additional policy in any response to that report.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Calgary-Buffalo, followed by St Albert.

Treatment Facilities for Youth

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is to the Minister of Community and Occupational Health. It's becoming increasingly clear that the government has neglected the needs of youth in this province. There is a scandalous absence of facilities to deal with children and adolescents in distress, whether it's through psychiatric problems or through alcohol and drug abuse. This has had a particularly devastating impact on low-income families. To the Minister of Community and Occupational Health: can the minister give parents and youth a firm undertaking that he will ensure that we establish quality community-based programs in Alberta for children addicted to drugs and alcohol, without delay? We've had enough of this baloney about AADAC studying the issue. The need is established, and let's get some action.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Calgary-McCall, the chairman of the commission, may want to respond further. I am becoming increasingly aware and as a result increasingly concerned about the problems faced by parents and by young Albertans who have a chemical dependency. Clearly, there are programs within our province that meet the needs of some of these young Albertans, and there are programs outside the province. We are working to build a better system of funding for those young Albertans who must go out of the province for that treatment.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you. A supplementary to the Solicitor General, who I think is aware that 95 percent of youth involved with the law have drug or alcohol problems. I'm wondering why it is that our youth correctional institutes are hotbeds of drug dealing and consumption while almost nothing is done to treat the drug and alcohol problems of young offenders. When are we going to get some action?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the member give me the evidence that there is a hotbed of trafficking of drugs within the young offender centres.

I will be the first to agree with the member that the majority of the young offenders are incarcerated because of an involvement with substance abuse of some sort. We have counselors in each of our institutions. We have psychiatric assistance for people who have mental problems that have come from substance abuse. We're working with AADAC to develop a program for our Strathmore young offender centre that will address specifically in one of the units there people that have results of drug abuse. We are working towards solving this.

MR. CHUMIR: You've got a long, long way to go.

Supplementary to the Minister of Community and Occupational Health. Drug and alcohol problems are often linked to psychological and psychiatric problems, and I'm wondering

why we've had so little progress in establishing programs for dealing with the psychiatric problems of our young people in light of the fact that the Fewster report told us what a mess our system was over a year ago. Why the delay?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't accept that there has been a delay. In fact, the hon. member and I spoke about this as recently as Sunday when we both attended the beginning of Mental Health Week, sponsored by the Canadian Mental Health Association in Calgary. What our department has done, certainly, is received the Fewster report; it has gone out to public hearing process. And we have taken action by setting up a pilot program for northeast Alberta by putting in place a children's mental health co-ordinator, by putting in place in the northeast region a number of therapists and psychologists, trained professionals, to assist in meeting the needs of young Albertans who need mental health treatment and counseling and therapy. So I don't accept what the hon. member has said. We are not dragging our feet; we are in fact taking action.

MR. CHUMIR: It sounded like very little to me.

Now, to the Premier: we have too many ministers involved and too little co-ordination. I'm wondering whether the minister might undertake to appoint one of his cabinet ministers to co-ordinate the needs of youth in distress so that we can end the drift?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Minister of Community and Occupational Health has already advised the House and the hon. member, I think this matter is being handled very well right now.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, one of the great problems facing young people with drinking and addiction problems is not drinking and driving but drinking and sex. What new initiatives has the Minister of Community and Occupational Health taken through AADAC to look at programs for adolescents, and adults for that matter, around curbing the abuse of sexual activity while under the influence of alcohol or drugs?

MR. DINNING: Well again, Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the commission may want to supplement my answer, but we have introduced a number of programs in the last three or four weeks, including an infusion of some one million new dollars into sexuality education and counseling programs for health units to provide to young Albertans in the classroom, for teachers, for parents, and for others in the community. So I believe that through those kinds of measures, through those kinds of programs, we are equipping our young Albertans with the knowledge and the information they need. In addition, we have, through the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, set a standard in education and counseling to our young people that is a standard unmet by any other province in this country.

Construction Industry Collective Bargaining

MR. STRONG: My question is for the Premier, Mr. Speaker, at least the initial one. For almost a year now the employers federation and the building trades unions have been attempting to bargain a master agreement for the construction industry under Bill 53, the Construction Industry Collective Bargaining Act. It appears that the government is coming to the same realization that the building trades unions have come to, and that is that Bill

53 has been a total failure and has not provided a means for negotiating a collective agreement for the industry. In addition, labour stability and continuity in the construction industry has been denied to thousands of tradesmen for almost four years now.

To the Premier: is the Premier and this government's Minister of Labour going to introduce new legislation to get the bargaining process back on track in Bill 53 negotiations?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, reviewing that matter regarding the negotiations with the Minister of Labour, I think it is fair to say that we are all a little disappointed that there hasn't been more progress. We would hope that by talking to both sides, they will see the light and try and close the gaps between themselves. It is true that the hon. Minister of Labour has been meeting with both negotiation groups, and he will probably want to add something to this reply or to handle any supplementary.

MR. STRONG: Mr. Speaker, that really didn't answer the question. But given that the Deputy Premier told a town hall meeting in Calgary last night that the government is going to abandon the process of Bill 53 and introduce new legislation to take care of the delay in negotiations, will the minister or the Premier confirm or deny whether we're going to see new legislation outside and away from Bill 53?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I think I dealt with this issue on Tuesday, two days ago, and indicated that while there may be frustration on the part of the two federations, there is also frustration on my part in that having consulted very openly with the two parties and with the investors, the Construction Owners Association, Bill 53 was developed with the assurance that the two parties could make it work. So far both sides have been remarkably unsuccessful at making the process that they bought into in the first place work.

MR. STRONG: Mr. Speaker, when is this Minister of Labour going to stop blaming the two parties at the negotiating table and take some of the responsibility and blame for a lack of negotiations on himself for not following the process as laid out by Bill 53, his legislation?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, since the hon. Member for St. Albert fulfills two roles, one in this House and one outside this House, maybe he should take some of the blame.

MR. STRONG: Mr. Speaker, I've never heard such nonsense in all my life.

When is this minister going to accept the responsibility of his legislation and see it through to an end? Put a time line in; put an end to this process. That's the problem and you know it. Fix it.

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, perhaps in his approach within the Assembly the member is showing what one of the problems is at the table.

It is true, Mr. Speaker, that on the part of the employers they appear to wish to fix the status quo as it existed during the downturn, with some 35 to 50 percent unemployment in that industry. On the other hand, some of the union people at the table appear to wish to return to the heyday of the boom times in Alberta. I think that both opinions held by the different parties are perhaps unrealistic and bizarre.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker. We need a straight answer on this situation. Is new legislation the government's intention, and if not, what on earth is the government's strategy to resolve the impasse?

DR. REID: Mr. Speaker, I dealt with that issue on Tuesday as well. The situation is that Bill 53 was introduced last year, passed by the Legislature, and proclaimed, to set up a mechanism that the two parties themselves said they could make work. They have failed to do that. The intent was that if they could make the Bill 53 provisions work to the benefit of the industry in Alberta, then that type of bargaining and that process would act as the basis for the permanent legislation for the construction industry. So far there has been little evidence that that system can be made to work with the present parties sitting at the table facing each other.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

Winter Use of Highway 40

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some questions concerning the winter opening of Highway 40, both past and future. I'd like to read from a memo from the former Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife to the Minister of Transportation and Utilities and the Minister of Recreation and Parks. To quote:

The recommendation of senior wildlife management officials is that the use of the Highway be confined to the three week period during which the Olympic events will be held. Such a strategy would represent a reasonable compromise.

I would like to ask the Premier if in retrospect he doesn't agree that keeping Highway 40 open for the entire winter was a mistake that ought not to be repeated in the future.

MR. GETTY: Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I think it was wise to have it open for the Olympics. It provided an opportunity in the event of some disaster. As the hon. minister has said in the past, there is no plan to open it in the future, and so I don't know what the hon. member's concern is. These kinds of decisions have to be made when they're needed.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. It's the fact that the advice from the minister was ignored that concerned me.

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.
Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another point in it said that:

I do not believe we are in a sound position to consider the issue of year round opening of the road as advocated by some individuals and groups. . . . [And also] we are already receiving requests and representations on the matter.

I would ask the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife or the Premier to reveal what proposals they have been receiving for the area and what consideration they're giving to them for the future.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, there hasn't been any future considerations whatsoever that I'm aware of.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. To the minister of transportation. The highway was given, at some expense no doubt, a winter surface last summer. Was this cost incurred simply for the three weeks of the Olympics, or does it indicate plans for future opening of the highway?

