

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Tuesday, June 7, 1988 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 88/06/07

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, we give thanks as legislators for the rich diversity of our history.

We welcome the many challenges of the present.

We dedicate ourselves to both the present and the future as we join in the service of both Alberta and Canada.

Amen.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

Bill 51**Personal Property Security Act**

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a Bill, being the Personal Property Security Act.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the Bill is to combine all security interests in personal property into one statute, provide a uniform structural base, a single registration system, and generally meet the requirements of modern commercial transactions.

[Leave granted; Bill 51 read a first time]

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 51, Personal Property Security Act, be placed under Government Bills and Orders for second reading.

[Motion carried]

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly, a very large contingent from the constituency of Edmonton-Belmont. I've got 58 students from Father Leo Green grade 6 classes visiting us today. They're accompanied by their teachers Léonie Poole and Peter Zapisocky and bus driver Monica Iwanyshyn. I hope that's the correct pronunciation of the driver's name. They're seated in the public gallery. I'd ask that they rise and receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and the other members of the House this afternoon, 33 students in the grade 6 class at John Paul I school in Edmonton-Mill Woods. They're accompanied today by their teacher Mrs. Ollie Waschuk and a parent Mrs. Rodriguez. They're in the members' gallery this afternoon, and I'd ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, may we welcome 21 children from grade 6 in Strathearn school in the constituency of Edmonton-Strathcona. They're seated in the members' gallery. They're accompanied by their teacher Mr. Unrau and parents Helen Unrau and Julie Sabo. If they will stand, we can welcome them.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, a group of school students from my constituency. There are 25 grade 5 students from the Beau Meadow school in Beaumont. They're accompanied by their teacher Eve Zoltai. They are seated in the public gallery. I wish them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, representatives of the Edmonton Opera Association. The organization in this fall's season will be celebrating its 25th anniversary. It's a remarkable story for the Edmonton Opera Association to have not only record-breaking attendance in the last five years, including 1987-88 specifically, but to turn around the course of their success to reach a positive and surplus position. In the members' gallery is president, Tim Miner, and he's accompanied by the general manager, Rob Mullam. I would ask that they stand and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Wainwright.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my colleague the member from the sparkling jewel constituency of Highwood it is my pleasure to present to you and to the Legislative Assembly, three energetic people who are here today with the president of Western Decalta Petroleum, Mr. Loren Gordon, to visit with our minister of culture to discuss the Turner Valley interpretive centre, the place where it all began. In the members' gallery are Vicky Adamson, the mayor of Turner Valley; Danay Lott, a former councillor; and Larry Clausen, the man who is heading up the project. May I ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome from this House.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Free Trade

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, regarding the Mulroney trade deal. Earlier on in this session the Premier was questioned about certain key clauses within the federal enabling legislation, Bill C-130. This is the Bill that grants the federal government authority to make binding regulations to guarantee provincial compliance. We say clearly that this would compromise Alberta's control over our resources. At the time the Premier said he was studying the matter. Now, my question to the Premier: will the Premier advise this Assembly whether he has now read this legislation, and does he now recognize the dilemma?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as I advised the House, we would have the law officers of the Crown do a thorough assessment of the legislation. That assessment has been provided to the Attorney General, and while he may be making a statement on the matter shortly, he may also want to add to my reply at this time.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the federal legislation has been reviewed carefully. It is the view of our government that the constitutional aspects of the legislation regarding the natural resources of Alberta are clearly protected within the current federal Constitution and are not impacted by the free trade legislation that the federal government has before it. Nevertheless, the government is considering methods by which legislative action may be considered in this Assembly to ensure that the matter is clearly and well understood by the people of Alberta.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know where you're getting your lawyers from, but section 9(5) says:

A regulation made under subsection (1) in respect of a province is binding on Her Majesty in right of that province.

