

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Wednesday, May 11, 1988 2:30 p.m.**
Date: 88/05/11

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our Father, we thank You for Your abundant blessings to our province and ourselves.

We ask You to ensure to us Your guidance and the will to follow it.

Amen.

head: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 36****Public Health Amendment Act, 1988**

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Public Health Amendment Act, 1988.

The purpose of the Act, Mr. Speaker, is to bring in several amendments to facilitate public health operations and maintain the high standards within the province.

[Leave granted; Bill 36 read a first time]

head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file with the Legislative Assembly copies of a report entitled New Dimensions in Emergency Health Services: An Alberta Solution. This report was prepared by the Policy Advisory Committee to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care and was made public earlier today. Copies will be provided today to all hon. members.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to table for the information of all members of the Assembly a petition that was presented earlier today to the Premier. The petition was signed by some 3,500 Albertans and requested that a

Public Inquiry into the lack of adequate regulations and enforcement of regulations, governing the importation and humane transportation and handling of Slaughter Horses in Alberta [be held].

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Government House Leader, might we entertain a motion with respect to Bill 36 to go under Government Bills and Orders, please?

MR. YOUNG: My apologies, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, it's my pleasure to move that Bill 36, the Public Health Amendment Act, 1988, be placed under Government Bills and Orders for

second reading.

[Motion carried]

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, 38 schoolchildren from Malcolm Tweddle school in the beautiful constituency of Edmonton-Avonmore. They are accompanied by their teacher Muriel Burnett and by a parent Dave Smith. They are seated in the members' and public galleries. I would ask that they now stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, today I'm pleased to be able to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, 126 grade 6 students from the Ponoka elementary school. They are visiting Edmonton today and have been at the Art Gallery and the aviation museum, and of course now are at the Legislature. They are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Jim Erickson, Mrs. Marilyn Watson, Mrs. Colleen Schayes, Mr. Jim Rawji, and Mr. Gordon Hickey. They are seated in the members' and public galleries. I would ask that they now stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, Dr. Kherani, president of His Highness Prince Aga Khan Shia Imami Ismaili Council for Edmonton, and Mr. Anil Mawani, secretary. One of the attributes, Mr. Speaker, of the Ismaili community is their willingness to share their culture and to introduce members of other cultures to their organization. They are seated in the members' gallery. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Hospital Funding**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. The current crisis facing Alberta hospitals is a direct result of cutbacks in government funding. The minister now, I understand, has announced that he may be reviewing his hospital budget with cabinet for the second time since the funding was announced. There was previously \$10 million for the nurses. We're told by the Hospital Association that for the two recent settlements they need another \$9 million to \$10 million. We have four other settlements being negotiated. What we've had is an ad hoc approach of cutting back until the system starts to hurt people, then backing off under pressure. It no longer works. My question to the minister. When is this minister going to get organized and provide enough money to the hospitals so that they can adequately look after the sick and the injured in this province?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has little or no knowledge of how the system actually works. It's impossible in January, February, March to predict what hospital operating costs might be when a very substantial portion of the hospitals' operating budget is the cost of labour that they must pay for nurses, registered nursing assistants, and other hospital workers.

What I have consistently said for the past several weeks is that we want to see a situation where hospitals have enough funding so that they can continue to operate their full complement of beds that they're operating with today and that they will not have to reduce any services. We are reviewing with individual hospital boards their costs of doing that in relation to the settlements that have been made. Now, as the hon. member knows, some settlements with their workers have not yet been completed, so there's an unknown factor there. I repeat again: we're prepared to consider additional funds if it can be proven that there is no other way, after a fine-tooth comb goes over the budget of every hospital, to ensure that the beds remain open.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, for the minister to say that they're not vastly underfunded -- there was a 3 percent cut last time, and people were telling him what was going to happen, if he was listening. Now the minister suggests that the hospitals, I believe, must sharpen their pencils and tell him what their costs will be so that they can fund them. My question is to the minister. Doesn't he realize that's exactly what they've been telling him for over a year now? That's why they were forced to cut hundreds of beds last year.

MR. M. MOORE: Well, Mr. Speaker, there are still ways in which costs can be saved. I recall in this Legislature not many days ago answering questions about the number of registered nursing assistants that are employed in our hospital system. I indicated that I thought that if the Royal Alex hospital could employ 20 percent registered nursing assistants, so could most every other hospital. There are some who are employing almost 100 percent registered nurses. Surely that's one way over a period of time in which they could reduce their operating costs. There may be other ways as well. We're examining all of those, and we need to examine them all if we're going to be responsible with the taxpayers' dollars.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, you're not being responsible with the taxpayers' dollar, and that's what the taxpayers are saying. That's why we're in such disarray. My question is: instead of blaming the health care workers, why doesn't the government stop playing political games and blaming one group and saying there should be more of this and start adequately funding the health care system. This is what Albertans want.

MR. M. MOORE: The only one that's in disarray, Mr. Speaker, is the Leader of the Opposition. He doesn't seem to understand that you just can't throw money at the system and say, "Here; spend it wherever you like." You have to have some control over the kinds of expenditures that are made in the system. Last year, sure, there was some pain, some reduction in bed numbers, but the system managed on 3 percent less money with about a 5 percent inflationary figure. That was proof, and lots of it, that there was room in the system for improvements.

This province funds its hospital system and its health care system better than any province in Canada, bar none. The dollars are there to do a more than adequate job. Now, as I said in the opening question, Mr. Speaker, we're prepared. If it can be proven that the dollars are not there and that there's no way that the hospitals can operate without closing beds, we're prepared to consider additional funding.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. It's always interesting how he accuses everybody else of spending unnecessary

money. We spend money here on all sorts of unnecessary things, and that's the point. Hospital beds are the last place we should have been cutting. My question to the minister. Will the minister give now, then, a commitment to this House and to the people of Alberta that the government will provide the funding necessary so that the hospitals can reopen the necessary beds that they closed last year and that they're contemplating closing now?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I've indicated that we do have a commitment to ensure that the hospitals will not have to close any beds which are presently open or reduce any hospital services. As to whether or not there will be funds to open beds which might have been closed last year, I don't know the answer to that until the hospitals have completed all of their salary negotiations and we've reviewed their budget. In most cases, the beds that were closed last year were closed on a temporary basis, oftentimes in order to do refurbishing and other work in the hospital, and then were reopened at a later date. There are very few beds in total in the province that were closed permanently because of last year's budget reductions.

MR. SPEAKER: On a supplementary, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The public is really confused by some of these inconsistent moves that the minister has made. The minister has recently announced the Camsell board. What is the rationale for creating yet another board in an institution when the former deputy, now executive to the Hyndman commission, has stated that what we need is a district board which would be effective and economical?

MR. SPEAKER: With due respect, hon. member, that's not germane to the main question. Thank you.

Additional supplementaries? Second main question, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. TAYLOR: Point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Let's go on.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

Loans to Members' Spouses

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta Treasury Branches purchased a debenture; in other words, made a loan to a Lethbridge numbered company which is one-third owned by Sienna Financial Corporation, which in turn is wholly owned by the wife of the Provincial Treasurer. To the Provincial Treasurer. To the best of his knowledge is this another example, to use the Premier's words, of Albertans' helping an Al-bertan, or is there something more to this than that?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, of course, that question is one that's somewhat difficult for me to deal with in that it deals only with my wife's personal business operations and has, in fact, very little to do with responsibilities that I may have.

MR. SPEAKER: With care. The questions may well be ruled

out of order.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Treasurer must be well aware of the Legislative Assembly Act, which disqualifies a member if that member's spouse becomes a party to a contract under which the spouse borrows money from a Treasury Branch. Now, I don't believe that this arrangement constitutes a violation of that Act, but it certainly shows poor judgment.

I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer if it's his view that a loans officer at a local Treasury Branch, when presented with what amounts to a loan application entered in part by the wife of the Provincial Treasurer, would treat that application in an identical manner to any other such application, that that application would not receive special attention.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I think really that the hon. member should be directing his questions to me, because I had an opportunity some time ago to look into this matter, to discuss it with the Provincial Treasurer -- and, as he said, to the extent that he has a knowledge of it, because obviously it's something that his wife, who has every right to operate as she wants and with a company as she wants -- and the Attorney General, because the member has raised the issue of the Legislative Assembly Act. There is absolutely nothing in this transaction that in any way contravenes the Legislative Assembly Act. It does not in any way contravene our disclosures. All disclosures were made public by the Provincial Treasurer on this matter, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of an Albertan dealing with other Albertans through companies, developing a small business, and really is not the business of this Legislature.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Treasurer has declared his interest in Sienna Financial Corporation, and both he and his wife, I'm sure, must be aware of these provisions. To the Premier. Given his comments, would it be his view that this kind of an arrangement between the wife of the Provincial Treasurer through a numbered company with the provincial Treasurer Branch is an example of poor judgment being shown either by the Provincial Treasurer or his wife?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, again, those are responsibilities that the Premier, who's responsible for Executive Council, would have. No, I do not accept the fact that because a wife of any member wishes to operate in this province within the laws, they should in any way end up having aspersions cast upon them.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Speaker, Plutarch said of Caesar, "I wished my wife to be not so much as suspected." Will the Provincial Treasurer, in the interests of removing any suspicions, convince his wife to terminate her association with this arrangement as quickly as possible?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, as the member has pointed out, under the Legislative Assembly Act my wife has every right to operate as she has. She is an independent person, she has her own means, and she was not operating as an agent of mine at all. Therefore, if the Assembly agrees that that is the law, then let the law dictate what we do. That's essentially what has been done here, and it's been reinforced by legal opinion. As the member across the way has pointed out, it is in fact legal within the Legislative Assembly Act. There is nothing wrong with it, and there is no difficulty with respect to what the proc-

ess has been.

To simply correct the record, Mr. Speaker, I have no interest in the company, although it is, under our disclosure requirements, required that I disclose that my wife has 100 percent interest in that company.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair would like to point out *Beauchesne* 359(7), because it does have elements of application to what's been going here.

A question must adhere to the proprieties of the House, in terms of inferences, imputing motives or casting aspersions upon persons within the House or out of [the House]

The Chair also needs to point out that the declaration was filed and has been public information on file for a number of years. This is not a new event.

Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I hope I'm phrasing this supplementary carefully. It is not a request for a legal opinion. It is just to ask the Treasurer whether he has obtained a legal opinion as to whether or not the Legislative Assembly Act of 1984, clauses 28 and 24 were infringed in any way by his spouse borrowing from Treasury Branches.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, as I've said before, this is perfectly legal. There is nothing that contravenes the Legislative Assembly Act, and therefore I can say yes, it is a legal process.

MR. SPEAKER: The matter was checked by Parliamentary Counsel.

MR. HORSMAN: I'd like to supplement the answer by saying that there was a request for a review of this matter by the Attorney General's department, and in the view of the law officers of the Crown nothing has infringed the Legislative Assembly Act. In addition to that, the Provincial Treasurer has sought and obtained his own independent legal advice, which is to the same exact effect.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.
Supplementary, Stony Plain.

MR. HERON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct a supplementary question to the Attorney General for clarification in a general way. Given that the spouse, male or female, of any member of this Assembly may, say, inherit a small percentage of the shares of a family company with no say in the management of the company, which in the case of a minority shareholder is usual, could the Attorney General, for the consideration and analysis of all elected officials in this Assembly, say if it's possible to unknowingly or unwittingly violate or contravene the rules governing our being here?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is verging very close to asking a legal opinion, and I would say that the Legislative Assembly Act with respect to this matter, was very carefully drawn, after consultation with all members of the Assembly, in its current form in 1984. I think it's quite clear as to the relationship of spouses and how they must be dealt with. There are ways within the legislation to seek legal opinions from the courts as to whether or not certain relationships are or are not ones which would render members subject to disqualification. But beyond that, I would just refer members to the Legis-

lative Assembly Act. Its terms, we believe, are quite clear and in this case unequivocally correct on the part of the action of the Provincial Treasurer.

Ethics of Elected Officials

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pursue that a bit -- not this particular issue but the whole question that we've asked the last couple of days: the Premier having some trouble determining what's the difference in right and wrong or conduct for the members of the cabinet. Everyone has a code of ethics, written or unwritten, and in view of the many contracts and grants made by his government since 1986, the public are wondering what his unwritten code is. For example, would he accept the position of the B.C. government, for instance, when the Leader of the Official Opposition also has to give approval before any gifts of free travel are allowed?

MR. GETTY: Well, it's interesting. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader of the Liberal Party tried to introduce some British Columbia matters into our House. Frankly, I told him then and I say again now: our responsibilities are here in Alberta.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised. I thought Vander Zalm's statue was in his lobby there.

Would he assure the public, then, that no minister of this government has or will ever receive his permission to accept a gift or favour from someone doing business with this government?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, all of these matters are a matter of judgment. It may well be, as one of the hon. ministers said yesterday, that somebody offers you a ride in a taxi somewhere. You might go or you might not. I think the hon. leader of the Liberal Party is groping about, trying to cast some aspersions here. Frankly, there aren't any to be cast.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, we've established what they are. I'm just trying to find out what the price is.