MR. ADAIR: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you. Another point in the memo says:

It is . . . a very important important winter range that can be defended by experts as 'critical'. . . "It is a matter of scientific record that the area is virtually a wintering wildlife 'mecca'."

Will the minister give his word in this House that Highway 40 will remain closed in winter and that no winter recreation facilities will be built there?

MR. GETTY: Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, since the hon. member is asking for a government commitment of some duration, I should make it clear to him that the government will make the decisions based on the needs of Albertans. As I said earlier, there is no intent of opening it on another winter occasion, but it may well be that there will be some type of need in the area, a disaster or something like that that it would be needed, and we would not want to make a commitment that prevented that from happening.

MR. SPEAKER: Additional supplementaries?

The Chair would like to ask the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry if it's his intention to file copies of the correspondence that he has been extensively quoting from in this question. Just a question to the House.

MR. YOUNIE: Yes, I'd be delighted to. I had been given to understand in the past that it's not appreciated when we do so in the middle of question period.

MR. SPEAKER: It's the extent of the quotation that was going on in terms of the four questions, hon. member.

The Chair has had notification from the Member for Vegreville under Standing Order 40 with a request for unanimous consent. Vegreville?

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 40 to request the unanimous consent of the Assembly to deal with a motion. I have copies for all hon. members here.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member could read the motion please.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, the motion reads:

Be it resolved that the Assembly suspend the normal order of business under Standing Order 8, move immediately to consideration of Motion 251 standing in the name of the Hon. Member for Vegreville on today's Order Paper, and entertain no motion to adjourn or other motion until such time as the question on Motion 251 is put and resolved.

If I may speak to the immediacy of this motion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that we demonstrated in discussions earlier in the Assembly today that the reports issued by the government on the ethanol industry are seriously flawed and inadequate, and I'm concerned that the conclusions drawn by the government in that regard have encouraged some business people in the province to look elsewhere to develop some important regional economic development opportunities. Indeed, Ethanol Energies of Calgary is musing about the need to move out of province to develop, and that's a concern not only of mine but I'm sure to a number of other rural MLAs who represent . . .

MR. YOUNG: On a point of order. The hon. member should confine himself to the points or urgent and pressing necessity. His debate at this point is musing about what other people may be thinking or may be doing, and in expressing that, he is in fact probably creating some confusion. Because the government, in co-operation with Unifarm, which is sponsoring meetings, as proposed in the motion, through the Grain Commission, is actually involved in meetings. So it is proceeding, and he should return to the urgency.

MR. SPEAKER: The point of order is well taken. Back to the urgency, Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: In spite of the lack of *Beauchesne*, Mr. Speaker, the government may not consider businesspeople moving out of Alberta to be urgent, but I do. In terms of the legislative agenda, the only evidence of legislative concern for the ethanol industry in the province of Alberta is my Motion 251. I submit that it is way down on the Order Paper due to the weight of legislative business. I urge all hon. members to back the ethanol industry and the agriculture industry. Let's debate it publicly in this Assembly now so that people can decide for themselves whether the assumptions on the part of this government that the industry is not viable are valid.

MR. SPEAKER: Under Standing Order 40, only the member proposing the motion may speak to the matter of urgency.

There's a request for unanimous consent with regard to dealing with the motion. Those in favour of giving unanimous consent, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The request fails.

Is this to be a point of order, hon. minister? Point of order, Minister of Agriculture.

MR. ELZINGA: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of misleading -- in fact, untruthful -- statements

made in the presentation by the hon. Member for Vegreville, and I would seek your guidance, sir, as to how one . . . [interjections]

MR. STRONG: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, please be seated. You'll be recognized in due course. It's not a matter of a shouting match.

Minister of Agriculture, speaking to the point of order and, indeed, about to give a citation.

MR. ELZINGA: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I was going to do so before I was so rudely interrupted by the hon. Member for St. Albert, who had no citation. My citation is citation 351.

The hon. Member for Vegreville indicated there had been application for support by Ethanol Energies. There has been no formal application for support to this government, Mr. Speaker. He's misleading.

Another quote, Mr. Speaker. He indicated they were government reports. They are not government reports; they're reports commissioned by this . . . [interjections] [some applause]

MR. SPEAKER: The House is not about to have applause, Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

The Chair applauds to some degree the Minister of Agriculture for throwing out number 351. If indeed there was a transposition of numbers, 315 might have some kind of leeway to it. Nevertheless, is there indeed a valid citation? I think really the Minister of Agriculture has raised a concern which indeed is a complaint against another member's statements. Thank you. The record will be examined.

Member for St. Albert on a point of order.

MR. STRONG: Mr. Speaker, under Standing Orders, section 22, it's been common practice in this Legislative Assembly when a member -- any member -- rises on a point of order, they're to give either Standing Orders or *Beauchesne* and a number to this Legislative Assembly. Now, I'd like to see that practice followed by all hon. members of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The member makes a valid point, and the Chair looks forward to the co-operation of the House in that regard.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: Might we have unanimous consent to revert to the Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

The Chair recognizes the Minister of Social Services, followed by Wainwright.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MRS. OSTERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A group of young Albertans are patiently waiting in the members' gallery to be introduced, and we're very pleased to welcome them here today. They are the Forum for Young Albertans, the first group of two that will be coming to visit in the Legislature. There are

40 young people from all across the province. They are part of the group that is actually celebrating the 10th anniversary of the forum, and we're very pleased about that. Many of us have been here to enjoy most of those occasions. They are accompanied by Linda Ciurysek, the executive director; Brian Tittmore, the assistant executive director; and chaperones Holly Strach and Tara Fate. I would like them all to rise and receive the very warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Wainwright.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to introduce to you and through you my second group of students today. The group consists of 75 bright, young grade 6 students from the Wainwright elementary school. I'm sure they're having a very educational and entertaining day today. They are seated in the public gallery. They are accompanied by teachers Bob Marchand, Terry Tiffen, Bob Allen, and Willis Brink; also by parents Mrs. Coleman, Mrs. Hope, Mrs. Brower, Mrs. Ratray, Mrs. Frost, Mr. Subbert, Mrs. Dewald, Mrs. Engerdal, Mr. Morgan, Mrs. Ford, Mrs. Maier, Mrs. Herman, and Mrs. Rogers. I would like to ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, if we are now at Written Questions, I would move that the following questions stand and retain their place on the Order Paper. They are questions 178, 180, and 185.

[Motion carried]

148. Mr. Pashak asked the government the following question:
In view of the response given by the minister to a question in the House that Alberta Environment did not do any soil tests at the Imperial Oil Limited Calgary refinery over the past 20 years, for each refinery in Alberta, on what dates between April 1, 1972, and March 31, 1988, were soil tests carried out by Alberta Environment or any person acting for Alberta Environment?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, in response to Question 148, the government is pleased to accept it today and respond to it. The response will be by way of two items. One is just a brief review from me now. I'll also be filing a document with the Legislative Assembly and providing to the sponsor of this particular question a further written response.

I'd just like to simply point out Mr. Speaker, that since 1971 Alberta Environment has collected over 350,000 samples and has undertaken 4,250,000 individual tests with respect to air, water, and soil quality, and sometimes it takes more than half a day to come up with a correct response.

166. Mr. Ewasiuk asked the government the following question:

What was the total cost of all advertising purchased by the government, reported as it was for the months July 1981 to February 1982 in Sessional Paper 158/83,

- (a) for each of the months of January 1980 through to June 1981, inclusive;
- (b) for each of the months of March 1982 through to June 1982, inclusive; and

- (c) for the month of March 1983?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file a response to Question 166. It indicates that the information is not available in the form requested.

167. Mr. Wright asked the government the following question: Since June 1, 1974,

- (1) what requests to participate in a plan to be presented to the Canadian Transport Commission, pursuant to Part I of the Railway Relocation and Crossing Act (S.C. 1974 c12), have been received by the government from or sent by the government to any municipality;
- (2) when were such requests received or sent; and
- (3) what was the outcome of each request, noting in each instance whether the plans did not entail a grant of money from the government of Canada?

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file a response to Question 167.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, I move that Question 177 stand and retain its place.

[Motion carried]

179. Mr. Wright asked the government the following question:

With regard to the Public Records Committee, created by Alberta Regulation 373/83, promulgated October 13, 1983,

- (1) who are the current members of the committee, identified by name, occupation, and representative capacity, if any, and who is its chairperson;
- (2) how many times has the committee met since its creation;
- (3) what reports or recommendations has the committee made to the minister responsible since its creation; and
- (4) will the minister responsible table copies of any written reports or recommendations to him from the committee in this Assembly?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to file a written response to Question 179.