It's very clear. My question to the Attorney General or the Premier then. What does this mean if he doesn't think that it gives the federal government the rights to intervene in provincial jurisdiction? What else possibly can it mean?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the regulation-making power is specifically centred upon the wines and spirits chapter of the federal legislation. Our intention, of course, as a government is to comply with the free trade agreement. Whatever legislative requirement will be necessary -- or it could be done by regulation; that's still being considered -- will be entered into by this government as part of our full and complete support of the free trade agreement entered into between Canada and the United States. It's quite clear, with respect to the constitutional responsibility granted to the province of Alberta and all other provinces with respect to natural resources ownership, management, and control, that no piece of federal legislation can amend the federal Constitution. That section is in the Constitution as a result of the insistence of Alberta with the full support of most of the other provinces in Canada when the 1982 Constitution Act was passed and brought to Canada.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, this could end up in the courts. It's the treaty-making powers of the federal government too. They've gone even further in subsection 6, as the minister is well aware, saying that anything in the future they can look at and move in on provincial jurisdiction. Now, again my question is: how can this minister or the Premier say that this doesn't affect provincial rights when six other provincial Premiers are concerned and are looking at this before they even blindly accept the Mulroney trade deal? When is this minister going to start doing his job?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, of course, that in this negotiation of this trade deal between Canada and the United States there's been an unparalleled level of discussion between the federal government and the provinces. There were 10 first ministers' conferences. While it is true that two of the 10 Premiers who were in attendance are no longer there, including the one who really didn't support the free trade deal, from Manitoba, nonetheless the Premiers are well aware of the implications of the free trade deal between Canada and the United States.

Insofar as the energy chapter of that deal is concerned -- and that was the one referred to by the hon. Leader of the Opposition -- it is perfectly clear that the Constitution of Canada protects the rights of the provinces to the ownership, management, and control of the natural resources. I don't know where the hon. Leader of the Opposition is getting his legal advice, but if he'd

listened to what I'd said earlier, whatever legislation may be required for implementation of the free trade deal by this Assembly to make sure that this Assembly supports the free trade deal, whether it has to be done by legislation or can be done by regulation, will be presented in the appropriate manner and be passed by the province of Alberta, because we do support and agree with the free trade agreement itself.

The free trade legislation is another matter which the hon. Leader of the Opposition has referred to, and while six other Premiers have expressed concerns, so has ours. We will be making sure that the appropriate legislative requirements are passed in this Assembly if it is necessary to do so here. That is still uncertain; we are reviewing that.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, none are so blind as those that will not see. The government, though, does have some interesting bedfellows: the conservative running for the Liberal leadership now supports it, and President Ronald Reagan, who described the trade deal as a way of enhancing the energy security of America; that's what he said.

My question is to either of the gentlemen. Do they now still deny that what we have is a continental energy agreement at the expense of Alberta's right to control its own resources? That's how everybody else in North America sees it, whether this government . . .

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, there are none so deaf as those who will not hear, and the hon. Leader of the Opposition must be as deaf as a post.

The fact of the matter is that we have told this Assembly time after time, and it is true -- it is the legal opinion of everyone I've talked to except the hon. Leader of the Opposition and perhaps his adviser, who hasn't spoken to me directly -- that the constitutional responsibility remains exactly the same as it did beforehand. As a matter of fact, I'd be happy to share with the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, who sits there laughing and smirking, a speech that I gave last Wednesday in Washington . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. minister.

MR. FOX: We're all laughing. Why don't you mention all of our names?

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair isn't laughing. The Chair can't hear what the answer is. Would the minister continue, directing the remarks through the Chair, please?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to share with the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the members of the ND Party, if they would read it, a speech I gave last week in Washington, D.C., to the National Press Club, in which I outlined the fact that the government of Alberta fully supports the energy chapter because we believe that it provides security for Alberta and for the producers of this province to an energy market greater than that in Canada. We reject on this side of the House and in this government the notion that we should tie ourselves forever to the possibility of another national energy program, and we see this agreement as being . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. The Chair is not recognizing anyone else in the House until we get finished with this answer. [interjection] Thank you. It's about to be com-

pleted, I'm certain.

MR. HORSMAN: Now, Mr. Speaker, we reject on this side of the House being tied to the type of policy that the Leader of the Opposition and the current leader of the Liberal Party in this Assembly would have us be subjected to: the national energy program. We say this agreement protects us from that happening again, and we support it wholeheartedly for that reason.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, there is only one reason why the federal government is usurping provincial powers under this free trade agreement, and that is to meet the condition placed upon it by the United States Senate that there be no chance of provincial disagreement. To the minister. Is it, therefore, not the case that de facto the United States is becoming a third party to our federal/provincial constitutional negotiations in this country?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the short answer to that is no. We are well aware that that particular member of the Liberal Party does not support the free trade agreement. He'll have to talk to his new leader at the end of the . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Hypothetical.