To the Premier. Is he not aware, then, that even his federal cousins, after I don't know how many ministerial scandals, found it necessary to come out with tougher conflict-of-interest guidelines? Is he aware that even the federal Tories are coming out with one?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is missing a very important point that the Legislature has taken a great deal of time, and all members who are here participate in a total review of the Legislative Assembly Act. It could well be called the conflict-of-interest Act. But that piece of legislation was in fact considered and considered in great detail under the former Attorney General, the Hon. Neil Crawford. It passed through this Legislature supported by the House, and it now is the law dealing with members' responsibilities.

Now, to create the legislation and then somehow start to say, "But what we should really do is cast it in a broader fashion" -- frankly, the legislation was drafted in order to cover the situation. Why then try and say, "Let's extend it in some way to make it more difficult?" Frankly, we are dealing with a piece of legislation. All members, I assume, are living within that law, and when they do, I think that's a credit to them and that's where it should end.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, as a final supplementary. We just heard five minutes ago that we're having trouble interpreting how it works out. Would the Premier not be willing to strike an all-party committee to write a code of ethics for consideration by this Assembly? Would he be willing to do that?

MR. GETTY: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, we have a Legislative Assembly Act. From the way the hon. leader of the Liberal Party is talking, I doubt if he's even read it. Secondly, no one is having any trouble interpreting this matter. The Attorney General has talked about it, the Provincial Treasurer has talked about it, and I have talked about it. No one is having any trouble interpreting except in the mind of the leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Member for Clover Bar.

Bosco Ranch

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister of social development. Just recently a facility in my constituency, Bosco Homes, was opened. It's a facility for severely troubled young people. Can the minister indicate what has transpired recently to afford that facility to be available to young Albertans who have emotional disturbances?

MRS. OSTERMAN: We don't have a contract, Mr. Speaker, with that agency, although children can be referred to it. That is the case with a number of services that are offered across the province by either community organizations or private service givers. Where the folks dealing with a particular youngster believe it to be appropriate, obviously that could be one of the considerations in terms of a referral.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, has the minister or will the minister be meeting with the organization or a group that's looking after the facility within the next while to see if their differences can be reconciled, that this facility can be used by the department?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have met with the principal in terms of the founding gentleman and presently the priest that's responsible for the particular institution that we're talking about and I believe that our differences are rectified. Unfortunately, that does not mean that the Department of Social Services is able to guarantee the viability of any particular institution in this province.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that the facility is able to look after and accommodate at least 21 youngsters and there are only three people, as far as I know, who are using the facility, is the minister in a position to indicate to this Assembly and the people of this province that as many troubled youngsters as we have, there is not a need for a facility and there are not youngsters in the department that need these facilities?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I think it would probably always be a fact that some people would say there was a need. Certainly in terms of the ups and downs that we have with respect to caseload, there potentially could be a waiting list of youngsters requiring a service. However, as with all departments, we must try to do some reasonable planning in order that a budget can be maintained. With that in mind, the regional of-

face in Edmonton some two years ago began a major planning strategy and produced a document called Planning Children's Services in the 1980s. It is with respect to the very Edmonton region that the hon. member mentions.

I think it's important to note that there are facilities such as this right across the province of Alberta. From time to time other regions will refer children to a specific facility if they believe it to be appropriate. But at the time when this same organization planned to deliver services -- and there are others who require services besides those a part of the Department of Social Services -- we closed some 58 institutional beds in the Edmonton region in order to accommodate the very special planning for children to be served in their homes with parents and cut down on the amount of institutional care. In other words, we do not want, unless it is absolutely impossible to do anything else, to remove youngsters from their homes.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, I don't think anyone could ever accuse me of having a suspicious mind, but, Madam Minister, surely there seems to be some undercurrent of some problem here between the minister's department and this facility. Can the minister indicate to us or is she aware of some reason why the department cannot make use of this facility, that is so close to a major centre. What is the hang-up?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry that the hon. member doesn't seem to understand, and I'll try to give an answer with a different approach. The Edmonton region has planned for the institutional beds that they believe, on average, are needed to serve this region. That is the case right across the province, though it does not mean that any particular region confines their looking after children to that region. It may be that they leave the region. In this case, 58 institutional beds were closed, which I hope will indicate to the hon. member that we're trying very hard to take a different direction and commit more resources to children in their homes.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by Edmonton-Calder.

MRS. HEWES: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Social Services departmental personnel participated in the planning and the development, along with AMHC, of the Bosco Ranch. Under those circumstances, Mr. Speaker, it seems inconceivable that we allowed that to happen and that we're not using it. Will the minister tell the House how many children in Social Services' care have, in fact, been placed in the Bosco Ranch, and what is your intention in regard to them?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar is completely wrong in the preface to her question. We did not participate in the planning and development of this facility. We are responsible for licensing all facilities. We do not guarantee their viability. We only license them. Where need is shown, then certainly a child could be referred to that facility, but we first have a commitment to the facilities that have been a part of the regional plan, and those are the facilities that will be used first.

MS MJOLSNES: Supplementary to the minister. In view of the fact that the government did fund the construction of Bosco Homes through various departments, why was there no co-ordination between the Department of Social Services and other

departments before funding of the construction was granted?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I understand that they have a mortgage which is not controlled by the Department of Social Services in any way, shape, or form, and it wouldn't be our role to step in and say that this facility should not operate. Surely, if there is need out there that goes beyond the children who are mandated to be served by the Department of Social Services, the public should have access to such a facility if it is warranted.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, followed by Edmonton-Highlands and Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Addiction Treatment Program for Adolescents

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, my question this afternoon is directed to the Premier and possibly to the Minister of Community and Occupational Health. Notwithstanding the excellent work being done by AADAC with young Albertans dependent on drugs or alcohol, a growing number of our constituents have expressed concern about the inadequacy of our treatment programs for their tragically dependent teenage children. Can the Premier give the House any assurance that some action will be taken to help these young Albertans and their families?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I guess all members of the House recognize the problems faced in Alberta and, I suppose, in Canada and in the world with drug abuse in our modern society. As the member points out, it is true that Alberta has been on the forefront with AADAC in facilities and treatment, but he raises the matter of treatment for young Albertans, teenage addicts and others. I must say that there have been concerns for some time about the impact of drug abuse on young people of Alberta. It's something that not only strikes the individual who is directly involved but strikes right at the heart of families as well and whole communities in our province. That has concerned me, and I'm sure it concerns all members of this Legislature.

Some time ago I asked the Minister of Community and Occupational Health and the Member for Calgary-McCall, who is chairman of AADAC, to draw up and make recommendations to the government as to how we might deal with this matter. It's a frustrating, difficult matter that I know governments are struggling with all over the world, but I have asked them to provide us with recommendations, to do it as quickly as possible, and to make it a made-in-Alberta program, not merely import something here, and see whether we can come up with at least our best efforts to help young Albertans with some type of a youth treatment program.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier in his very helpful response used the phrase, "as quickly as possible," in the recommendations he listed from the Minister of Community and Occupational Health. I wonder if that minister might be able to indicate with more precision how much time will be taken to develop these sorely needed recommendations.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I think the question is really an important one, as the Premier has heightened and highlighted this government's concern about the tragedy of this problem. We will, in working with AADAC and working with other agencies, working with the PRIDE organization in Calgary and other concerned parents and groups, work over the next six to 10 weeks to do a very thorough survey of about eight programs

in the United States that are known to us to be effective. We would hope to come back after that survey of those programs and consider which program and which kind of mix would be appropriate for a made-in-Alberta solution. After we've done that, Mr. Speaker, we would bring the proposal to our colleagues in government, and my objective is to have that done by September 1.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to return to the Premier, if I could, for my final supplementary. While these Alberta families wait for our government's response, can the Premier indicate his support for those families who feel they have to seek help at treatment centres outside of Alberta, those centres that the minister has just referred to?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as members could appreciate, I have discussed this matter with the Minister of Community and Occupational Health but also with the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, responsible for our medical care system. It is a problem because we much prefer to expend our resources here and treat people here in Alberta with a made-in-Alberta program, rather than if we build in a program of sending Albertans away, out of the province, where the facilities will be built, rather than here, and not be an Alberta program.

Therefore, our preference is that we treat Albertans here in Alberta. Now, important is to assess what is being done first and, having found out what is being done, what works -- probably even more important is what works -- and then what additional can we try to build into a program. Those are the difficult matters we're currently assessing, and I hope that Albertans will be patient with us on an issue that is frustrating governments everywhere. But we are committed to a program for the treatment of youths, the treatment of teenage addicts in Alberta. We are committed to doing everything we possibly can to help our families and communities deal with what is a pretty vicious problem.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, in last week's *American Time* magazine there was an eye-opening article on the dangers of crack. Ten-year-old, 12-year-old children are pushing it, acting as lookouts. To the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall or the minister of community health. Can either of the hon. members indicate to the Assembly if we have a major problem or the threat of a major problem in the usage of crack in this province?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the commission may want to supplement my answer, but no, I don't believe that is as serious a problem in Alberta as it is reported to be certainly in parts of the United States. But I simply want to underscore that the treatment program, the program that hopefully we will come up with, will address the seriousness of that problem as well. Any program we put together has got to look at a remedy that will help kids to overcome any kind of dependency of that kind.

I want to underscore, though, Mr. Speaker, that we have in the province today some very good programs that help the majority of our young Albertans with their dependencies, and I think of a number of outpatient programs that AADAC now puts on, as well as Catholic Social Services in Edmonton and the Foothills psychiatric unit at the hospital in Calgary. Both of those are excellent treatment programs that need to be supplemented by another made-in-Alberta solution.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo, followed by Edmonton-Centre.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's nice to see what pressure can do, but in the interval we don't have any programs now, and unlike the Premier, desperate parents and children can't be patient. So I'm wondering whether the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care will change this government's policy and provide funding for community-based programs in the United States, seeing as we don't have them here now -- not hospital programs but the community-based programs that we need so badly.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member must not have been listening just a few moments ago to the comments of the hon. Premier, in that it's our preference to develop expertise in this province and treat those kinds of problems here, which we have been doing. The hon. member might well be aware that there are literally hundreds of programs throughout the world, particularly in the United States, that purport to treat drug problems and alcohol problems better than they do somewhere else. The facts of the matter are that it costs us a great deal more on an individual basis to send people outside of Alberta or Canada for treatment than it does to effect the treatment here. So that's our preference.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, in doing all that he possibly can, will the Premier commit his government to a policy whereby at least 1 percent of all revenues accruing to the province through the sale of beer and alcohol be devoted to treatment programs for people who abuse alcohol and drugs, as is the policy in the state of New York, for instance?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that's a relatively simplistic way to deal with the funding of something that's just so important: to just pick a figure out of the air and say that somehow we're going to use that. Frankly, no, I won't make that commitment. I think that anybody who has raised a family through these difficult years, and many members here have, knows that simplistic answers are not going to be the ones that work at all. This is going to be something that has to be tackled with a great deal of care, concern, attention, and sympathetic and sensitive dealing with this matter. We will do whatever we possibly can, and we won't tie it to some ad hoc percentage of funding.

Ethics of Elected Officials (continued)

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read a single sentence reference from Code of Ethics and Conduct for the Public Service of Alberta, under Acceptance of Gifts.

An employee shall not accept a gift, favour or service from any individual, organization or corporation, other than: the normal exchange of gifts between friends; the normal exchange of hospitality between persons doing business together; tokens exchanged as part of protocol; or the normal presentation of gifts to persons participating in public functions.

Given that statement, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Premier would recognize that an employee of the Alberta government could have been fired for having summoned a plane from Nova without paying for it.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: After question period.

MR. YOUNG: Well, Mr. Speaker, then, aspersions . . . [interjections] Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne* is quite clear about unworthy motives being cast on the floor.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Well, sure, Mr. Speaker. I wonder, given my reference to the Code of Conduct and Ethics for the Public Service of Alberta, if the Premier will now agree to fix the problem that he himself caused and pay Nova for that flight.

MR. SPEAKER: The question has been raised so often in the House and answered so often that it's really out of order. It's tedious and being repetitious.

Next supplementary question.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

MS BARRETT: Well, I think that it's pretty clear that this government wants to operate on double standards, Mr. Speaker, and it doesn't like answering for its problems.

To the Premier, who doesn't like answering questions. Will he now agree to ask his own caucus, his government caucus, to adopt the NDP Bill on the code of ethics for the Alberta Legislature so that this problem wouldn't arise in the future?

MR. GETTY: First of all, you, Mr. Speaker, are the one who ruled, not me, on the validity of the question and the fact that it's repetitive. I wasn't ruling on it. You did. If the hon. member has some kind of complaint, it's with you, sir, not with me, because I've answered the question many times.

As far as the initiatives from the NDP, being a member of the House, I have looked at many, many, many of those they have suggested. Frankly, I find that they tend to be wanting, and that's reflected in the number of governments representing that party in this country.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I didn't exactly see the Premier jump up to answer the questions I posed to him.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary.