181. Mr. Wright asked the government the following question:

With regard to the trip by the hon. Dr. Reid, then Solicitor General, to the United Kingdom in the summer of 1984, the announced purpose of which was to inquire into British practices for dealing with young offenders,

- (1) how many persons accompanied Dr. Reid either wholly or in part at public expense, and what were their names;
- (2) what was the total cost of the trip borne by the government, and what was the separate cost in each of the categories of travel, accommodation, meals, entertainment and hospitality, and "other";
- (3) reported individually for each of the persons identified in response to clause (1) above, what was the total cost of the trip borne by the government, and what was the separate cost in each of the categories of travel, accommodation, meals, entertainment and hospitality, and "other";
- (4) what reports and/or recommendations were prepared as a consequence of the trip; and

- (5) will those reports and/or recommendations identified in response to clause (4) above be filed in the Legislative Assembly?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file a response to Question 181.

183. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question:

What are the results of government evaluation of current day care worker training programs available through postsecondary education institutions which was undertaken according to a statement made by the Minister of Social Services in the Legislative Assembly April 15, 1988?

In particular, what did the evaluation determine about the applicability of program curriculum to present day care situations, and what assessment was made of the accessibility of these programs for workers already employed who may not be able to afford programs?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file a response to Question 183.

head: **MOTIONS FOR RETURNS**

MR. SPEAKER: Government House Leader, with respect to motions for returns.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I move that Motion 176 stand and retain its place on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

152. On behalf of Mr. Piquette, Mr. Younie moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of every environmental impact assessment and other documents dealing primarily with the impact on the environment, including impact on flora and fauna, of forestry operations undertaken in its timber lease area by Daishowa Canada Co. Ltd., received or generated by the government.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd be pleased to file the appropriate documents to fulfill the request made in Motion for a Return 152.

[Motion carried]

156. On behalf of Mr. Taylor, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing those documents reflecting the number of subscriptions since 1986 which the government of Alberta has to the publication *Insight into Government* and the total cost of these subscriptions to the government of Alberta.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, speaking to Motion 156, I would propose the following amendment: first of all, to delete the words "those documents reflecting"; then to insert the words "departments of after the word "which"; and delete the word "has" after the word "Alberta" and insert the word "have".

Mr. Speaker, the amended motion 156 would then read:

... that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing the number of subscriptions since 1986 which departments of the government of Alberta have to the publication *Insight into Government* and the total cost of these subscriptions to the

government of Alberta.

On behalf of the government, I would accept the motion in that form

[Motion as amended carried]

163. Mr. Hawkesworth moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all invoices received by the government from LPI Development Corp. Ltd. for which the \$463,079 paid to that company by the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services, as reported at page 7.119 of the public accounts 1986-87, supplementary information volume, constituted payment in whole or in part.

[Debate adjourned April 21: Ms Barrett speaking]

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, as I recall, when I was speaking last week on this matter, I was arguing that the minister and the government ought to come through with this information, because, as has been evidenced really in the course of the last year, I would say, the government is or is perceived to be acting under a cloak of secrecy which is unprecedented in a democratic country in the industrialized world. It seems to me that every day I hear the litany of nonresponses from cabinet ministers to questions posed during the question period, the period during which the government is meant to be held accountable for its actions or lack thereof, in each instance, on a day-by-day basis, I can practically recite along with the minister making the response or nonresponse that if people really want this information, they should put it on the Order Paper. That's what we call rote speech number 3, I believe. Rote speech number 2 is to say that the question isn't really a question and isn't therefore answerable. I think rote speech number 1 is usually a monosyllabic insult to the individual asking the question.

These have become the convention in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. It's a shame that parliamentary democracy has been so grossly debased as it has been here in Alberta. I believe that the one thing the government could do now to correct this distorted image of its notion of accountability and responsibility is at least respond when it can to information requested by way of written questions and motions for returns.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

It's not that this information ain't available, Mr. Speaker, and the minister darned well knows it. It is that this is a politically hot issue for the minister. He doesn't like it. He made a decision, and now he doesn't want to have to cough up the facts. Maybe he's hoping that an election will intercede between now and the time the building would actually be occupied and that he won't any longer be the minister. Well, that certainly would be the politically convenient answer for him, but I'm not sure the taxpayers of Alberta want to wait that long for the information to come out. And I'm not sure they want to be saddled with a relationship this minister has already cemented between a famous carrier of an orange and blue card, a famous fund-raiser of his political party, a famous partisan, shall we say, in the province, and get saddled for a bill because that relationship existed between the government and this particular individual. I know Mr. Mabbott doesn't like me mentioning his name; I have a letter from his lawyer indicating that. But the fact of the matter is that Mr. Mabbott and LPI are connected and that LPI is the company that did assemble the property in the downtown area --

about the most expensive property you can get on the Monopoly board, Mr. Speaker -- and we want to know why it is that the government spent \$463,079 in that little relationship between LPI and just exactly what it was in payment of.

Now, the minister has already said ad infinitum -- or I should say "ad nauseam" -- that he's not going to tell us just what the people of Alberta are going to have to pay for this preleased property in a building that has yet to be constructed. Right? I mean, remember that 75 percent of this first tower is going to be occupied by the Alberta government, despite the fact that there's an overwhelming . . .

MR. ISLEY: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services on a point of order.

MR. ISLEY: Standing rule 23(b)(i) indicates that the member should speak to "the question under discussion"; 23(c) talks about persisting "in needless repetition." I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands is a little confused and is attempting to debate Motion for a Return 182 instead of 163, and maybe should save her comments until we're dealing with the Olympia & York project; 163 is dealing with an entirely different company, and the member should know that.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'll . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands, on the point of order?

MS BARRETT: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The point of order, then, is well taken.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I was speaking to motion 163, but thanks for the kind, benevolent instruction from the hon. minister. He's so nice, isn't he?

Mr. Speaker, I was talking about the relationship that seems to have been cemented between LPI, which, of course, has the principal of Les Mabbott, and the Conservative government here in Alberta. It's already going to cost the taxpayers who knows how much to pay for this property that has yet to be constructed but into which we are now in an agreement to lease despite a high vacancy rate in the office retail sector in the downtown core. Now we see that the minister's department has paid out \$463,079 to this same company but gets really shy about telling us in what capacity that money was expended.

Now, earlier today I was saying in the Assembly that I believe there are some major clouds of suspicion that really have been generated -- you know, a dust kick-up basically -- by the government itself. I believe the responsible thing to do in order to disperse those clouds of suspicion, in order to clear the air once and for all and prove there are no sweetheart deals, no conflicts of interest, no real driving reasons for the sort of secrecy demonstrated historically by this government, which believes it's still part of the Loughheed dynasty, hasn't grown up to realize it isn't -- the one way they could start is to give the information as solicited. I always figure, Mr. Speaker, that when you're asked a question and you don't answer it, what are you hiding?

What's the minister hiding?

MR. KOWALSKI: Aw, Pam, that's histrionics.

MS BARRETT: Pardon me? Histrionics? The hon. Minister of the Environment says I'm getting pretty good at histrionics. I'd like to thank the hon. minister, or professor, the guy who for sure leads the way in the ability to filibuster, I can assure you, having witnessed his attempted filibuster of his own estimates two years ago. He didn't even know he's got a 30-minute time limit to the discussion that he's allowed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, please now. We're on Motion for a Return 163. Let's deal with the motion for a return. Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I was just trying to be nice to the hon. Minister of the Environment. He's always paying such pleasant compliments. I just wanted to, you know, respond to him.

My real point, Mr. Speaker, as I was about to conclude . . .

MR. TAYLOR: He's really a teddy bear.

MS BARRETT: Teddy bear? I thought you were the House teddy bear, Nick.

My real point was that when you're asked a question and you avoid answering it or refuse to answer it, it is usually an indication that you've got something to hide, and there, my friends, you have my central thesis. What is this government trying to hide? Why don't you just answer the question, Mr. Minister?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question? Hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, are you wishing to close debate? [Mr. McEachern rose]

Order please. Hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, you've spoken to this motion. Is the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View prepared to close debate?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: To answer your question, Mr. Speaker, if there are no further members in the House who wish to speak to this matter, I'm prepared to close debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Chair will make that decision. If the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View decides to speak, it will close the debate.

Hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On page 7.119 of the public accounts, 1986-87 supplement volume, is found payment from the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services to LPI Development Corp. Ltd. The motion for a return requests the minister to table those invoices that he received as minister to support that payment. Quite simple. Now, the minister has refused to table that documentation, although I was hoping he might have had some sort of encounter similar to, you know, a ride on the road to Damascus since this matter was last debated in the Legislature, given the apparent response to

the written questions that have been dealt with earlier this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, we were admonished by the Premier yesterday. You know, if we have questions, if we want to seek information from an "open" government, all we need to do is put it on the Order Paper. In fact, there were at least four responses to questions in question period yesterday when members were admonished. You know, you can always put items on the Order Paper, motions for returns. That came from the Premier. Then in response to a supplementary, the Minister of Energy:

If the hon. member has a desire to get more information, he can put it on the Order Paper.

Again, the Premier said:

. . . the hon. member has the opportunity, as every member has, to place requests for information on the Order Paper.

Now, these, Mr. Speaker, are answers to questions posed yesterday. Finally, for the fourth time yesterday, the Premier said:

. . . that when there is additional information that a member wishes to obtain, either a document or even a written question, as is custom in this Legislature, all they had to do was put it on the Order Paper and the House decides.

As if to tell us, Mr. Speaker, that in answer to the question "Why won't this government give this information in Question Period," the implication being, "Well, you can always get it by putting it on the Order Paper."

So I say, Mr. Speaker, I was hoping the minister or one of the members of the government would have reconsidered their decision initially to deny this information to the Legislature and would have stood up today and said, you know, we had that conversion on the road to Damascus, on the road to Government House, or on the road to the Legislature this morning and we realize how important open government is, how important providing information is, and here we're providing it. Well, I'm sorry they have chosen not to do the right and proper thing and give that information.

Mr. Speaker, let's just have a look at some of the facts that might be pertinent to this particular payment to LPI Development Corp. Ltd. Fact: this corporation optioned a square block of land in downtown Edmonton. Fact: LPI was able to get some form of tentative lease agreement out of this provincial government in order to persuade a developer to proceed with purchasing that land and undertake construction. Fact: a square block of land in downtown Edmonton was sold to Olympia & York, again with the commitment from the provincial government attached. Fact: finally construction was undertaken. Now, the question is whether this payment to LPI Development Corporation Ltd. did, in any way, relate to that particular transaction. I think it would be reasonable to conclude that it did.

What's also interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that if we go to the Auditor's report for the same period, covering the same period of time -- for the year ended March 31, 1987 -- and we open the book to this minister's department, what do we find?

The annual financial audit was extended to include the following:

-An examination of the systems used by the Department to identify, plan and acquire the government's short-term and long-term office space requirements.

Do you know why the Auditor General did that? Well, he tells us:

The Department's present systems are not capable of providing all the information needed to support decisions associated with acquiring major blocks of office space, whether by purchase, lease or construction.

The Auditor General couldn't find out what systems this minister was using in order to acquire major blocks of office space.

We've been trying to tell the minister that, but of course he wouldn't table the leases either for this Legislature when that was requested at a previous session of the Legislature.

The Audit Office concluded that significant benefits could be derived from upgrading the Department's system to improve its ability to forecast supply and government demand for long-term office space in Edmonton and Calgary.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what an astounding conclusion to reach in looking at this minister's department.

So the question is: was this payment of \$463,079 to LPI Development Corp. Ltd. one of those that prompted the Auditor General to make these observations about mismanagement in the minister's department? It may be. But that may be the reason why this minister refuses to provide that information to the Legislature.

This Auditor General's report also extended the audit to include an examination of a system used to plan and implement capital construction projects. Well, that's perhaps not germane to this particular payment to LPI Development, but it underlines that this minister has obviously made poor judgments for politically motivated reasons, I suspect. And it may be that this payment to LPI Development Corp. Ltd. is motivated by the same consideration.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, without providing the documentation it simply confirms that the whole question of accountability and openness, which this government's leader, the Premier, was touting so proudly yesterday, doesn't exist, especially when we try to seek further information related to mismanagement identified by the Auditor General's report. I think it's not surprising that this minister would refuse to give that information. But that doesn't make it right. And it certainly does not bode well for this minister when he has to sometime down the road be accountable to the public for the dollars which he is mismanaging.

I mean, for a major developer to proceed with a \$100 million office complex in downtown Edmonton, he has to have a pretty firm lease arrangement in place before making that kind of commitment. And I would guess, Mr. Speaker -- an educated guess -- that the provincial government would need to have made a commitment of a \$17-per-square-foot net rate on that lease arrangement in order for a developer like Olympia & York to commence construction in the kind of environment in downtown Edmonton in 1987. Well, that's very interesting, that that kind of commitment would have to be in place for them to undertake that sort of construction.

How does that compare to similar leases which this government has undertaken in other parts of the city in downtown Edmonton since that decision was taken? How about the Treasury Department in Park Plaza? What's the net value of that particular lease? The minister is aware of it. How about some of the private-sector deals that have been done in Edmonton in the last little while, in the Manulife Building by a firm of national chartered accountants? The minister is probably aware of the net lease rate in that lease. How about Community and Occupational Health in the 107th Street building, or Career Development and Unemployment in Park Square? Huh? None of those come anywhere near close to \$17 a square foot. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I can say to you with some considerable assurance that the lease rates on those particular leases are probably somewhere in the order of a quarter of the lease rate which this minister signed on behalf of the government for Olympia & York in downtown Edmonton. If you cost out 400,000 square feet that adds up to somewhere in the order of \$6 million a year that this

minister is wasting through the mismanagement in his department.

Six million dollars is a lot of money. We've heard pleas from all over the province for money for improved hospital care, paying teachers, nurses, needs in this community -- all over the province in social services. You can go through every department in this government where \$6 million would make a considerable amount of difference. This minister, because of political patronage and a politically motivated decision, is costing the taxpayers of this province at least that amount per year. No wonder he doesn't want to make any information public in anything remotely connected with this particular deal. It's shameful and pathetic, Mr. Speaker. I can predict this minister and this government are going to learn that there'll be a political price to pay for that kind of decision-making.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Debate having closed on Motion for a Return 163, all those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion fails.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Barrett	McEachern	Sigurdson
Ewasiuk	Mitchell	Strong
Fox	Mjolsness	Taylor
Hawkesworth	Pashak	Wright
Hewes	Roberts	Younie

Against the motion:

Adair	Elliott	Nelson
Ady	Elzinga	Oldring
Alger	Fischer	Osterman
Anderson	Heron	Payne
Betkowski	Horsman	Pengelly
Bogle	Hyland	Reid
Bradley	Isley	Rostad
Brassard	Johnston	Shaben
Campbell	Kowalski	Shrake
Cherry	McClellan	Stewart
Cripps	McCoy	Trynchy
Day	Mirosh	Weiss
Dinning	Moore, R.	Young
Downey	Musgreave	Zarusky
Drobot	Musgrove	

Totals:	Ayes - 15	Noes - 44
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[Motion lost]

164. Mr. Pashak moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:

(1) those documents or studies relating to the environmen-

tal testing performed in January 1987 at the Hub Oil recycling plant in Calgary identified by the Minister of the Environment on March 24, 1987, at page 299 of *Alberta Hansard*; and

- (2) those documents or studies relating to the monitoring of the Hub Oil recycling plant in Calgary from the fall of 1986 and the spring of 1987, identified by the Minister of the Environment on March 24, 1987, at page 299 of *Alberta Hansard*.

MR. PASHAK: Now, why I'm supporting this motion, Mr. Speaker, has to do not only with the motion itself but certain . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: He's accepting it.

MR. PASHAK: Oh, he's accepting it. You mean I don't get a chance to explain why? This is so rare that I'm . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, in keeping with this government's tradition of accountability, openness, provision of information, and attempting to assist the opposition in their onerous work, the government is very pleased to accept question 164.

I'm very pleased to file with the Assembly today answers which will include such results as air quality monitoring that occurred between July 1 and August 15, 1987, undertaken by Western Research; documents called Air Quality Monitoring for the period March 18 to April 21, 1987, also conducted by an independent research firm called Western Research; source emission surveys conducted in August 1986 by Western Research; and source emission surveys in November-December 1986, also conducted by Western Research. Mr. Speaker, I sincerely wish good reading.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, I'm just so flabbergasted by this remarkable turn of events that I'd just like to congratulate the Minister of the Environment.

[Motion carried]

169. Mr. Taylor moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all documents pertaining to the loan guarantee agreement of \$55 million made on March 3, 1988 (O.C. 135/88) between the government of Alberta and Gainers Properties Inc.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

MR. TAYLOR: Now the honeymoon's over.