MS BARRETT: This is the final one? Mr. Speaker, he only answered one question. He didn't even do that. Okay, I'll make this the final one.

Mr. Speaker, it's pretty clear to everybody else. Maybe the Premier will say it now. Is there one rule for his government and one for the employees of the public of Alberta? Is it a case of do as I say, not as I do?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, it's a supplemental, very simple. Mr. Premier, would you fire a civil servant who took a free ride in a Nova plane?

MR. SPEAKER: That's a hypothetical question, actually.

Westlock-Sturgeon, go for it. If the Premier wishes to rise and deal with it, fine.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's obviously, in the way he's placed it hypothetical to get information *from* me. As to whether or not other members in this Legislature or a member of my caucus or the cabinet or a member of the public service -- if they were assisted in the way that I had been in a family emergency, I will absolutely guarantee that I would not fire that person at all. As a matter of fact I would be pleased that they had been helped, and I would thank the organization or individual who helped them.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Violence Against Women

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, it is a disturbing fact that 27 percent of women in Canada experience a sexual assault at some point in their lives. Of these assaults it is estimated that only 39 percent are actually reported to the police, and even fewer result in convictions because of society's attitudes and, in some cases, the circumstances of the event. To the minister responsible for women's issues. What plans does the minister have to deal with this abhorrent problem which affects more than one in four Alberta women and which affects the quality of life of many more women who have to fear its existence day to day in their lives?

MS McCOY: There are a number of programs, Mr. Speaker, to help women who are facing that dreadful situation of being sexually assaulted, some, of course, in their own homes, others on the streets and elsewhere.

MR. MITCHELL: It's interesting that the minister didn't outline what those programs are, probably because they're not very evident and not particularly aggressively implemented.

Will the minister consider setting up a task force with the mandate of looking at ways and means of lessening sexual violence against women and other forms of violence against women in Alberta?

MS McCOY: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's one of those ongoing social tragedies that any crime should occur, particularly those in this instance. We have, as I say, ongoing programs of support for women. We have various sexual assault centres and crisis lines and things of that nature, but when the hon. member suggests that we can do something to reduce the incidence of such crimes, I'm at something of a loss. One cannot legislate good behaviour, and although we of course would prefer that sort of behaviour not to occur, it's not something that we can write off with a pen. In the meantime, we do our best to help those women in distress.

MR. MITCHELL: To the Attorney General. Could the Attorney General please explain why, despite the minimum sentence of three years for sexual assault established by the Alberta Court of Appeal in 1985, so few sentences for these crimes in Alberta ever meet this minimum?

MR. HORSMAN: The hon. member knows that when there's a finding of guilt in the court by a judge, either at the provincial court or at the superior court level, there is a discretion on the part of the judge as to the sentences which may be levied, and the circumstances of each case are decided on those cir-

cumstances. I cannot and will not account for the decisions of each judge within this province relative to any particular crime or offence. It would be totally impossible for me to do so.

What I can do, what I have done, what my predecessor has done is to instruct prosecutors in presenting cases before the courts to seek the maximum and appropriate sentences upon the finding of guilt. That is the role of the Attorney General.

MR. MITCHELL: To the Premier. The Alberta government has undertaken an excellent approach by focusing many of its resources and much of its attention on the very difficult issue of reducing impaired driving. Could the Premier please make a commitment to this Legislature that he will direct his minister responsible for women's issues, as well as his Attorney General, to undertake at least as much of a focus and place as much attention on this very, very serious issue in Alberta as has been done in the area of impaired driving?

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.
Hon. Premier.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I agree completely with the hon. member on the serious nature of the crimes involved. Frankly, I thought that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, responsible for women's issues, replied to the hon. member indicating various programs that are in place with regard to that problem. Frankly, it is reasonable from time to time to review programs, and I'll give the hon. member the commitment that those programs will constantly be reviewed.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Red Deer-North, followed by Edmonton-Avonmore.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the Minister of Social Services. In light of a recent survey of 11,000 wife abuse incidents which showed that one in 18 separated women are assaulted whereas only one in 500 married women are assaulted, does she have instructions available to her social workers which would allow for special care and attention maybe in the area of counseling, especially with the high-risk group of separated women?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased also to respond to some very important questions raised by the hon. member. We had hoped that at all times social workers would address the individual in question in terms of their total needs, and this certainly for a number of single women in our society, separated women in our society, is one of the areas that is importantly addressed.

As well, the Department of Social Services has a special unit that addresses family violence. I believe we have done a much better job in profiling the problem. Therefore, communities and individuals are responding, which, after all, is the focus that we need, because it is speaking to a change in behaviour of people out there, and that isn't going to come about as a result of legislation.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, we not only need a change in behaviour, we need a change in attitudes of not only the people out there but judges in regard to both sexual assault and wife assault. I would ask the Attorney General if he would undertake an intense training program with judges that would give them contact with people who have worked with victims of both wife assault and sexual violence so they become sensitive to the dynamic and the trauma of both of these very serious crimes?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the members of this Assembly that I will not undertake an instruction course for judges on any matters. There is a judicial independence in this country which is seriously protected by the courts themselves.

But I will do this and have done it in the past. I have, as I am required to do each year by law, undertaken a meeting with the justices of the Court of Appeal, and I meet on a regular basis with the chief provincial judge and the chief justice of the Court of Queen's Bench. It's certainly under those circumstances that I urge at every opportunity that matters of this nature and all matters that come before the courts be given the most serious attention by the judges. It is then the responsibility of the chief judge or chief justices to engage in instructional programs that are necessary relative to sentencing.

I would report, as well, for the benefit of hon. members of the Assembly, that there will be this summer in Ottawa a follow-up to last year's very successful conference in London on reform of the criminal law, a special conference on the subject of sentencing. That will give an opportunity for that interchange of views between elected officials, the bench, and practising members of the Bar to discuss these issues in a forum such as that. That's an appropriate forum, and I am fully supportive of the efforts being made to organize that sentencing conference. We will support it as a government, and I intend to participate in it.

But I will certainly not undertake an instructional course for judges as Attorney General. That would be quite inappropriate. I appreciate the concern, however, of the hon. member's question, and I will pass on to the appropriate chief justices, chief judge, the concerns expressed on this matter by the member, as shared by all hon. members of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Minister of Education, then Cypress-Redcliff.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, an important part of this government's co-ordinated response on family violence is something on which I wish to supplement what the Minister of Social Services said, and that is that we have a protocol between that department and my own with respect to ensuring that superintendents know what kinds of processes must be put in place once the detection of family violence or abuse of any kind has been detected. As well, the Department of Education is a member of the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence to co-ordinate the work of our department with other departments of government. Thirdly, the special education institutional support grants, which are part of vote 2 of the Department of Education, are given to those women's shelters where children may be attending school.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Question period has ended. Sorry, hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff. One other member from the government got in on the issue.

I understand there might be points of order.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my point of order is on the question asked by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. It was a supplementary, and using *Beauchesne* 371, the question was quite related to what the question was on, funding of health care in the hospitals system. I think now you have the Blues, and you would see that the sup was asking, the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar asked why then, if we were talking about trying to keep costs down in the hospitals system, was he going ahead with appointing a new board, an extra board that didn't exist awhile back, if he indeed is trying to rationalize and save money. So I feel the question now -- if you've looked at the Blues, I would think that maybe you do too. Unfortunately the minister has left.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: On this particular point of order?

REV. ROBERTS: Yes, of course, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your involvement in this is?

REV. ROBERTS: Point of order. I'd like to support the leader of the Liberal Party in his contention on this point of order. I mean, it's obvious, Mr. Speaker, that boards are the conduit through which government funds pass on to hospital services, and the way in which boards are appointed or elected or how they're developed, whether it's on a particular hospital system or on a regional system, is integral to the funding system. This very crucial debate that's developed between Dr. McPherson and the minister is one that is of urgent public importance, and I would ask that the member have an opportunity to raise that question and have it answered.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Chair appreciates the comments.

The Chair also has a copy of the Blues and has gone through them. The first question as given by the Leader of the Opposition was indeed:

When is the minister going to get organized and provide enough money to the hospitals so that they can adequately look after the sick and injured in this province?

The second question is similar, the matter of costs. The third one is also a matter:

Instead of blaming the health care workers, why doesn't the government stop playing political games and blaming one group . . . and start adequately funding the health care system?

So those first three are dealing with the costing all right. The same thing happens with the final supplementary by the Leader of the Opposition. However, when the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar -- because, hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, we do not have a member for Gold Bar in this House. You know, we keep dropping "Edmonton" or "Calgary" from some of the names. But then the supplementary that was introduced by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar was:

What is the rationale for creating yet another board and institution, when the former deputy, now executive to the Hyndman commission, has stated that what we need is a district board which would be effective and economical?

In the opinion of the Chair at that moment that was not directly related to the first four questions, which were specifically with

regard to costs; that the supplementary then took us into a more narrow focus with regard to the Camsell board. [interjection] Well, we could debate this at some time, and if we have a further concern, we can attend upon my chambers after the session.

But *Beauchesne* 371 still is the section that deals with supplementary questions:

Although there may be no debate on an answer, further questions, as may be necessary for the elucidation of the answers that have been given, within due limits, may be addressed to a Minister.

This we attempt to do time and time again. Then it goes on:

The extent to which supplementary questions may be asked is in the discretion of the Speaker.

Now, once again, discretion was used by the Speaker, and perhaps some people agreed with the Speaker and some did not. Nevertheless, the Speaker had to rule. So the Chair is advised of the complaint, and we'll try to find more of the wisdom of Solomon for another occasion.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The point arises from, I believe, the first main question by the leader of the Liberal Party, the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, today. If I understood correctly -- and regrettably I haven't been able to get my hands on the Blues -- the hon. member stated to this effect in his series of questions: "We have established what they are. I'm just trying to determine what their price is."

Now, Mr. Speaker, if that is so, and I believe that is in fact what was contained in a preamble to the hon. member's question, then we should examine *Beauchesne* 360(5), which says:

Some further limitations [are] generally understood. A question may not:

- (5) reflect on the character or conduct of the Speaker or other occupants of the Chair, Members of either House of Parliament and members of the judiciary.

Mr. Speaker, further support and an indication of the concern of parliamentarians about this kind of imputation and slur on members can be found in Section 359(7):

A question must adhere to the proprieties of the House, in terms of inferences, imputing motives or casting aspersions upon persons within the House or out of it.

Mr. Speaker, there are still further citations. Section 319(3) states:

A Member will not be permitted . . . to impute to any Member or Members unworthy motives for their actions in a particular case.

Section 316(e) goes on about imputing bad motives. Finally, I draw to your attention, and hopefully to the attention of the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon and, I may add, some other hon. members from the opposition today, sections 48 and 49, which also deal with reflections on members.

Mr. Speaker, I am very disturbed that the kind of imputation that has been arising more and more frequently in this House -- and most particularly today I'm very disturbed about that that I believe was contained, although, as I say, I do not have the Blues for *Hansard*, by the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. I would hope that he will do the honourable thing and make right his comments today.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I don't know how it got to the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon when he raised the point of order when the Member for Edmonton-Highlands is talking about it, Mr. Speaker. That's when he talked about the point of order. It wasn't during that time. And I have a point of order. If he wants to talk about imputing motives, it happens over there all the time. Don't have selective vision.

Mr, Speaker, my point of order is that I have a point of order about ministers trying to influence the Speaker by running interference, deciding which questions should be in order or not.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition, that you haven't finished. The matter is that we're dealing with a point of order that has now been raised by the Government House Leader first, and then the Chair will recognize your point of order. Indeed, the member can bring up a point of order, whatever arose in question period.

The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon with regard to the comments . . .

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I must admit I felt like I was blindsided there. I didn't realize the point of order was at me for a bit. But in recalling it -- and I would wish to study the Blues -- I believe the Premier answered and said something like a taxi ride was okay but then he'd have to look at something bigger. I made the comment that he's established what he is, or what they are; they're just haggling about the price. So consequently, Mr. Speaker, I would have to examine the Blues, and if indeed . . . Obviously the House leader's been to some of the plays where that joke reigns supreme or that old joke has been around for a time, and he's taken umbrage at it. I'll have to look at the Blues, Mr. Speaker, and see whether or not it indeed imputes that the group has been, in effect, prostitutes, or whether, indeed, what it was was a comment that the Premier had said. I wish to take that and come back tomorrow with my comments.

MR. SPEAKER: On this particular point of order, hon. member. But first the Chair is willing to look at the notion that first the Blues need to be examined by the Government House Leader as well as by the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. The Chair obviously will take under advisement the use of the word that was used by the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon as being unparliamentary.

Calgary-Buffalo, briefly to this point of order.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, I was always under the impression that a point of order had to be raised on a timely basis and that once question period was over, you couldn't kind of leap back into any particular point that troubled you. This matter was not raised by the Government House Leader at that point in time. It was not raised. That is the heart of this issue. If that's the new procedure, then we'll expect to have those same opportunities and benefits henceforth.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Strathcona to this new point.

MR. WRIGHT: On the same point of order. With the greatest respect, I must take a different view, based on common sense and on *Beauchesne* also, that it is customary to raise the points of order after question period. It says nothing about having to indicate your need to do so during question period and that the former course is a superior one because time is not wasted.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, because that is indeed the case. It has been the practice of this House for a long time, not simply since the last election. Hon. members have shown absolutely no hesitancy about raising points of order either during question period or at the end of question period, so this point of order is indeed legitimate to

be raised at this time.

With regard to the issue as raised by the Government House Leader, there will be an examination of the Blues made and discussion will take place in the House tomorrow.

The Chair now recognizes the Leader of the Opposition with regard to his point of order.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said, it becomes a fairly common practice across the way . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Citation.

MR. MARTIN: *Beauchesne* 359, dealing with question period -- where the ministers, when they don't want to answer a question, try to influence the Speaker's judgment. It's happened time and time again. The question today, they said, was asked before. It was not, Mr. Speaker. We were dealing with the public service of Alberta code of conduct and ethics, the Member for Edmonton-Highlands. It had to do with the acceptance of gifts. What we're talking about is double standards. That was a new attack in terms of government ethics, which is certainly a major issue in this province and right across Canada. If they don't want to answer it, that's fair enough, but to stand up and say it's been asked before -- it wasn't. This is specifically a code of ethics that says how provincial employees should operate, but there seems to be different rules for the government. That's the point we were trying to make, Mr. Speaker, and it was clearly in order.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all of us in the Assembly share the view that there should be the widest possible latitude in question period and in debate in order to do the business of the House and the business of the province. Unfortunately, it has become evident to members of the Assembly, and I'm sure even those who are members of the opposition, that the question period is being used to attack ministers personally as opposed . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps hon. members should indeed listen, with due respect.

MR. SHABEN: . . . as opposed -- thank you -- to seeking information. In my years in the House, my understanding of the purpose of the question period was to seek . . . [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps the hon. Member from Athabasca-Lac La Biche could be entertained to enter the debate a bit later, but not during. Thank you.

Minister.

MR. SHABEN: So, Mr. Speaker, the government members support the latitude of the members of the Assembly to seek information and also recognize that rules are in place, whether House rules or in *Beauchesne*, that apply to the conduct of question period. And this proclivity toward attacking members I think is unfortunate.

There is another mechanism, and that is a standing committee of the Legislature on privileges and elections. If the hon. members have a point they'd like to raise that is in keeping with the line of questioning of the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon or

some other members of the House, they use the standing committee as opposed to question period. I think it's simply common sense. The members of the Assembly are abusing question period and its purpose, and I would urge upon all members, Mr. Speaker, that we get back to the purpose of question period, and that is to seek information.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm sorry, hon. member. You get once in on your point of order.

Vegreville on this point of order.

MR. MARTIN: It had nothing to do with the point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: The first time that sort of occurs in this House is that . . . [interjections]

Thank you. Thank you. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, in reference to the point of order, as dealt with by the hon. minister there, I think it wrong of him to suggest that in our persistent questioning of the ministers' roles in performing their public duties we are somehow launching attacks on the character or personality of those individuals. That is not the case. The Treasurer's personal involvement with matters is none of our concern, but how that relates to his responsibilities in this government is. The same is true of the hon. Premier. With respect, sir, the hon. Premier has a responsibility to the people of this province, and when we feel that some of the things he does impinge on his ability to do that, then I think it's right and proper to be raised in question period.

I think that if the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade and the hon. Government House Leader are to review their comments about the kind of conduct that goes on in this Assembly regarding name-calling and imputations and stuff, they're going to see that it applies much more directly to the members of that government who engage regularly day after day in name-calling and imputations of improper motives to members of the opposition simply because we try and do our job on behalf of Albertans.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

On this particular point of order, the Deputy Premier, followed by Westlock-Sturgeon, followed by the Government House Leader.

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the issue we're discussing at the moment, and that is imputations and name-calling and casting whatever. I listened with a great deal of interest . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Deputy Premier, it's very easy to get confused in all this today, but the point of order, as the Chair understands it, as raised by the Leader of the Opposition is dealing with the repetitious questions which the Chair had voiced concern about today. The issue was raised by Edmonton-Highlands with the public service guidelines, and then the Chair ruled because of the questions it had great similarity with regard to the Nova issue. This is the one that we're supposedly on at the moment, irrespective of the fact that the Leader of the Opposition made some comment about trying to influence the Chair. So it's on this at this moment, Deputy Premier.

MR. RUSSELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, because I am leading directly to the point raised by the hon. Opposition House Leader with respect to guidelines of accepting gifts. I listened with interest to the comments made by the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods yesterday during question period and couldn't believe what he was saying. So I checked the Blues, and I noticed from *Hansard* today that those comments are there.

Speaking of accepting gifts, I think it's tragic that a member of this House would attack people outside the House by calling them scummy employers and then go the same day and accept a free meal and drinks with them and also refer to those same people as friends of the Premier. So where are the standards, Mr. Speaker? They apply to both sides of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon on this particular point of order, which is dealing with the matter of repetition with the issue with Edmonton-Highlands.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I believe the point of order being made is that the question -- and I think I'm fairly familiar with it, because I raised it yesterday on the code of ethics. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands raised it some time ago on the propriety of taking a free plane trip. I understood the question to be entirely different. In other words, we learned what sauce for the goose is; we wanted to find out in the opposition what sauce for the gander was. In other words, it was an entirely different subject. Apparently there are rules as far as civil service behaviour, and the questions were along that line. Mr. Speaker, I know it's very hard with the way we're going back and forth on the ethics and yelling back and forth, but I think the Blues, when examined, would show that it was an entirely different topic. Although it's related to a code of ethics, it was a code of ethics for the civil service, not a code of ethics for the front bench, and asking why the difference.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, with respect to this matter, there's a final speaker to this issue. Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I was waiting, because after all, it was the Government House Leader who jumped up during my questions and shouted "Order, order, point of order" and begged the Speaker to run interference. I was hoping he'd just get up and explain just how . . .

MR. SPEAKER: With due respect, hon. member, the Speaker did not run interference.

MS BARRETT: I said that he wanted it and attempted to do it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for the clarification.

MS BARRETT: Oh, yes, Mr. Speaker, I said that last week outside the House as well with respect to the Government House Leader. See, my point is this. The Government House Leader thinks to himself, "Gee, that's a politically hot issue" and jumps up and claims "Order, order" -- it's sort of like "Fire, fire," but there is no fire, and believe me it's pretty clear because he does this constantly -- in the hope that someone will believe there is a fire.

The fact of the matter is that my questions weren't out of order, and that minister deliberately tried to run interference. I believe the Government House Leader would be well advised to let the Speaker run the show instead of letting the Conservative

government attempt to run the show.

MR. SPEAKER: Has the Government House Leader spoken to this one? No.

Government House Leader.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to deal only with one point in all of this exchange on this point of order allegedly. [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: Give him the courtesy he gave to you, would you?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. If this continues, the House is going to stand adjourned for some considerable length of time.
Government House Leader.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Norwood, in speaking to this point of order -- and now again the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands -- has said that the government, and particularly the Government House Leader, is running interference and trying to influence the Speaker. That is a matter of opinion, and it's only their opinion. Furthermore, it is quite contrary for them under rule 359(7) to make that kind of imputation. So even in making an alleged point of order, they're making an imputation which is contrary to the House rules. I think they're really searching for some kind of limb to hang onto to sustain an alleged point of order.

MS BARRETT: May I make a comment, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: No, you may not, hon. member. [interjection]
Order, hon. member.

The Chair has listened with great care to at least seven speakers with regard to this point of order, which goes back again to the matter of the questioning as raised by Edmonton-Highlands. Not all of the questions were ruled out of order. The first one especially was leading down a different direction. The Chair interfered when the Chair thought a question had arisen with respect to Nova flights, which was basically the same question which has been raised on a number of occasions, not just simply back on April 11 by the same member but on other occasions at least by Westlock-Sturgeon. The matter of the questions are being quite identical in form in many respects, but in terms of the whole line of questioning, it was not ruled out of order.

The Chair also wants to point out that the Chair at no time feels it has been influenced by any of the parties in this House with respect to how the Chair operates. Let it be manifestly clear that while members of the House may feel that an opposition party or government members are trying to influence the Chair, that may be your opinion. It certainly is not the opinion of the Chair. The Chair has learned to live with the isolation of being the Speaker of the House. The Chair also points out that the Chair understands it is fair game for any quarter of the House to be influencing the Chair, because certainly attempts have been made on many occasions from all quarters of the House.

Now, is there yet to be another point of order on today's business? Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the point of order 359(7) that the Government House Leader just referred to, in

which he stated that I have violated. That refers to assigning imputations or motives. I'd like to clarify for all members in the Assembly that what I was pointing out is a matter of record and a matter of fact. I don't know what motivates that man. I don't know what motivates that government. What I do know is that this Government House Leader hopped up, yelled "Order, order, order" during the middle of the questions I was asking, and then didn't proceed to say what the point of order was at the end of question period, which indicates to me that there was no point of order. Therefore, I believe I'm not in violation of 359(7).

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe we're on a point of order, but in response to the complaint, I already did, in dealing with the point of order respecting the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, allude to specifically the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands in the same context of imputation of motive.

MR. SPEAKER: Once again, hon. members, it was discussed earlier in this interesting little session that one can indeed raise a point of order at any time. One can stand up and make a call for a point of order during question period, which would be dealt with at the end of question period according to *Beauchesne* 369. If the member does not wish to pursue that particular point of order at the end of question period, so be it. That has happened many times, and again from both sides of the House. Then a member may stand and raise a point of order after question period even without having given notice, as so appropriately pointed out by the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Now, with respect to this particular discussion we are engaged in at the moment, all of us need to look at *Beauchesne* 234, which says in part, "A point of order cannot be raised on a point of order." Therefore, praise the Lord, this is not a point of order. Now, surely to goodness, there's no other reason for having to go through this business of bringing more points of order today, and the Chair therefore declares Orders of the Day.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, I've got one. Sony.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, hon. member, it had better be indeed appropriate.

MR. SIGURDSON: Yes, I do believe it's appropriate, Mr. Speaker. It's under section 319(3). I hope the Deputy Premier would realize the language he used. I know that he was caught up in the exchange. He did refer that yesterday the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods accused certain employers of being scuzzballs and that he had, I think he said, the audacity to eat with certain scuzzballs last night. I'm sure he wouldn't want to leave the impression that there were scuzzballs at that dinner, and I would ask him to withdraw that remark.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair will review the Blues.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: Might we revert briefly to the Introduction of Special Guests, if they have had the patience to stay with us?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes first Taber-Warner and then the Minister of Recreation and Parks.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, if indeed they're still in the gallery. The hon. Member for Cardston and I are pleased that today we have 13 senior citizens from the county of Warner who traveled up on the county's Heritage Handi-Bus. They're here to visit some of the sights in Edmonton, including this beautiful Legislative Assembly. I'm going to ask those who are present to rise as I introduce them: Mrs. Frances Swanson, Mrs. Evelyn Selk, Mrs. Ethelina Thompson, Mrs. Jean Erickson, all of Milk River; Mr. Lyman and Mrs. Mildred Hardy, and Mrs. Elva Michelsen of Stirling; Mrs. Ada Obom, Mrs. Martha Garber, Mrs. Helen Loft, Mr. George and Mrs. Adeline Bosch, and Mr. Angus Erickson of Milk River; and the bus driver, Mr. Don McCoy. I'm pleased they've been able to come in and meet with us today and have an opportunity to see Alberta's most treasured historic site. Would members of the Assembly please join with me in welcoming these citizens to our Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Recreation and Parks.

MR. WEISS: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, a group of 10 students from Fort McMurray. The students are in grades 6 to 9, and they attend Moberly Hall private school. While the school itself is not unique, it is unique in that the school is the first accredited private school operating in Fort McMurray under the Alberta curriculum. I look forward to joining them in a few minutes, thank them for their patience as well, and hope to be with them in Fort McMurray on Saturday at the official opening of their new facilities. They are accompanied by their teacher/operator Mrs. Fern Brooks and their teacher Mrs. Bev Pasichnuk. I'd ask that they rise and receive the cordial welcome of the Assembly and would ask all hon. members to join with me in extending it.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair begs the indulgence of the House and would like to respond to the supposed point of order as raised by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont. Both the member and the Chair were in error, because the member immediately went against what the Chair had said just moments before. Raising a point of order on a point of order is not in order. Therefore, the Blues will not be reviewed in that matter. Thank you.

head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS**
(**Second Reading**)

Bill 32
Appropriation Act, 1988

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to move second reading of Bill 32, the Appropriation Act, 1988.