MR. SHABEN: Why do you ask, if you know what the answer's going to be, Nick?

Mr. Speaker, I would request that the hon. members decline the request of the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. We have and continue to make available to members of the Assembly information upon which they can base their debate and support for government programs or criticism as well for government programs. In this particular instance the government has provided information on the nature of the guarantee and the recipient of the guarantee and all of the important information related thereto. But we are not able to meet with the hon. member's request to file confidential documents. In many cases we

can do that. In many cases we cannot, because information contained in those documents is commercially confidential and would likely damage the competitive position of a company. Companies generally should not be put in that position where information is made that puts them at a disadvantage competitively.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the Assembly refuse the request to table confidential documents of a commercially confidential nature.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, the Treasury Branch is both a branch of the government and in the business of lending money in competition with the banks. In its latter capacity it does, in fact, make arrangements of a commercial nature which are confidential. However, we know that there is more to that in this case, that there is a government guarantee and it is intertwined with government business. There are, therefore, two points to be made, Mr. Speaker.

Perhaps the minister could address this point and consider it and perhaps amend his proposition. There are public parts of it relating to the guarantees that ought to be made public because they entail a substantial commitment of public money -- it's not certain the money will be spent; but a commitment to a possible liability -- and it is wrong that the elements of this part of it be classed with the confidential documents as to assets, perhaps, or as to the business plan which you have to show to get a loan of this size and, therefore, themselves assume the mantle of confidentiality. I submit that's an unacceptable confusion of two ideas.

The second point to be made is that the confidentiality is not that of the government but that of the client. I'm speaking about the relationship of the Treasury Branch to its customer; the confidentiality is that of its customer. Will the minister undertake to inquire of the customer -- Mr. Pocklington, I suppose, or his company or whoever it is -- whether they want to retain that confidence, and if they want to retain confidence of some documents, whether they would release the remainder to the public? Because I daresay the customer himself or itself, or both of them, are embarrassed if there are imputations made against good business etiquette that are unfounded. So it might be doing them a favour, as well as the government -- and also of interest to the public -- if the confidentiality was sought to be waived in respect of these documents.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for St. Albert.

MR. STRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise today in the Legislative Assembly and speak to Motion for a Return 169.

That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all documents pertaining to the loan guarantee agreement of \$55 million made on March 3, 1988 (O.C. 135/88) between the government of Alberta and Gainers Properties Inc.

Mr. Speaker, the minister again seems to be missing the total point and object here. The minister states that he cannot comply with the request. The minister states that these are confidential documents. The minister states that these arrangements are of a commercial nature and confidential. The minister states that this information would damage Gainers' competitive position. The minister has stated that it would be a disadvantage competitively to this owner. Mr. Speaker, that is hogwash, quite literally.

What we are talking about here, and what the minister should recognize, is that these are public funds; they are taxpayers' dollars. What I'd suggest to the minister is this: if Mr. Pocklington and Gainers fails, who is going to be left holding the trough? The Alberta public. That's who is going to be left holding the bag, Mr. Speaker the Alberta public. Now, if the minister feels this is so confidential, why doesn't the minister turn around to some of these people that support one hundred percent free enterprise, free everything, and tell those people that when they come to him, when they go to this government with their hands out looking for loan guarantees, loans, royalty write-downs, anything else they come and ask for -- why doesn't this government and these ministers tell those free enterprisers that if you expect and you want public help, taxpayers' help, when you get those loans there is going to be full public disclosure?

Now, that's a very simple, basic rule of democracy. Certainly I expect that; that if I go to a bank to borrow money, that arrangement is between myself and that bank and of nobody else's concern because it is a commercial venture. When a Mr. Pocklington comes to the Alberta government for a \$55 million loan guarantee, that is public with a capital P, Mr. Speaker. Why can't this government, why can't these ministers, tell these so-called free enterprisers that if they come to the government for money, there will be, there must be -- it demands -- full public disclosure of all the financial dealings we as a government or this government makes on behalf of the taxpayers of the province of Alberta? That is important. It's part and parcel of what we call open government, government with a commitment, government with some integrity, government with some fairness. Because I didn't see too many other people of Mr. Pocklington's stature lined up with the proper forms to get money from this government.

What the constituents in St. Albert perceive -- because I've talked to a number of them -- is that there seems to be, there appears to be, and indeed is, two sets of rules now in the province of Alberta to get in the door with a cabinet minister or to get into the bank vault with this Progressive -- maybe not so progressive -- Conservative government. That's the very essence. So when this minister stands up and says that this would put them at a competitive disadvantage, it is nonsense, absolute hogwash.

What about those others? What about those other competitors that are in the same business as Mr. Pocklington? When Mr. Pocklington can walk into this government and get a \$55 million loan guarantee, why shouldn't the same thing apply to Mr. Pocklington's competitors?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. member. Under Standing Orders the time for this item of business has now expired.

Clerk, call the next item.

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

**Bill 205
Alberta Economic Council Act**

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure today to stand and move for second reading Bill 205, the Alberta Economic Council Act.

Mr. Speaker, I think that when we look at the needs of Albertans, it's summed up rather well in the first paragraph of the preamble of this important Act, and if I may just read it into the record, it states that

whereas the efficient husbanding and management of the resources of Alberta, material and human, is an essential prerequisite to the long-term growth and prosperity of the Province and her people . . .

Mr. Speaker, that's an important statement: "material and human"; the management of material and human resources for the benefit of all Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, we see that in most every department, in not only this government but governments in North America and indeed around the world, there is an important need to plan. There is a need to collect data, to use it wisely so that we know when we spend public dollars what to build, where to build it, and what to get ready for. What are the future trends and what implications are there going to be on the expenditure of public dollars?

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

The department of transportation does it. Indeed, the other day in question period I recall the Member for Vermilion-Viking standing up and asking a supplementary question to the minister of transportation about the possibility of fast-tracking the twinning of the Yellowhead, given the fact that there may soon be greater activity for the Lloydminster Husky heavy oil upgrader. That was a progressive move. I thought that was a good question. That was an amazing question, coming from that member, because what it was was foresight. [interjection] Yes. The minister of transportation says it was a sensible question. Indeed it was, because it was foresight. He saw a need. He was planning for the future.

Planning for the future: that's what this Bill is about. Other departments do it, not just the department of transportation. I looked in my bookcase this afternoon, and I saw that the Department of Tourism last year put out an action plan for community development to increase their potential for tourism. There again, another plan. The Department of Education, as well, looks at trends, the changing demographic needs of our population and the impact that those changes are going to have on Albertans: the buildings, the communities, and the students that we hope to serve.

But it seems, Mr. Speaker, that when we get into financial management, this government has a penchant for backing away, getting away from strategic planning, and that is what this Bill would hopefully address: that we have to plan the economy. If we fail to address the trends and the implications of those trends, then all we're doing is setting ourselves up for another perhaps boom period, hopefully in the near future, but certainly following that probably a bust period. Who would have thought in the 1970s that there was going to be the bust following the boom to the degree that there was? But that's part of the advantage to having that plan, that we can look at the potential for the bust cycle and use public investment public dollars, as a tool to try and even out the peaks and valleys that we seem to have in a resource-based economy.

The second paragraph of the preamble talks of a dispassionate and impartial inquiry and reflection based on the accumulated experience and wisdom of the people of Alberta. Now, that input is so very important. It's important because I think when we as legislators, as elected members from our communities, come down here, there are occasions when we're pro-

vided with so much that we forget to look at certain programs as objectively as we might. That's why the economic council that we propose would provide a different point of view. There'd be people from all walks of Alberta life. They would be essentially a volunteer group comprised of members of the business community, both the corporate and small business sectors; farmers; consumers, an important component of an economic council; labour; professional groups; educators. All of these people have a contribution to make that perhaps may be more objective than what we have from being in this Legislature for such a long period of time.

Now, it's important also to ensure that they come from all parts of Alberta, not only Edmonton, which has a very different kind of economic climate than Calgary or Lethbridge or rural Alberta, but that the needs of all Albertans are being met, and we can do that through the appointment process. Because as we have discussed on numerous occasions in this House, the unemployment situation in Edmonton is so very dramatically different than the unemployment situation in Calgary. Calgary has a different base for its economic growth and development. Edmonton has an economic base that has suffered the consequences of, first, the reduction in oil activity. Edmonton also suffered perhaps to a greater degree than any other part of the province the cuts of this government, because so many people in this capital city were formerly employed providing service to Albertans; they were formerly employed by the province. So when the cuts arrived last year, working Edmontonians found themselves to be without work, and that is a very different situation than what working Calgarians found. Those are important examples to keep in mind when we look at the appointment of the council.