As we come to a conclusion of a debate on a most interesting budget Mr. Speaker, I think it appropriate that in terms of the principles of this legislation I be very brief in my comments and very specific in what we have achieved here over the past 25

days or so.

Mr. Speaker, the Assembly has had under consideration the estimates of many departments. It's my understanding, in checking with the Government House Leader, that all departments have had an opportunity to at least have a review, an examination, an opportunity to question each minister. As a result, there has been a free flow of exchange of opinions and ideas with respect to the budget itself. Obviously there is some disagreement about the spending priorities, and certainly the government from our side will look on the discussion and debate as a series of recommendations wherein those valid points raised will in fact be considered and to some extent, wherever possible, included in the next budget process.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the budget itself is one which achieved at least three or four objectives. This budget stayed within the fiscal plan, and as I outlined in 1987 when I introduced the budget, in fact this fiscal plan is important for the province and for the government for Alberta to bring the government's budget into balance by 1990-91. As a consequence of that commitment, this budget is the second step in a four-part contention moving to that conclusion.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's been a difficult process. I wanted to compliment the ministers who have participated. We have all, as I've said before, become more efficient and more productive in the way in which we spend and conduct government business, and that certainly is a plus when it comes to the outcome of a tight fiscal plan.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we have also redirected the priorities within government. That is a result of many discussions that all of us in government, and to some extent the opposition, have had with constituents. We've been able to refocus the expenditures of our government again this year, moving broad dollars into the area of health and education. As a consequence, as I said in my budget, these two departments have, in fact, received higher funding this year than ever before in the history of the government.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the overall expenditures, some departments have reduced considerably, and those dollars where there were reductions have been redirected or re-employed to achieve the broader objectives. But overall on the expenditures, two things can be said. Generally speaking, the level of expenditures, certainly on a per capita basis in this province, is unmatched anywhere in Canada. Moreover, the focus on education and health is probably among the best, if not in North America, certainly in Canada. That's been achieved, and I think all of us can mark the record of success in that achievement.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, in this budget there was reduction in the personal income taxes. That reduction will come about in July 1988, wherein \$185 million will be reduced from the Alberta take on the personal income tax side. So far this year Alberta is the only province to reduce personal income taxes, and in concert with the federal government we are attempting to flow through or back to the individual citizen in Alberta the federal tax reductions which otherwise are being captured by other governments.

Now that I've had an opportunity to review the tax regime of other provinces, Mr. Speaker, two things are clear. Still Alberta is the only province with no sales tax. We have made that commitment, that that would be one of the pillars of our fiscal plan, and so far we've been able to maintain that. It's a very lucrative tax. Other provinces have increased it; other provinces have backed away from reductions. We in the province of Alberta, at least the government side, have made that commitment and are

now sticking by it. We've been able this current fiscal year to continue with the no sales tax policy.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, in comparing the Alberta personal income tax with other provinces, I think it's safe to say that the Alberta personal income tax is as low as any other province's. I've had the department do some checking and some calculations, and because of the way in which our tax system operates, particularly because of the impact of the unique taxes here in Alberta, there are one or two intervals where, in fact, Alberta is perhaps \$2 or \$3 higher than one other province or two other provinces. But generally, on average across the board, Alberta still now can say that it has the lowest personal income tax as well in Canada, and that therefore protects the disposable income of Albertans.

As I have said before, the intention of our tax regime is to protect low-income Albertans, and with the selective tax reduction which we put in place and have expanded in this budget, approximately 500,000 Albertans are removed from the tax rolls themselves. So the adjustment on the flat tax, reducing them by 50 percent, will start to show up in your and my income cheques and disposable income in July of 1988. And with that, the federal government will also add to it an additional \$200 million for this province, which means that, roughly speaking, about \$400 million of tax reductions will flow through to the people of Alberta.

So we've been able to do those things, Mr. Speaker, and I'll just recite them again. In this budget this expenditure program will provide the highest level of services of any province in Canada; maintain a commitment to a fiscal plan which brings us to a balanced budget by 1990-91; focus in on those important expenditure priorities in education and health; and maintain -- I think is clear -- the highest level of services of any province, any government, in Canada. Overall, Mr. Speaker, for those who look at bottom lines, we have expanded our expenditures by less than 1 percent in this budget year. Again, that is in line with our fiscal plan.

Now, in the legislation, Mr. Speaker, we have two items, two schedules to deal with. One is the special warrants, and those special warrants this year total \$328,077,584. Just a word on those, because there has not been that much debate on the special warrants. Essentially, five of those probably account for 80 percent of the expenditures, and \$60-some million was required to deal with the Edmonton tornado situation. Yes, that will in part be recovered from the federal government but, as you well know, must be spent here before it can be recovered back to the general revenue side.

Advanced Education: my colleague the Minister of Advanced Education has a very large special warrant, and that is essentially responding to contributions made by the private sector to the very well established universities and colleges in this province. We tend to forget that that \$40 million was on top of what was already budgeted, and that simply indicates that the endowment program which this province has is certainly working: it's certainly providing a capital opportunity for colleges and universities to establish endowed chairs and to add fixed assets to the infrastructure, to provide social programs, those programs of education which are signally important to us in this province.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, Red Deer railway relocation -- that's a hard one to say -- received some \$38 million to allow that very important urban community, that fourth largest city in this province, to expand its core centre. As a result of the work of the MLAs that was accelerated, and my colleague the minis-

ter of transportation argued successfully for that process. As well, the after program added additional dollars.

So in terms of the special warrants, we were this year running about 3.3 percent of the total budget voted as appropriation. It's not the lowest, Mr. Speaker, but it must be very close to being one of the lowest over the past decade in terms of special warrants on the basis of budgetary expenditures. That simply keys on the point that we've been very careful ourselves with how we manage the resources of this province; we've been very careful ourselves with our commitment to reduce the size of government spending, and of course that shows up in the stats today.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Appropriation Act, 1988, second schedule, Schedule "B", includes \$10,019,802,191, which are the dollars required to operate this province -- after the interim supply Bill is factored in -- to the end of March 31, 1988. I'm saying March 31, '88 again. My friend across the way is going to draw it to my attention: March 31, 1989, Mr. Speaker, and that, of course, is the fiscal year which is covered by this appropriation.

So all in all, this Bill, while it is essentially a reflection of numbers, it's much more than that. It is an element of a plan, a set of goals and objectives which this government described to the people of Alberta in 1987, which carries us through that very difficult period of 1986-87 with a large deficit. When we turned to the people of Alberta and asked for their support in respect to personal income tax increases, they responded, and we responded ourselves with good management. That is what this budget states. This is what this appropriation Bill reflects, Mr. Speaker, and while we may look at it in terms of dollars and in terms of whether it builds a hospital or not really this is a fundamental part of the government's policy to move towards that balanced budget. It reflects a very high level of services and, as I've indicated, maintains the lowest possible tax regime of any province in Canada.

So it is without hesitation that I encourage all members to support this piece of legislation in second reading, and I certainly appreciate the time, the recommendations, and the efforts of all members in the very important debate on the departmental estimates.

I move second reading, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise and speak on Bill 32. It is, after all, the summing up, as the Treasurer said, of the plans of this government for the tax dollars and the revenue dollars collected in this province, and it's a measure of their commitment to certain programs of different types. So needless to say, I have a few comments in different areas that I would like to make.

I would like to start by taking the Treasurer up on a few of his opening comments. He said that he's assured that all departments did get before this Assembly. While that is true, I would have to say that some of them didn't get here very long. There were two crowded into one day, and a fairly short day, if I recall, and one or two others that were brought back even for a second day. We often still didn't get past the first speaker on this side of the House, because members on that side, ministers

and other members, got into it and talked out the time or the House leader decided to cut off debate early. So while this free flow of ideas that he mentioned to some extent was there, it was not there in the measure that it perhaps should have been.

I would, for instance, point out to him that when the Treasury Department was called by ourselves so we could continue the debate on the budget in general because we felt that we hadn't had very much time on it -- I think it was some three days on the overall budget -- toward the end of that day I had a lot of questions that I'd asked and the Treasurer ran out of time in answering those. So I would request that he look back at the *Hansard* of that day -- it was a Wednesday; I forget exactly which one in early April -- and see if there are some outstanding questions there, in fact I know there are, that he did not get to reply to from not only myself but perhaps from some other members of the committee.

The Treasurer says that this is part of a fiscal plan, and so I assume that that whole fiscal plan is, in fact, up for debate at this time. I would say that this Bill, although it's just some numbers -- in fact, some very hard, cold sorts of statements -- does in fact speak to many other things that embody in it the overall government plan.

The Treasurer said that part of that plan was to reimburse or to rebate, if you like, some of the taxes the government took the year before. That's true. They cut off one-half of the 1 percent of the flat tax that was imposed the year before: a very minor reduction, I might say, compared to the billion dollar tax grab of the year before. He also said that they've allowed to flow through the benefits that the federal tax changes brought to the people of Alberta. I agree that he did that, but I would just say to him that that benefited mainly the very rich people that could benefit by the lower tax rate at the top end of the scale.

The Treasurer also goes on, and the government often brags a lot about the fact that we have no sales tax here. I would like to ask him what is a gas tax if it's not a sales tax? What is a hotel tax if it's not, in a sense, a sales tax? What are medicare premiums if they are not, in fact, a type of sales tax? You're buying medical services, so they're flat taxes. Since that tax grab of the previous year, Alberta really isn't that much better off than anybody else.

He also brags that a lot of the low-income people were taken off the tax rolls. I appreciate that fact, that that is true, but I would just point out that we still have a great number of people in this province that live under the poverty line, whose income is less than the poverty line, still paying taxes in this province. So I think we're a long way from being in a position where we can congratulate ourselves on how wonderful a job the Treasurer and this government is doing.

The Bill, Mr. Speaker, has two parts: Schedule "A", the government warrants part from last year, and then the new expenditure plans for this year. I would just say of the \$10 billion expenditure plan in Schedule "B" that it does not include, of course, the \$0.5 billion in statutory expenditures. One doesn't expect it to; that's not a criticism. But if you just balance that against the \$9.8 billion planned revenues and you come up with a \$670 million deficit, you kind of have to acknowledge that the statutory expenditures do exist, or the \$670 million planned deficit would not seem to add up.

I would point out also that the government will bring before this Assembly two other Bills asking us to approve expenditures. One is the Capital Fund estimates of some \$308 million, and the capital projects division of the heritage trust fund expenditures of \$164 million. Unfortunately, in a way, even that

doesn't really tell us the whole story of government expenditures in this province. I would point out, for example, that even in the Auditor General's limited consolidated statement the total there is some \$13 billion in the previous year when, in fact, the government planned expenditures were in the neighbourhood of \$10 billion. So there are a number of expenditures and commitments that this government makes that never make their way before this Assembly for us to pass judgment on.

Before I get into some of those details, I just want to say that one of the things the Treasurer said that is a sort of basic principle of this Bill is that the government was setting a high priority on education and health care. I'll say to him again what I said during the budget debate: a 1.3 percent increase in the Education budget is not all that impressive when there's a 4 percent inflation rate. And if you look at the previous year, when we had a 3 percent cut and a 4 percent inflation rate, quite frankly education isn't as well off now as it was two years ago. And even the health care, where they got the 6.9 percent increase, if you balance that against a 3 percent cut last year and a 4 percent inflation rate and a 4 percent inflation rate again this year, you can hardly claim that the health care is exactly flourishing. And so, Mr. Speaker, there are some principles embodied in these numbers all right, and they tell a different story in terms of priorities than what the Treasurer would have us believe.

This budget is a hold-the-line budget, in some ways a non-budget. It didn't take advantage of the fact that we gained an extra billion dollars in revenues almost last year. Well, a slight taking advantage, I suppose, by reducing that 1 percent flat tax to .5 percent; but that's really all. So the Bill before us gives us a bit of an indication of the government's directions, but it also leaves out quite a number of things.

One of the things that is there that I need to look at in some more detail is Schedule "A", the government warrants. If you look back at the 1985-86 year, government warrants amounted to some \$800 million. Last year they were \$289 million, and this year they are back up to \$328 million. And I just want to say to the Treasurer that this is one section of the government's economic activities that I don't think is handled adequately on behalf of the taxpayers of this province. Those government warrants in many cases could have been brought into the House in the first place. I understand the tornado victims needed to be dealt with immediately, and nobody would object to that kind of emergency situation. That's what government warrants are for. But as we told them in a fairly strong debate, as I recall, in the summer of 1986, the \$800 million was totally unacceptable in terms of government spending a lot of money outside of this Assembly and not bringing the expenditure ideas before this Assembly for approval before they spent the money.

Now, they did cut it back some last year, but it's back up again a bit this year, and I would say to the Treasurer that that's not the way to handle the budget of this province. In fact, the government should seriously consider running a minibudget in the fall or amendments to the budget in the fall and bring any expenditures that they feel they need approval for into this Assembly before they make them. The government seems to believe that all that's necessary is to put out a press release and say, "This is what we're going to do, and this is how many million dollars we are committing," and expect that everybody somehow in this Assembly is going to keep a record and keep tab of it and somehow know what's going on. Mr. Speaker, it's up to the Treasurer to account for the dollars and ask for the approval of this Assembly in as effective and efficient a way as possible, so that we can immediately know and understand

what's happening with the tax dollars in this province.