Another strong component of this Bill is that it will be charged with the responsibilities of realizing the potentials for growth and the diversification of the provincial economy. Now, Mr. Speaker, the potentials for growth and the diversification of the provincial economy are very important. And again, experienced folk coming from all walks of life in a balanced arena can provide that input that we may neglect because of partisan political organizations that we belong to. The government does not have to always accept or act upon the recommendations of the council. However, the very fact that they're making those recommendations from a different point of view, from an objective, nonpartisan point of view, would be, I believe, a real asset.

Of course, in this Bill one of the things that my party and my colleagues in caucus have proposed for a lot of years is the section that would decrease the foreign ownership of our natural resources. That's also a charge that we propose to make to the economic council. We don't do that, Mr. Speaker, because we don't like our good neighbours to the south or our friends across the Pacific in Japan. We do that because we truly believe that we have to be masters of our own house and that we can only be masters in our own house if we happen to be able to -- I'll perhaps use the term "pay the mortgage." But you know, when we look back and we see that ownership is so greatly based outside the borders of Alberta, we have a very real concern about that. In 1981, 55.7 percent of the income of nonfinancial industries in this province left this province to return to foreign investors; 55.7 percent, a substantial amount of money that left Alberta.

If we look at the mining industry, which includes oil and gas, what kind of percentage is left in terms of profit? How much went away from Alberta, back into the shareholders' pockets or back to the home corporations in New York or Houston? How much went back? Seventy-nine point five percent. That has a

negative effect on the Alberta economy. That has a negative effect because we are not able to plan with that money how much money may be coming back into Alberta for Albertans for reinvestment to ensure that we have ongoing projects. Over an 11-year period between 1971 and 1982 the Alberta Bureau of Statistics suggested that outflows amounted to some \$16 billion outside Alberta. Sixteen billion dollars that could have been reinvested in our province, and perhaps should have been reinvested in our province, went outside our borders to go to the shareholders of the foreign multinationals.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this Bill deals with setting up an economic council that would assist us in finding a way, in finding a mechanism, in which to decrease foreign participation or perhaps, to be more positive, to increase domestic participation in our Alberta. Maybe that's what we have to look at: increasing the kind of participation that's going to keep the shareholder dollar, the shareholder profit, at home in our province. It's so very important, I think, to have that kind of information coming from some kind of a council to a minister that may choose or may not choose to act upon it. But at least the objective opinion of a well-appointed and well-balanced council would be able to make those recommendations to the minister, and then the minister would be able to take those recommendations to his colleagues in cabinet. That is an action plan that the government of the day would then have to determine whether or not it was going to follow.

Of course, this Act calls that each and every Member of the Legislative Assembly would receive a copy of the annual report of the council. So the opposition would certainly have an opportunity to go through those recommendations, and if the government did not respond in what the opposition thought was a favourable way, then the opposition would have more cause to ask questions in question period; it would have more opportunity to put motions for returns on the Order Paper, which we enjoy doing, to find out why the government wasn't responding. Were there partisan political barriers or blinders that prevented the government from responding? Now, that's what we suggest; frequently we suggest that there are blind, partisan political barriers, because we do not have the benefit of an economic council to make those recommendations. It's at the whim of government, at the whim of those who are in the seat of power, to determine the kind of economic plan, if any, we're going to have for Albertans.

We think, Mr. Speaker, that with the direction that could be provided to this council and back from this council, we may have an opportunity to try and balance out, as I said earlier, the peaks and valleys of our boom-and-bust economy. We have over the course of time become increasingly more dependent on the energy sector, and that has led, to a large part, to the problems that we face with unemployment in Alberta. But if a council is charged with looking at diversification of our economy and sees that we're going off in a direction that puts even greater reliance on one sector, perhaps then the recommendations would come forth and say: "Just wait a second. Step back and reflect on what you're doing. Step back and take a look at the problems you may be causing, because you've done it before, and you ought not to be putting so many eggs into the one basket." An economic council charged with the responsibility of ensuring that there is a diversification of the economies of the province would indeed be able to make that kind of recommendation to this government.

Perhaps that kind of recommendation would level out those peaks and valleys, so that we would know when to make those

public-dollar investments and when not to make those public-dollar investments, so that we can maintain a steady rate of growth, so that we can maintain an economic activity that ensures that, for the most part, we have the fullest participation rate in labour that we can possibly have, because there are still too many -- far, far too many -- Albertans who are without work.

Mr. Speaker, these are some of the concerns that we hope to address by having a debate on this piece of legislation, and I would hope that hon. members would consider giving their support to it.

Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak in support of this motion -- I often do not support what the NDs think up in the economic sphere, but in this particular area I think they are batting in the right area or going down the right wicket or whatever you want to say. Because one of the problems, I think -- and this is always faced with any government that considers itself free enterprise or to the right of centre; it operates on a philosophy that government shouldn't be interfering. But what it really does end up meaning is that the government responds to those powerful segments of our society that are able to get the government's ear. If the government in a real, truly free enterprise or right-wing environment put together by some of the philosophers, Friedman or whatever they read -- right-wing philosophies might even be able to work, because then the interplay of the market out there in the business community and social community would correct the problems. The government could possibly, working from a right-wing philosophy, come in occasionally to put on band-aids or to wash off the wounded as they fell by the wayside in the competitive process.

However, in a true right-wing atmosphere -- and we see it more with this government. It happens, I think, in any government that's been in power a long time: the seeds of imagination and reform decay very quickly. Consequently, they are pushed hither and yon by lobbyists. And those who can afford to lobby a government are those who are pretty well-to-do, Mr. Speaker. They are, as we see here now, the Pocklingtons or the Novas or the Essos or the Daishowas or the Cargills. It reads like a litany of the rich and the powerful from all over the globe. And of course, it gets accelerated as from time to time the word passes out that there are a number of, maybe, hayseeds or people like that running a government with a huge pile of money that you can stickhandle around, that you can mislead, that you can lobby one way or another. Consequently, there's no long-term policy or hewing to a line.

We see today . . . Now, when they talk about the upgrader, for instance -- and you can go back and read my speeches in 1975 and '76 and '74, when I said we were launching into petrochemicals in an impossible situation -- for anyone who's ever looked at the processing of raw materials, and I've been in it all my life, it's very rare the raw material that can be processed at source better than it can be processed next to the market. Otherwise, if the free market reigned and that was a way you could process at source, all our automobile companies would be in Labrador, our cotton gins and cotton mills would be in the Upper Nile, and our copper wire and copper pot and pan makers would be in the hills of Quebec where copper is mined. There's the rare mineral -- for instance, gold -- that can be converted into a refined product and then shipped somewhere, but in general the refined product happens near the source.

Consequently, when we were lobbied by a group back in the

'70s to build a petrochemical industry, it caught the imagination of this government that didn't have the economic know-how to realize that once you build something near a source, there are only two ways it will survive in the future. One, you force the raw producer -- be he a person who grows peanuts in Nigeria, barley in Alberta, or produces oil here or produces gas -- to supply that processor at less than market cost. Or else the other way that it can be done is that the taxpayer digs into the pocket and puts money up to recompense the processor for paying higher than average costs. And this government does that; they go and reach into their pocket. A few years ago they gave the petrochemical industry subsidies to pay for natural gas, to bring down the price of the feedstock so it could meet the competition around the world. Now that they want to junk that, the petrochemical industry wants a law forcing the producers of natural gas to deliver their product to the mill. I've seen this all over the world. I've seen it in Egyptian Sudan. When they decided to put cotton mills in there far from the European markets, same thing: the cotton producers were forced to turn cotton over to the processor. I've seen the same thing in peanut processing in Nigeria, where they were forced to turn it over. We've seen the same thing in canola.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm curious to know the relevance of the hon. member's contribution to the debate on the Bill of the hon. member. Perhaps he could explain the relevance of his contribution to the motion before the House.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, the Bill is talking about an economic council, Mr. Speaker, setting up an advisory council. Surely if the advisory council isn't what this government needs, I don't know what they do need. I'm just trying to point out the horrible mistakes that they have made in their planning in the past by not setting out some long-term plan. And I think what worries the public today is that what we see is a government that is indulging in something that for socialist regimes -- in some ways it's rather intriguing that the NDP is in opposition here, because we have a government that takes the public's assets, oil and gas, sells them and pockets the money and says, "Oh no, that's not a tax." The rent that we've charged the producer as income is not a tax. They put that tax into their pocket Mr. Speaker, and they also tax the public. And they turn around and invest that money, supposedly on behalf of the citizens. It's certainly a gross misuse of the public's funds, because oil royalties belong to the public more than the government. They are not the government's funds. Likewise, the personal income tax ratio. It is indeed a government that believes they can spend money better than the citizens can. They believe they can spend money and diversify the economy and make the hundreds and thousands of decisions that need to be made better than the public.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm sitting down now so that -- possibly the hon. member for High Prairie wants to get up and put his two bits in. Those are the only two quick points I wanted to make.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Stony Plain.

MR. HERON: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, at the outset would like to applaud the Member for Edmonton-Belmont in his initiative in introducing Bill 205. I cannot support it, but I do applaud his change of direction and what I see as an obvious shift in the New Democratic Party towards putting some empha-

sis on economic development. In the two years that I've been here, I've witnessed a great deal of debate and great emphasis on spending programs that relate directly to the social benefits of the province. So it is a shift, and I do recognize the shift and compliment him for it.

However, I think in reading through Bill 205 one very quickly gets the notion that you're creating a superbureaucracy which would involve an addition of staff to do a job that is presently within the mandate of the civil service. I think we must ask ourselves: is it consistent with the present fiscal reality of the province today? Is this superbureaucracy going to duplicate the superb progress in both the economic and social programs that we have today? I say that it isn't. I say that it's out of step. And that is not being too harsh, I believe.

But I just have to turn to the comments made just a moment ago by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont, when he gave a dreamy example of how you obtain objective input to the economic system. I have to share this with my colleagues. I got a note from one of my friends in the Assembly, and I said: "Isn't this an example of true love -- for himself. I wish he'd elope." But anyhow, I accept the note, and I must admit it was a rather dreamy, idealistic searching for objective input to the economics of the province of Alberta.

Just what does he think this government and the minister of economic affairs do? Does he think they sit in isolation? He implied that we sit in the Legislature, that we should go out and get some objective information. Well, let me offer to him that this government and each of the members are in close contact with the chamber of commerce, with numerous organizations, that this government and the caucus committee meet on a regular basis with those organizations. And I think of the broad cross section of organizations: the local chambers of commerce, the Alberta Chamber of Commerce, the Alberta Motor Association, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, the municipal districts and counties, the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Canadian Bankers' Association, Unifarm, trade unions, and so many, many other organizations in society, to gain their collective wisdom in terms of establishing priorities for government economic initiatives.

But that said, I would have to note, too, that the motion is not original thinking in any way. Similar Bills have been introduced in the last four sessions, and the idea has been debated. Of course, it was again brought forth just this spring by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West. Motion 203, for example, urged the government of Alberta to consult with business, labour, and the general public to determine the [general] direction and goals of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund in this case. So there is an ongoing review. There is an ongoing debate, and I think to stand up and be as critical of the economic initiatives taken in this province as the Member for Edmonton-Belmont was is wrong.

I note that when you turn to the budget, you have good evidence that the grease that keeps the economic wheel turning is working. That is, when we look at what the economic initiatives are generating in terms of revenues for this province, we can pick out such highlights in the budget address, such as a \$2.4 billion budget for education, or almost \$2,900 per household, and the fact that it's a number one priority. If we didn't have good and solid economic programs in place, we would never be able to support the finest health care system in Canada, \$3.3 billion, \$4,000 per household, or just about a \$1,400 per capita expenditure. Again, we look at \$0.5 billion for agriculture.

You know, it's nice to compare other provinces, but let's

compare them on a spending basis. Let's take a good hard look and say, "What did that social worker in B.C. do for the province of British Columbia long term?" Let's take a look at Manitoba and just try for a moment to explain how they'll ever, ever cover their debt. Well, I can tell you what they did. They ignored the economic initiatives, and they spent money left, right, and centre. No, when I stand here and talk about the finest programs in social services, health care, and education, it's done with a realistic attitude towards matching those expenditures against revenues.

Then I just have to turn to that part of our achievement which says that we have the lowest tax regime in Canada. Yes, the last few days during question period it's almost been necessary for the Provincial Treasurer to use those cue cards to try and explain how the relationship between revenues, expenses, and income relates to the total amount of taxes paid. But I think our Provincial Treasurer has done a superb job in trying to communicate basic household economics to the opposition members.

I think that it's important to look at the big picture. When we're talking about an economic council here, Mr. Speaker, in Bill 205, I think it's important that we look at the combined government spending this year of almost \$10.7 billion, nearly \$12,600 for each household. Then we cannot be too critical of the economic initiatives that have been taken when we look at capital expenditures of \$2.5 billion for the '88-89 period. No, I am not so naive to believe that we can rest on this significant achievement or on our laurels, but we must ensure a system of checks and balances and imagination.

I would like, however, to point out that members are elected to represent the interests of their constituents in the Legislature and to promote the overall good of the province. They fulfill these functions by relying on the opinions, advice, and suggestions of their constituents. That's why I mentioned earlier the many, many special interest groups that we meet with on an ongoing basis to get that kind of economic input.

Looking specifically, Mr. Speaker, at Bill 205, it's definitely drafted far too broadly. It's too broad to permit its passage by any responsible government. The activities and budget of the council are difficult to predict because there are few limits to its jurisdiction. It's a dreamy budget with no realistic parameters attached to their spending. Section 7 of the Bill raises the most concerns. Section 7(a) gives the Council the power to

conduct social or [other] economic studies in any area considered by the Council to be of concern.

Section 7(d) allows the Council to

conduct public hearings into any matter or subject as it may deem necessary for the proper discharge of its duties under this section or under section 6.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Section 7(f) conveys the authority to

create such committees as it considers desirable for the proper discharging of its duties.

Giving a nonelected group carte blanche to spend public funds is not a prudent or responsible step.

MR. FOX: How about Vencap?

MR. HERON: Well, we can mention Vencap if you wish, hon. member, because I firmly believe that that arm's-length organization is fulfilling its mandate and fulfilling economic diversification for the province. I would suggest that you take a bit

of time to take a look at the true role of a venture capital firm. I've heard the members say, "It's not spending all of its money this year; why don't you go out and claim back the \$200 million?" without any appreciation for how a business works when it's listed on the public exchanges. That company went to the people of Alberta and said: "Buy our securities. Here is our mandate, and here is what we will do." Yes, hon. member, I believe that it is fulfilling that mandate and recognize that a venture capital firm doesn't go out and spend all of its money in one year. No, it looks for opportunities. It takes a lower gain in the early years with the hopes of a larger payoff later on, and it responds to initiatives. Vencap is performing that role as far as I'm concerned, so if you want to bring that up, I would certainly welcome it.

I was looking at a quote that was passed to me here recently, a statement by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, which sums up the conservative attitudes towards individual freedom, and I quote:

The pursuit of equality is a mirage. Opportunity means nothing unless it includes the right to be unequal.

A free society guarantees basic human rights in equality before the law but allows each individual to choose their own life-style. I thought you might enjoy this outstanding world leader's succinct comment because of the difference in attitude which is displayed with Bill 7.

Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservatives feel that individual choice, based on the law of supply and demand, should determine the direction that the economy takes. This does not mean that the government abdicates its responsibility for the operation of the economy. The primary role of the government is to act as referee in a marketplace and provide an attractive business environment. All Albertans must benefit from economic growth and protect the interests of future generations, who are obviously unable to represent themselves.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Now, when we look at the fundamental philosophical difference that the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party and the Alberta New Democrats have, it is with respect to the government role in the economy. Both parties recognize that governments in a modern industrial society must play a role in the economy, but they differ with respect to the form and extent of this action. I think that in listening to the Member for Edmonton-Belmont, it was evident the amount of control -- often the words "control" and "influence" came up. That, tempered with painfully evident descriptions of the existing system, brought out the basic philosophical difference of the two parties.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the notion of obtaining economic input to the government's activities has been well debated here in this Assembly in previous sessions. I believe that Bill 205 is redundant, especially when I look at the experience that other regions have had with the formation of economic councils. The Ontario Economic Council was formed in 1962 and was disbanded in 1986. Its mandate was to contribute to public awareness, discussion, and understanding of socioeconomic issues, and it seemed to focus, before it was disbanded, on health, housing, social security, and industrial policy. So I think we must look at other directions, other initiatives in Canada when we talk about forming something here. I think it's useful to take a look at just what happened elsewhere. I note, too, that British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba do not have economic

councils. These provinces rely on provincial departments and ministerial advisory committees to perform this function.