There are some other areas of the government's expenditures that get even less scrutiny than the government warrants, however. I've mentioned a couple that will get some scrutiny: the Capital Fund and the capital projects division of the heritage trust fund. And we will even do something about the debentures for Crown corporations from the heritage trust fund, probably. We have each year we've had to prop up three of those losing Crown corporations each year. I would say to the Treasurer that I would appreciate it, though, if he brought in something other than a motion, or at least some more details with his motion, for those appropriations for the Crown corporations, more than just a global number: some explanation, some details, some reasons why, something about the programs that are being supported by those dollars. Certainly what's been brought in in the last couple of years has not been adequate to replace even the modest debate that we get on other expenditures of the government, and so it would seem to me that he could at least match that in terms of details and chance to debate and so on.

This document, Bill 32, summarizes the main expenditures, but still it misses quite a few, as I've said, and I intend to look at a few of those briefly. For instance, the lottery grants are nowhere to be found in here, and that is totally scandalous. I cannot believe that a Treasurer -- I guess he lost the debate in caucus or something, but that's not acceptable. The lottery grant money should be in here, and the expenditures out of those lottery funds should be in here. We had a big debate on that the other day, so I won't try to repeat all the arguments. I'll just say it's a major blot on this Bill, because this Bill does not take into account that problem.

The orders in council I've dealt with to some extent. I would just like to point out that one of the difficulties with orders in council -- and I'll take the example of the Grant MacEwan recently announced order in council for some \$100 million of expenditures. Now, some of those funds will be spent this year, and yet they won't be accounted for. We never will be asked in this House to formally okay them until a year from now when they come in in the form of Schedule "A" government warrants for the next year. So the money will be spent the year before -- some of it, anyway -- before we get around to asking for the approval of this Assembly for that government warrant.

On top of that, the accounting for what portion of that \$100 million is spent will not be shown until the following year -- I'm now talking about the spring of 1990 -- when the public accounts papers show what portion of the \$100 million is spent in the public accounts for that year. So it's going to be almost two years before we see the accounting for it. It's going to be a year before we get a chance to decide whether or not it was a good suggestion by looking at the kind of document we've got here a year from now. So I don't think the government needs to do that. They could incorporate it into this budget, or it could wait till fall and they could bring in a special Bill before this House, an adjustment to the budget.

The Treasurer regularly manipulates hundreds of millions of dollars of the heritage trust fund without any reference to this Assembly as to whether he should or shouldn't or what he's doing with it or why. I will give some examples: about \$1 billion out of the cash and marketable securities section into the farm credit stability program and the small business term assistance plan. Actually, that's gone up and down rapidly, from less than \$1 billion to \$1.6 billion at one stage, with no reference to this Assembly as to whether or why it should be moved or used in that way. The Auditor, I might remind the Treasurer, expressed

some concern that short-term notes were being used to cover what were, in effect, long-term loans.

Another example from the heritage trust fund is that the debenture adjustments in AGT and Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation have been greatly reduced. That's okay, but it would have been nice if we'd had some chance to debate that or had some understanding of the policy ideas and reasons behind it. But we just find out about it in the little quarterly statement if we're lucky. Of course, we don't get a quarterly statement for March 31 . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Chair is having some difficulty reconciling the comments of another statute, the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, to the appropriation Bill before us today. Perhaps the hon. member could come back to the expenditures that are proposed in Bill 32.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I'm basically trying to do is say that while this document is the main expenditure document of the government, in fact it's deficient in some areas because there are some areas of the handling of the taxpayers' dollars that are not in here. Now, that's okay when we know that some of them are going to be before this Assembly in the capital projects division of the heritage trust fund. But if they are not accounted for at all, this is really the only chance I have to point that out and say that for instance, the lottery fund should be part of this Bill.

This Bill, although it doesn't have much in the way of principles written into it, nonetheless, as the Treasurer said himself, exemplifies the government's budget revenue and expenditure plans. This is only the expenditure part but it leaves us no other form or alternative time at which we can discuss those things that are deficient in the Bill, that should be here or, at least, if not in this particular document, then in a similar one. So with your indulgence I would raise a couple of other issues of that sort and then go on back to the Bill in more detail, if I may.

The heritage trust fund has some aspects of it which should be covered in this Assembly and are not, and I will pass from that to the next one that bothers me considerably: the loan guarantees. The government has used order in council to make a large number of loan guarantees, and it's related to their fiscal plan, to take the Treasurer up on his words, if you like. The loan guarantees have been mainly to big forestry operations. Well, that's part of their fiscal plan to diversify the economy. In fact, the government said that free trade even was part of their fiscal plan, and it was going to diversify the economy. So we are here, Mr. Speaker, talking about the whole budget, and I would say about these loan guarantees that they have been very large, that they have committed a lot of taxpayers' dollars, and all we get is a press release.

Now, it's a favourite tactic of the Premier and the ministers on the front bench to tell us to quit basing our questions on what the press has to say. But surely the press release is no more or different than what the press has to say. So I would say to the minister that the details and the planning behind the loan guarantees in a general sense should be before this Assembly, and then also in the specific sense when a particular loan guarantee comes up. I don't think the Treasurer is accounting adequately for the commitments he makes on behalf of the taxpayers of this province.

It is also true that the Treasurer borrows a great deal of money from Albertans in a capital bond issue of last summer and also borrows a great deal of money in the United States and

other parts of the world. In fact, he has authorized himself last year to raise the borrowing potential up to \$6.5 billion, and yet we do not hear an awful lot in the House about any of those moves. We hear them again in a press release outside the House. The details and the plans are not brought forward to this Assembly and debated and discussed in the manner in which they could be.

Finally, I would say that the Treasurer has made some moves in taking over financial institutions like North West Trust and Heritage Trust and the credit unions, and again we get a press release to tell us about it. We do not get a debate in the Assembly; we do not get a plan laid before this Assembly, an accounting in this Assembly of it.

Mr. Speaker, I've been looking at some of the public accounts stuff, and while the Treasurer doesn't always ask for the permission of this House to do a lot of the things he does, on the other side of it, he doesn't always account in an adequate way for what is spent, either, after it's spent, and that represents a problem. The consolidated statement for 1986-87 indicated a \$13 billion expenditure by the government when, in fact, the Bill for that year was in the neighbourhood of \$10 billion. So we know that there are a number of dollars spent and committed that are not accounted for in the main documents before this Assembly, of which this is the major one. And we know that even then the Auditor General was unsatisfied that the consolidated statement fairly reflected all of the expenditures. So the \$13 billion was not even the total picture.

If I remember right, I believe he said that North West Trust and Softco were left out of it -- that's the real estate part of the North West Trust takeover. The other thing that he said was left out was the accounting for the money that postsecondary financial educational institutions spent, that that's not considered in the consolidated statement of some \$13 billion total on the assumption that the boards that control those funds are not controlled by the provincial government. Now, I know the provincial government does in this budget indicate the grants to those institutions, so they are in some ways accounted for in terms of planning expenditures, but they're not accounted for on the other end in terms of analyzing what has gone on.

So, Mr. Speaker, this Bill, Bill 32, does summarize the main plans of this government. Put it this way: it summarizes large portions of the plans of this government, the ones they are prepared to put before the Assembly, but it does not summarize a lot of the things that they are not prepared to put before the Assembly.

This Treasurer, to go back to a couple of his opening comments, said that we've had adequate time to debate this, but I would tell him that 25 days for 25 departments is not adequate, that the budget debate of three days was not adequate. And I would like to say that the document he produced, the budget speech, of which this is the condensation, has a lot of things in it which the Treasurer bragged a lot about. The plans and some assumptions that were made -- for example, the assumption that oil would stay at some \$18.50 a barrel for the year, on the average -- I might point out to him that so far, the first quarter of this year, the average has been \$16. That is American, and I'm assuming that he was saying \$18.50 American. So that's a projection that he didn't spend any time justifying, really; he just threw in the number. It's sort of like trying to prophesy the future but without doing your homework or at least not laying out that homework so that other people can analyze it and debate it and ask questions about it in a more detailed manner.

The same thing was true, of course, with their -- I'll just go

back to the loan guarantees for a moment. The assumption there is that if they can get a lot of these forestry projects off the ground in a hurry, they can get them started before free trade takes over . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Chair is very reluctant to interrupt, but the Chair is constrained by Standing Order 23. The hon. member's comments more and more tend to be related to Motion 4 on the Order Paper. Now, the Chair is reluctant to continue to interrupt, but could the hon. member address himself to the Bill before the House? The Bill before the House is an appropriation Bill.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, as far as I'm aware, there are no motions before this House in regards to these loan guarantees that would stop me from commenting on them. The Treasurer himself, when he stood up, said that this document is the document of his plan for the economy and people of this province for this year. It is the distillate, if you like, from that. It is narrowed down to the expenditures, it is true, but surely the whole of the plan is at stake here, not just the numbers in the Bill. I mean, if you wanted to do that, there is no principle in the Bill at all, if you wanted to look at it like an accountant, like this Treasurer tends to look at the problem of being a Treasurer of a province. He seems to think, in fact, that to just balance the budget is the only thing you need to consider. But I do think the Treasurer should be looking for all the advice he can get.

I wanted to just say -- and I see no reason why it isn't in order, because it is a part of the government plan -- that the loan guarantees to get the forestry industry off the ground, and there have been a number of major announcements lately, are committing a lot tax dollars to those corporations and to an industry that may in the very near future be overbuilt. We may have a boom and bust in the forestry industry just the way we've had in the oil industry. That is the kind of danger that this Treasurer and government needs to be aware of, and I don't see why it would be out of order to say that at this time.

The point I was trying to get to -- and I guess that often a lot of the assumptions made in the Treasurer's budget when he brought it in and that this Bill is now based on were very often . . . The premises on which they were making their assumptions were not very well explained, and there was not very much detail given so that we could get into a fairly detailed debate on them, quite apart from the fact that we didn't have very much time to get into those kinds of details and debate. I think, for example, the figures show what will happen with corporate taxes and personal taxes in terms of proportions. I mean, we dug that out and analyzed it and asked the Treasurer some questions about it. But the Treasurer didn't put anything in there telling or explaining why he thinks that's okay or why it's happening that way or anything like that.

Again, the tax expenditure problem is hardly dealt with at all in the budget, and yet the government spends a lot of money by tax expenditures which never show up in this document. So this document while it has part of what the government intends to do, doesn't tell us all of what the government intends to do. The Auditor General has told the Treasurer what he should do with tax expenditures: he should treat them like other expenditures. We had a billion dollars in tax expenditures in the 1984-85 fiscal year; we had a billion and a half in the year afterwards. And in the year presently before the Public Accounts Committee, for example, it looks like another billion dollars in that area. Now, I'm wondering: what are the tax expenditures that are not re-

corded in here that this government will be expending this year?

So, Mr. Speaker, Bill 32 covers some of the things that it needs to and does tell us the bare bones of the government's expenditure plans, but it leaves out a lot of things that it should have.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill, taken in its simple form, is just a bunch of cold numbers compiled by an accountant who has a balance sheet or bottom-line sort of mentality that says that cutting education's okay and cutting social services programs is okay as long as you balance the budget; that's really all that matters. This government doesn't mind at the same time handing out hundreds of millions and even billions of dollars in royalty tax credits and incentive grants. This budget, like all the other budgets in the last five or six years, has no demand-side economics in it. In fact, in a way the final insult this year for this government, considering that the economy of Alberta is somewhat depressed, is that it doesn't even have any supply-side economic stimulation in it.

So the Treasurer is content to see the economy of Alberta languish or make somewhat frantic attempts to spend money outside of the budget and hope that somehow that will work. I think he should take the caution about the forestry industry to heart. The supply-side economic stimulus which the government is usually pretty famous for, this year it amounted to a 3.7 percent cut in six of the economic departments plus northern development. When you add to that a 4 percent inflation rate, this government had no stimulation in this budget whatsoever to help the economy. Basically, what this budget was an attempt by the Treasurer to get to a balanced budget as quickly as possible and with no real consideration for the wants or needs or feelings of people.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. TAYLOR: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry for jumping up a little slower, but I had jumped up very contemporaneous with the other one.

I want to speak just a few minutes on the sleight of hand, or legerdemain, that has been used by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East in putting together the Bill here. For instance, Mr. Speaker, he says that we have the lowest taxation in Canada, number one. This is done with all the arrogance of a government that's been in for some time, that has pre-empted the oil and gas as to being theirs. I know all Albertans have been taught that God put the oil and gas in the ground but he didn't choose to reveal it until Social Credit was elected. Now this government comes along and puts it into the realm of government property. It belongs to the public. So to sit there and ignore the fact that all taxation from oil, all royalties fed to government is a form of taxation of the public is playing fast and loose with the truth.