I think that I can lean back to the Alberta way. There is an Alberta way, and I think this government has performed that mandate to the utmost; that is, to seek the input and guidance from as wide a base as possible. Again, I mention the very significant efforts that all members of this government take in seeking out the opinions and suggestions from the special interest groups.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I cannot support Bill 205. I think it's unnecessary, and I think that we as elected officials have to live up to our mandate and make that special effort to get out there and find out what Albertans want and support the environment for good, long-term economic development.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Calgary-McCall.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to stand and voice my support for Bill 205, introduced by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont. You know, it was interesting for me to listen to the comments made by the Member for Stony Plain. I appreciate him getting in on the debate this afternoon to make those comments, but it struck me that one should say, "Do as I say, not as I do." It seemed to be the tenor of his comments. He was concerned about this Bill, for example, setting up a superbureaucracy. This is interesting, coming from the government that has more bureaucrats per capita than almost any other government in Canada. In fact, I'd like to know what government in Canada does have more bureaucrats per capita than this one has; certainly not any of the governments that New Democrats have led in this country. [interjections] Yeah, okay. No, that's true. Anyway, I'm glad to see that . . .

Mr. Speaker, this certainly was not intended to set up a superbureaucracy. It was intended to provide, as it says in its opening "whereas" clauses, a body that would provide a means of evaluating public policy, reflecting "on the accumulated experience and wisdom of the people of Alberta." That is, it's a concept based on the experience and wisdom of Albertans all across this province. You know, it only underscores the comments made by the Member for Stony Plain. He referred to the caucus committee of the government receiving input from various groups in the province, and that's good. I'm glad to see that the caucus committee gets input from various groups. But it was a fairly short list; I know it wasn't intended to be an exhaustive list. The Chamber of Commerce and AUMA were two among others that he made reference to.

But this is the point of this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker: that there are a lot of groups in Alberta that have a stake in our economy. It's fine for a caucus committee of government to hear a selected group of interest groups across the province in any given year, but where is that group out there that has a non-partisan, independent, dispassionate, impartial view of the economy, evaluating the trends, looking at industrial policy, labour policy, looking at those groups that are not participating in the labour force or in the economy, and looking at the long-term trends? That is a much different kind of body than a list of interest groups that from time to time meet with a government caucus committee. That just underscores the importance, in my mind, of having an organization such as an Alberta economic

council.

As well, the hon. member made reference to a motion made by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West regarding the Alberta heritage fund. The member is quite right: not only was that motion brought forward by the member, but this Bill, Bill 205, makes it one of the duties of an Alberta economic council to do an annual evaluation of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, including

- (a) an assessment of the degree to which the operations of the Fund have contributed to the ability of individual Albertans to better their standard of living;
- (b) an assessment of the degree to which [this fund has] contributed to the strengthening and diversification of the Alberta economy;

and also would be empowered to recommend on how that fund might be better employed.

Of course, a mandate of this Bill would be to do that sort of thorough assessment. The fact is that the government, to my knowledge, has never done so. If they had done so, why would there be a need for a government member to put a motion on the Order Paper asking that such an evaluation be done by government, to consult with various sectors of the economy?

Well, Mr. Speaker, the member also indicated that we shouldn't be critical of government policy. Well, I'm afraid that the members opposite are starting to confuse good fortune with good judgment. It's one thing for Alberta to have a wealth of natural resources that traditionally have been easy to exploit and have brought in lots of money to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, to government revenues, in the form of economic rents. It's one thing to recognize that we are a province of abundant resources; it's another thing to turn around and say that all this wealth has been generated as a result of good government economic policy. The truth of the matter is that we've had a wealth of easily recoverable, conventional natural resources which are rapidly being depleted. Unless we have somebody somewhere who's assessing regularly what the long-term prospects of the economy are in this province, we may find ourselves very shortly running out of the very things that have contributed in the past to our economic standard of living.

It was obvious in the last two, three, four years -- since 1984 in particular; earlier, in 1982, I suppose -- the degree to which this economy has been dependent on the twin pillars of the agriculture and the oil and natural gas industries in this province. When those two pillars crumbled, it was obvious how weak and dependent this economy was on those two pillars. Now, if somebody had even years before that been prodding the government and indicating that there was a need to strengthen and diversify the provincial economy, we may not have had the same difficulty, the same trauma, the same upheaval in our economy in Alberta that we've experienced in the last few years.

I'm also concerned, Mr. Speaker, when I hear that we should not be giving credible, nonelected groups some authority and responsibility in this province. You know, there are lots of examples, and one was made earlier about Vencap, where that's been done. But why would a government be afraid of doing that? Why would they not want to provide that kind of authority to such an eminent organization or an eminent group? Well, it might mean that they would have to start to deal with some of these issues in a public way. It would not be so easy and comfortable for them to simply make their decisions in the comfort and security of a cabinet room without really ever having to face up to some of these questions and deal with these questions in a public sort of way.

I'm concerned if that is a trend or the general attitude of this government, a sense of a closeness and comfort behind the doors of cabinet. We should, in my view, be having a much broader public debate about our economic direction and what it takes to get balanced economic development in all areas of the province for all sectors of the economy and for all people in the province. That is an important debate that affects all Albertans and should not be limited to the kinds of discussions that a caucus committee has with particular interest groups or that the minister might have with individual businessmen in this province.

Now, the Member for Stony Plain made some comments about how government ought to be a referee in the marketplace and not make interventions in the marketplace. I was interested to see where the Member for Stony Plain was on a previous debate over the government's involvement in Olympia & York. That certainly was a far cry from being a simple referee in the marketplace. [interjection] Boy...

MR. SPEAKER: Order please in the House.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: We could talk about the upgrader, recent announcements about all kinds of government intervention in the form of low-interest loans, loan guarantees. They're now talking about equity participation. I'm not critical about that, Mr. Speaker. All I'm saying is that there's quite a strong dichotomy between the comments of the previous speaker and the actual decisions and facts of the situation. As I said in my opening comments, it seems to be more a matter of: listen to what I say, and don't look at what I do.

This government plays a significant role in the economy, both as referee, as stated, but also as a participant, also in the way considerable amounts of public dollars are invested in various forms or committed in various forms of equity or loan guarantees or underwriting of loans to business. Now, the question is: does any of this fit a pattern? Does any of this fit a plan? Well, perhaps the government has a plan. I would hope they have a plan. To what extent there's a plan out there -- it's certainly not been made public, which only underscores for me the importance of some group in the economy having a look at what's going on in particular sectors of the provincial economy.

I'd like to know that somebody is reviewing what effect technological change is having in the environment in which Alberta is a participant and a competitor. I'd like to know that somebody out there is evaluating our strengths and our weaknesses in extraprovincial financial trade. I'd like to know that somebody is looking at the most effective ways in which government could be participating, either in the form of specific plans for production and investment or how government might best contribute to a high and consistent rate of economic growth. I'd like to know if anybody has a plan on how to balance economic development in all areas of Alberta.

You know, the government tabled its social policy statement, Caring & Responsibility, and it was interesting for me to note that there's a long-term trend towards the depopulation of rural areas in Alberta. Well, I'd like to know what plan, if any, this government might have for creating jobs in rural Alberta. Now, if all of these plans are in place, why aren't they being made public? I'd like to see them. I'd like them to be tabled. I'd like there to be some kind of public debate over those kinds of plans and directions, because all I've seen in the absence of that Mr. Speaker, is some decision-making going on in the ministers' offices with advice from perhaps some groups that meet with the

government caucus from time to time.

Quite frankly, I just don't think that's good enough. There has to be a far more comprehensive review taking place, and I would like to see someone outside of government undertaking that mandate and that responsibility. It just, in my mind, would facilitate the public participation in the process. It would assure me that it was in fact going on, and it would, in my mind, give much more strength and direction towards government to ensure that the decisions they're making have some coherence and coincide with some general direction of opinion as to where those decisions and those investments ought to be made. Because, Mr. Speaker, no matter how much government members opposite might decry the fact that government should not be involved, the reality is that this government is involved, and heavily involved, in all kinds of ways. It just seems . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I wonder, hon. member, if you might be gracious enough to move adjournment of the debate in view of the hour.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you for that comment, Mr. Speaker. In view of the hour I'd be quite pleased to move adjournment of debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, the House will be in Committee of Supply tonight with the Social Services estimates up. I move that the House now adjourn and that when it sits tonight, it will be in committee.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

(The House recessed at 5:27 p.m.)