There are many economies just across the 49th parallel where the royalty belongs to the individual landowner, and the government has to tax the landowner's share to get the tax. And it shows up as a tax. Here the government does a shortcut. That money never gets into the public's pocket and then has to get taxed about . . . The government reaches over and grabs it directly, an asset that's been held in contract or in a union or in common -- in common is the right word -- for the electorate and argues: "Oh, no. We've taken that, and we've put it in the heritage trust fund. We've done this and done that but it's not taxation." It's very smooth operating, Mr. Speaker. This is something you would expect when you get your pockets picked at the

local circus or the fair next summer, and the one that picks the money off you either by gunpoint or by pocketknife gives you a dollar back to get the bus fare home. Then you're supposed to be thankful for it. And this is what this government does: gives back a dollar for bus fare home for the taxpayers and calls it . . . This is why I think the budget is most unfair, when they don't take recognition of royalties as a form of taxation.

We can go on on this as far as the income is concerned, Mr. Speaker. They can then argue that they tax lower than anyone else, because what they're not telling everyone else is that they took a share of the crop and didn't note it down in the books. In fact, this government has been very smooth at it. They've not only done it to the taxpayer once, they've shafted the taxpayers twice. The first time was when oil prices took off, and they said: "Well, we can't really let that flow back to you. You citizens out there really don't know how to handle big money like we people do up here. After all, we've been elected. Now, what we'll do is we'll keep the money aside, and you won't get a chance to go off and spend it on the fleshpots of Egypt, or whatever it is, and throw it away right, left, and centre. We will set it aside and look after it for you." But what happened when a number of years later the tough times hit the 20 years of famine? And as the Member for Red Deer-North will well know, when the brothers showed up to talk to Joseph, what happened? Was there any grain in the granary here in this government? No, they'd given it away. So the taxpayer got shafted twice in this province. First, by being denied the right to go out and throw away the money, buy the Cadillac, drink too much, marry too often, do all the things that happen when too much money hits them. But the government said . . .

MR. HERON: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: A point of order has been raised by the hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. HERON: Under Standing Orders, section 23, certainly we've got to be a long way off target, and the long biblical quotation and that certainly has got to be testing the tolerance of all members in this Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair appreciates the point of order raised by the hon. Member for Stony Plain. The Chair would assume the granaries referred to were in the estimates in Schedule "B", but perhaps the hon. leader could come back to the Bill before us.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry I overrated the Member for Stony Plain's intelligence there. I had assumed he had read the Good Book, because it I thought was required reading over there. The analogy I was using was the question of the leader of taxation. The Treasurer of the day back in the pharaohs' times, when the Jews were starved out of Israel and went to Egypt was a man named Joseph -- very close to Mr. Johnston, Joseph; whatever way you want to look at it -- and he gave many of the same reasons that the . . .

MR. HERON: A point of order, Mr. Speaker, again. The dialogue that has continued since I raised the last point of order hasn't changed one bit. Surely there are more important things to be discussing in this Assembly than what the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon has persisted in doing.

MR. YOUNIE: On the point of order, I think it is common debating technique to use an analogy for a short period of time to make a point, to perhaps help some of the simpler minds follow it.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm sorry if my mind was too nimble for the Member for Stony Plain. Next time I'll bring pictures and cue cards to show him how to illustrate the point.

But now let's go on. The fact I'm getting at Mr. Speaker, is that sleight of hand, that legerdemain that was being used to not record the revenues from our assets in this Bill and then to proclaim that we're taxed at a very, very low level. But we go on; the legerdemain isn't only on the income side. Joseph hasn't only pulled a fast one here in selling what's in the granaries. But if we look over at the other side, on the expenditure side, what do we see? No note of what benefits are given the oil industry. The Treasurer is saying that, well, he's going to net the effect. Well, that's a very clever way of saying to the rest of the public or hiding from the taxpayers in general just how much money you did give to a segment. The farmers of this province would just love to be netted out at the billions of dollars that are involved here. But what we see instead as far as expenditures are going? A thundering silence about the billions of dollars that have gone into the oil business.

Let's move on a bit. Our pension responsibilities. The Auditor General has said that, taking money at today's present worth -- I suppose in the 9 or 10 percent value -- our liabilities are equivalent to \$6.3 billion. Six point three billion dollars: that actually means that when we go to spend for the pensions down the road, we'll probably have to spend about \$20 billion. I think the hon. Treasurer would probably agree with that. But if you net worth it at today's value, if you have to go out and buy bonds that will be sure to cover the civil servants as they retire -- and Joseph over there made sure he had all sorts of assistance, the biggest staff since the time of the pharaohs to look after the granaries or the royalties of the public -- that huge staff now is going to be retired and needs \$6.3 billion. No mention; no mention. If I ran a corporation and did a corporation report like that in the estimates, I would be in trouble.

Mr. Speaker, \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion in guarantees. Now, this government would have you believe the guarantees really weren't needed. The guarantees were given to people with credit ratings so good that there's no worry that it will come back. Well, my answer to that is that if the people's credit rating was so good that they didn't need the guarantees, what in the dickens were we doing making the guarantees? Obviously, the lending institutions wouldn't lend them the money without a guarantee. Obviously, there was some risk, and yet this government would have you believe, and doesn't note in the books, the fact that we could be called on for \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion in guarantees. Add that to the \$6.3 billion in pensions, and you have, Mr. Speaker, very close to \$8 billion that's not mentioned. Eight billion dollars in expenditures are not mentioned; take the amount that goes into the oil industry and you have \$10 billion. In other words, this department is hiding almost as much money again as they're willing to admit to spending; they're hiding it again in other areas out there and not noting it down.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I think any fitting budget should have within its cash expenditures the write-down of the different assets. The Alberta Opportunity Company, the Agricultural Development Corporation: I don't believe there's a sufficient write-down here. This department is going around saying that well, the assets are all right. The other arm of that department is

going out throwing farmers off the land, throwing people out of their homes under the idea that, no, the assets aren't worth what you have there any more, and selling those assets, sometimes at one-half to two-thirds less than what is owing. In other words, if that has to be sold that way and that's the type of loss they're taking in liquidating some of these assets, there should be some allowance within the accounting used here to allow for that.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's a question. I guess we have to vote for the Appropriation Act, but it is some of the most clever, fancy stickhandling that I've ever seen done by accounts officers. It's the type of accounting and the type of budget that if it were to be presented in some banana republic wouldn't get through its department of finance. Yet somehow or another we come up here and are asked to vote for something that takes the most extreme licence with all the recognized accounting principles, that even the Auditor General has to hold his nose when making a report on, and we're asked to pass it.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. GIBEAULT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to make a few comments on Bill 32, the Appropriation Act, because I didn't have a chance to participate in the Education department estimates debate when they came up. Unfortunately, that's an area of this Bill, Bill 32, that affects many of my constituents very directly.

The vote for Financial Assistance to Schools sounds like a lot of money -- and it is a lot of money, some \$1.2 billion -- but I want to bring to the attention of the Treasurer a couple of points. First, apart from the 2 percent increase, which is barely half the inflation rate now, and that comes after a major cutback last year -- even with that inadequate increase in the operating grant which has been referred to earlier, what I want to make some reference to here is the even more inadequate allocation for new school construction, because that nowhere near meets the need, Mr. Speaker. And in constituencies like Edmonton-Mill Woods, the new suburban growth areas of our cities, there are whole areas, whole neighbourhoods, whole communities that are without the basic elementary school and junior high school that urban areas are entitled to.

In Mill Woods this disparity is probably more marked than anywhere else, and while I'm grateful for the allocation this year that will be building the new Daly Grove school in Mill Woods, which many Mill Woods residents and myself have been fighting for for some years now, we still have many unmet needs. For example, in the neighbourhood of Bisset in the eastern part of Mill Woods, there's still no elementary school. There's still no junior high school east of 66th Street south of the Whitemud Freeway. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's an area of 50,000-plus people. That's an area that must have as many people as the city of Red Deer, and no junior high school. This is not a community of sparsely populated rural areas; this is part of metropolitan Edmonton. And this budget document that is before us, this Appropriation Bill, does not provide the resources that are necessary to meet those needs of my constituents. The fact that there is no junior high school east of 66th Street provides some real undue hardships for the young people in my community. Some of them have to take two and three transfers on a bus out of the community, an hour and a half each way, a total of three hours on a bus each day. Now, this is not fair to ask of children in an urban area in the capital city, for goodness

sake, of this province.

Now, if the Treasurer wants my support for Bill 32, his Appropriation Act, he's going to have to provide the resources to meet these long-standing and unmet educational needs of my constituents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WRIGHT: Yes. Mr. Speaker, first of all, a question about Bill 32, on the principle of the thing however. And that is that paragraphs 1 and 2 speak of expenditures set forth in schedules "A" and "B," and so far as I can see, there is no difference between the two. Of course, the items are all different, but there's no difference. It could all be just one long list, it seems to me, and I'm just wondering whether this is some leftover from the dim and distant past when there was some point to having two schedules, now lost, or whether there is a point to it, because it doesn't appear to be necessary any more.

AN HON. MEMBER: Look at the year-ends.

MR. WRIGHT: The year-ends? I did, and I'm looking again. It says that schedule one is:

From and out of the General Revenue Fund, there may be paid and applied a sum not exceeding, in the whole [and then the sum follows] . . . towards defraying the several charges and expenses of the Public Service from April 1, 1987 to March 31, 1988.

AN HON. MEMBER: That answers the question.

MR. WRIGHT: No, that's Schedule "A", and Schedule "B" says exactly the same thing: April 1, '88 to March 31, '89. [interjection] Oh. One year difference; I see. Okay. Well, in that case . . . All right; I'm obliged for that.

So what Schedule "A" is doing is accounting for the warrants then. Yeah. Okay. Well, thanks for that small lesson, Treasurer.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, I have more questions. Is that what you meant?

This represents a budget that still exceeds income by \$835 million yet is lessening public expenditure by some \$119 million since the year before last. And that, of course, is a real lessening of that much times -- what? -- 8 percent or so for inflation in the last two years. So there has been a substantial real decrease in the amount of public funds available, and we have still not balanced our budget. Now, I'm not claiming that there's some magic in balancing the budget in the short run. I believe there is in the long run, particularly when you can't print the money. You have to do it. But what I'm getting at is the large amount of expenditure unmatched by equivalent income, or to put it less longwindedly, the income that we should be getting that has been forgone from legitimate sources of taxation. And I question the principle that allows us to do as we are doing with the budget, Mr. Speaker.

I put it to the Treasurer that wealthy Canadians and large corporations, aided by skillful accountants and lawyers, because of the Income Tax Act, the federal one, of course, which is the one that provides the loopholes, contains a bewildering array of

special preferences and inequities -- and we are going along with those special preferences and inequities which enable Albertans who ought to be paying to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. I speak particularly of corporate Albertans, but not only of them, also of Albertans of means who have enough money to go through the loopholes. I put it to the Treasurer that a broadened tax base would greatly reduce the number of tax expenditures it is necessary to have to meet the objectives of the tax Act that we go along with.

We can't, of course, control what the Parliament of Canada does with its tax Act, obviously. But we can have a separate one, and it seems to me that it is necessary, if you cannot persuade those people in Ottawa to have a fair tax system, to at least have a fair tax system for ourselves, which on the collection side can only be achieved by a separate Act. I suppose it is a cumbersome thing to ask for, but one province does it, and we don't hear an outcry about that. I'm sure accountants are very pleased about it in that province. But it seems to me that simplicity, which we don't have anyway, is not the be-all and end-all; fairness is also a major consideration.

Speaking of tax expenditures, what does the Treasurer think of not having any concessions at all except those that are paid out, so that the public realizes what it is we are spending our money on? Because every dollar intentionally forgone is a dollar that is in effect paid out by the taxing authority. I suggest that we would have the amount of concessions that are made to the wealthy in our society so vividly illustrated by the cheques they would be receiving that we would have tax reform. We would have an irresistible urge for tax reform evident overnight. Mr. Speaker, if the Treasurer had to sign -- of course, not literally, but if his department had to issue -- all the cheques that amount to the tax expenditures. I suppose it's a wild idea. It will never get anywhere because it would expose so blatantly the breaks that the powerful are getting in our society that they would never consent to it. And I applaud the old-line parties. They're the ones, Mr. Speaker, that called the tune.

Then I believe that the provinces one by one and finally the federal government if that was the way around it worked, were shamed into abolishing estate duties and death duties -- well, that's the same thing -- because the provinces and indeed countries were competing for estates. But again, the wealthy and the powerful found it a nice thing to look forward to, that their estates could be passed on largely unencumbered. The trade-off was supposed to have been the capital gains tax, but right off that meant there was a huge gift to those with wealth, namely those capital gains that have been made before -- when was it January 1, 1972? Because they were caught neither by the capital gains tax nor any estate tax, and the province has long since abolished its own succession duties. Yet that is one of the largest sources of inequity in our society, the inheritance and passing on of wealth.

One of the fairest ways of raising revenue is to tax wealth in two ways. First inherited wealth, wealth that the creator no longer needs because he's gone to the other Creator, and that is left unimpaired except for such part of it as the capital gains tax can reach. But, of course, it's only half the capital gains. We know that there are big exemptions there, and we know that there are ways of circumventing that particular tax. The second form of wealth tax, of course, is an actual annual tax on wealth. It can be a low tax, half the interest rate, so that it doesn't stop the estate growing; it stops the holdings growing fast. But a small tax can raise a great deal of revenue.

These ideas I put forward unsolicited, Mr. Speaker, for the

benefit of the Treasurer. He may have some difficulty selling them in his group, but they certainly work in raising revenue, and the result of them would be to enable the present Bill that we are considering to cover -- cover, Mr. Speaker -- the public expenditures of this province, notwithstanding the severe drop in natural resources revenue which we have encountered.

So I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, as I put it to the government, that there is a myopia here. The myopia is that we look at the sources that can be resorted to to raise the money needed for the province to fund this Bill from far too restricted an area. We shrug our shoulders at what is dictated in Ottawa as being the roots, yet we ourselves willingly adopt that, it seems. The government willingly does. But it is an unfair adoption. A government with guts and fairness would say: "No more. We will not go along with that. We will do it ourselves in a fair manner." We don't have that here, and we ought to.

Thank you.

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

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly would hate to let this go by without a few comments about the budget and the kinds of attitudes and principles they reflect in this government, or perhaps attitudes and lack of principles, in terms of what's good for average Albertans.

What I've seen in two fast years and three budgets presented in this Assembly has been basically government that governs by decree, by order in council, by special warrant, by anything that avoids as much as possible debate in the Legislature and scrutiny by the public until after the fact. I think that in terms of the basic principles of parliamentary democracy it is not the way things should be done.

It is admirable to see the previous speaker give a number of serious and good recommendations to the Treasurer. I certainly would not hold my breath waiting for the Treasurer to turn them into government policy, because even if he could be persuaded by reason and by the needs of average Albertans, certainly it is something he would have no hope whatsoever of selling in cabinet in any case, the reason being that what we have in that cabinet and what we have in this province is government of the wealthy, by the wealthy, for the wealthy. We see that more and more every day as things that benefit average Albertans are cut so that things that benefit the wealthy can be increased.

We see, for instance -- and I mention a specific fact for the reprehensible sort of principle it embodies -- a special warrant for special waste management assistance. Now, there is only one principle involved in the special waste management assistance and the whole structure of the joint venture of the Special Waste Management Corporation and Bow Valley Resource Services through Chem-Security, and that is the principle that a Conservative government, when it sees a company owned by friends of a former Premier and relatives of a present cabinet minister in debt in the oil patch -- it's nice to help them out, so we'll sign a joint venture agreement that gives them the kind of percentage return appropriate to extremely high-risk ventures, with a guarantee of no risk whatsoever. If that is the principle of this government -- and I do believe it is -- then they are going to have a problem selling those principles to average Albertans in the next election. And I believe they are well aware of that problem they'll be facing.

One might wonder if this whole attitude doesn't reflect to some extent the influence of the Minister of the Environment

and his past studies of mandarin emperors and dynasties of Chinese history, because that is certainly the attitude of this government, that there should be no check over the power of the government.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

In looking through the special warrants, one department was notable by its absence, that being Education. So I might, for that minister's consideration, suggest how wonderful it would be to see a special warrant in the very near future, over and above this year's budget, for the provincial government's share of the \$3.2 million cost of building an elementary school in the Lake District in my riding. Certainly if helping Bow Valley Resource Services out with their financial problems and their need for extra cash flow justifies special warrants, then the needs of my constituents in the Lake District would at least equally justify it, and the minister might be able to win my support.

I would point out to her that in fact the school board for the city has committed themselves to making whatever changes are necessary to their fiscal plan for the year, to come up with their 45 percent share should the provincial government find a way to adjust their fiscal management plan for the year and come up with their 55 percent share. So I would put the challenge to the minister to twist a few arms in Executive Council, in cabinet and see what could be done on behalf of the Lake District residents. Certainly if she cannot twist arms hard enough this year in the way of special warrants, I'm sure she will find room in her budget for next year.

I think we see over and over again through the budget -- through the kinds of detail, or lack thereof, we get to know exactly what, in detail, money is being spent on -- a government that, for whatever reason, doesn't want to be held as accountable in front of the people of Alberta as it should rightfully be. Whether it is fear that if the taxpayers ever found out what they're up to, they would be turfed immediately or whether it's just arrogance that accountability is not necessary because they are so obviously wonderful in all their plans that we shouldn't even offend the universe by wanting to scrutinize them, it's hard to tell. But for whatever reason, that arrogance most certainly exists. Hopefully after the next election it will come to an end, with a government that's willing to be more responsible to the people of Alberta and more responsive to them and more accountable to them.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to establish why I and my caucus will be voting against this particular Bill. There are a number of reasons, and I would like to briefly outline those reasons.

First of all, I have a tremendous concern with the assessment of the debt of this province. We have seen a \$3.4 billion deficit the fiscal year before last. Last year we had a \$1.1 billion deficit. We have projected a \$1.85 billion deficit for the current year. All that is of course unfortunate but at least properly established by this government. What is missing is the \$6.6 billion unfunded pension liability which, no matter how it is assessed, is debt. It should be accounted for properly as an integral part of the budgeting process of this government. It should be dealt with openly, and the government should be held

accountable for that portion of its debt during this segment of the legislative session, this segment that deals with the financial fiscal responsibility of this government.

A second area of concern is a number of issues that relate to and indicate lack of accountability and the avoidance of accountability by this government. Clearly, the lottery funds should be reviewed by the Legislature. They are public funds; they are not being reviewed by the Legislature. They represent a significant amount of expenditure of public funds.

Secondly, the Public Accounts Committee must be structured between sessions so that once this money is spent, we can have some assurance that it will be reviewed in a public all-party committee forum. This offers the advantage, one, of revealing problems in previous year expenditures and, two, of generally enhancing the management process by holding management accountable, not only the ministers but senior management in the departments, to give them an appreciation of what is on the Legislature's collective mind.

Thirdly, we have concerns about the use and manner of use of loan guarantees. Clearly, this process is not subject to proper accountability. We have asked; we cannot determine what the government's policy is for the approval of loan guarantees, the process by which people apply, the process by which one individual is approved and another isn't. Secondly, we have seen very, very hazy policy -- if it can even be construed as that -- on the question of personal guarantees. We have been told that under certain circumstances personal guarantees are received; under other circumstances personal guarantees are not received. We have not been told how it is that one circumstance is distinguished from another, and we have certainly not been told why it would ever be that we would not as a government receive personal guarantees for what amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars of loan guarantees to the private sector.

These are simply three specific . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 61(3) now comes into effect at 5:15:

If any appropriation Bill has been moved for second reading on any day, Mr. Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings 15 minutes before the normal adjournment hour, and put the question on every appropriation Bill then standing on the Order Paper for second reading, which shall be decided without debate or amendment.

[Motion carried; Bill 32 read a second time]

Bill 11

Motion Picture Development Amendment Act, 1988

MR. SHABEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak for a few minutes on the importance of the amendments to the Motion Picture Development Act contained in Bill 11.

These amendments are important to the growth of the film industry in Alberta since the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation was first established in 1981 and became fully operational in 1982 and has been a significant factor in assisting Alberta filmmakers in this growth industry. It's important in that it provides an opportunity for skilled Alberta individuals to enter into this exciting area that is growing because of what is happening worldwide in the demand for film. Whether it's the great increase in the number of television channels and movie outlets and the purchase and rental of film through VCRs, it's a growth market, and Albertans have a tremendous amount of capability in this particular industry. So Bill 11 is directed to-

wards assisting Albertans in growing with that growing market. In addition to the support for Alberta filmmakers of preproduction expenses, assisting in preproduction expenses, it provides an opportunity for the film development corporation to make investments in Alberta indigenous films. It does set maximum limits of 25 percent on the portion of investment that the Motion Picture Development Corporation may make in that film. That's essentially the nuts and bolts of the amendment.

We've received over the past number of years representation from individuals involved in the filmmaking industry. My colleague the Member for Stony Plain had a resolution on the Order Paper last year that we weren't able to debate that essentially asked for these provisions. So I'm pleased today to recommend to all members of the Assembly that we all support Bill 11, the Motion Picture Development Amendment Act 1988.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to indicate, first of all, that the minister makes a very good case for supporting this Bill, and it's my intention to do so. But I think the minister should be aware that those comments he's just made should not be seen in isolation of the broader environment. No one is going to say no to expanding the fund from a \$3 million fund to a \$10 million fund, especially when you consider that Alberta artists really are creative and productive. That applies to film and video as well as to all the other disciplines of the arts. It's high time the government of Alberta, the Conservative government, recognized the validity of the arts not just in the aesthetic, educational, historical, future historical sectors but also in terms of their economic participation and their incredibly high multiplier rate.

So the minister is certainly to be commended for this Bill, but I would like to comment on the broader context in which I think this Bill should be seen. The fact of the matter is that the film and video producers in Alberta would like themselves to have a greater say over control of funding, of money that's going to be designated by the Alberta government to their endeavours. Now, one of the ways they have suggested, Mr. Speaker, is the establishment of a film and video foundation so that they can be judged by their peers. Remember; film and video artists themselves and all of those people who are related to production of those efforts -- that is, everybody from gaffers to writers to, you know, stage managers -- they also all believe that they should have the right to elect their peers to foundations so that they know they're being assessed not by political appointees, and not by political appointees within the department but by their own peers, people who are really conversant with the terms of those endeavours. That ultimately is the problem in Bill 11, that we're leaving it very often up to the government itself to determine who gets money and how much.

Now, one of the good parts of that is that it forces the government to come to the Alberta Legislature for approval to expand the fund. That's good. I wish the Alberta government would do that more often, Mr. Speaker; we'd have a lot fewer fights around here if they'd bring the lottery funds in for public consideration. Remember; lottery funds are what most artists depend on for money, because the actual grants to artists in Alberta from the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism are very minimal, and hitherto the grants from the -- well, you don't like "alphabet soup," so I'll refer to it by its proper name -- Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation have not really been enormous. They're getting to a very good size; one cannot

argue that. But the point is that people would like to have a little greater control over it themselves, as opposed to more political control, which inevitably happens through any department, and that's true no matter who is government, Mr. Speaker. It just so happens that we happen to have a Conservative government here.

The other thing I think is important is that the fact of the matter is that this division, this corporation, and this Bill come under the auspices of the Department of Economic Development and Trade. One may think, "Well, jeez, isn't that appropriate? After all, we're attempting to make this into one of our more emerging economic sectors." At the face of it that seems very reasonable. The problem is that those who are determining the grants are going to be determining, and hitherto have determined, on the basis of purely economic criteria; that is. pure economic feasibility.

Now, we know that there are trends and waves in the arts whereby things that are experimental, for instance, for a couple of years are not commercially viable and then suddenly become the hot item on the market and people can't get out fast enough to consume that. Now, if you're judging an application on the basis of a current assumption about what is economically viable, what will appeal to a fairly large audience, you may be inadvertently impeding access by those whose applications indicate a more adventurous production. That's the problem, and I think the minister is aware -- this government, I know, has been lobbied, because I've received copies of those lobby letters -- that the Alberta artists, particularly film and video artists, would much prefer that this Bill and the entire division, AMPDC, come under the auspices initially of the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism so that their applications can be assessed on the broader basis I've indicated.

But ultimately, they would like to see some sort of independent arts board or arts council determining the allocation of funding for all of those artistic endeavours, on the basis of elected people so that their peers are making the judgment. After all, the people who are actively involved in production of the arts in Alberta really are the people who could best assess the merits, both the short-term and long-term merits, of any particular en-

deavor that may be embraced by application. [interjections]

All that notwithstanding, I think the minister himself is to be congratulated for having the guts to go to his own cabinet and speak up on behalf of artists in Alberta who hitherto, in most recent years . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please in the House.

MS BARRETT: . . . have really been getting the short shrift in terms of the budget, Mr. Speaker. I can refer to cuts up to 73 percent last year within that department, cuts in grants, not administration, grants to Alberta artists.

So I congratulate the minister on having the guts. I guess it's a matter of political clout. The minister is a very senior cabinet minister; he's got long-term service. I wish now that he would go back to cabinet and express all of the other perspectives I've brought to him today with the same amount of clout, because I know that Mr. Shaben carries weight.

In the end, Mr. Speaker, I can't help but say that the Bill is good, the bottom-line dollars are good, and we're happy to support it.

[Motion carried; Bill 11 read a second time]

Bill 12

Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Amendment Act, 1988

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I believe Deputy Government House Leader, Member for Ponoka-Rimbey.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, in view of the time I don't think we should start the next Bill. Tomorrow evening the House will sit in committee and third reading of Bills.

[At 5:26 p.m. the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]