MR. HORSMAN: Hypothetical.

. . . after Thanksgiving weekend in order to reverse his position.

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

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

Court of Appeal Decision in Keegstra Case

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, recent events in Alberta and a provincial Court of Appeal decision yesterday I think demonstrate that two things in Alberta currently obtain. One is that intolerance and lack of understanding are still a problem here in Alberta, and the second is that legislation, I guess, isn't working. I don't think I have to convince any member in the Assembly that this matter affects all Albertans. I'd like to ask my first question of the Attorney General. I wonder if he'll advise if his government is taking the effects of that appeal court decision as an indication of a problem now in Alberta and if he's got any plans which would help address that.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, regrettable as it may be, the fact is that there are people who are intolerant, who spread vicious lies, and who continue to preach intolerable things in this province. But I reject the notion that Albertans are intolerant people by and large, and I'm sure that view is shared by the hon. member as well as all members of this Assembly.

The fact of the matter is, of course, that the Attorney General's department commenced a prosecution under a federal piece of legislation, the Criminal Code of Canada. When the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands says that legislation is not working, she must be referring to the Criminal Code of Canada and a certain section of that which was struck down by the Court of Appeal in the judgment announced yesterday. That being the case, of course, it is not within the legislative compe-

tence of this Assembly to correct that defect. It will be necessary, however, for us to carefully consider whether or not an appeal is warranted and could be successful. Failing that, of course, it is always possible to have the federal government refer the matter by way of reference to the Supreme Court of Canada, which our government cannot do. The provincial government cannot take that step. It is possible for the federal government to do so in order to test the validity of its own legislation by way of reference. Failing that, of course, it is possible for the federal government to attempt a different legislative method of dealing with this serious problem.

All of those alternatives are going to have to be carefully reviewed and will be reviewed by myself, by members of our government, and with the federal government, because we do not want to see the type of action as undertaken by the particular individual repeated or encouraged in any way.

MS BARRETT: Hear, hear. Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question then. I thank the minister. I had contemplated all of those alternatives as well.

My question, I guess, would be to the Premier then. In contrast to that which has already been discussed, I wonder if the Premier has thought about or is planning, say, a revival of the former program Alberta is for All of Us, a public education campaign initiated or kick-started by the government in the wake of these events.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has made an interesting suggestion which I'd certainly be prepared to look at. I would say to the hon. member and all members of the House that probably the most effective weapon in tackling this type of reprehensible situation is for all of us in the Legislature to be diligent and for Albertans to be diligent. I think that would take us the longest way along the road to making sure that we can if at all possible stamp out this type of intolerance within our province.

MS BARRETT: Difficult to disagree with the Premier, Mr. Speaker.

Supplementary question then. Following the recommendations of the 1984 Ghitter report, is the Premier in a position to indicate if his government is ever going to adopt one of the centrepiece recommendations in that report, and that is the establishment of the intercultural education development fund?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, in a way, my previous answer deals with this question as well, because frankly funds and laws really are not the things that are going to do the job here. The real way in which we can tackle this job is by all of us being diligent and stamping out this type of intolerance wherever we encounter it in our province.

MS BARRETT: Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the Premier, except that it takes more than words; it takes action. So let him consider this possibility on behalf of his government: will he agree to establishing an all-party standing committee of this Legislature which can address the values and the goals of Albertans, which include removal of intolerance in both the short term and the long term? Will he agree to striking an all-party legislative committee?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, in this Legislature itself, of course, we have an all-party group of representatives of the people of

Alberta. It might well be that by exercising the diligence within this House, we'll be far more effective. Having said that, I take the representation from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands and will review it once again.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Education. Does this recent court decision have any bearing upon the previous decision to remove the teaching certificate held by Mr. Keegstra?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: No, it does not, Mr. Speaker. I'm certainly not prepared to reconsider the decision to cancel the certification for Mr. Keegstra. You'll recall that three events occurred with respect to leading the former Minister of Education to reach his decision. First of all, the board which was the hiring board fired this person. Secondly, the Alberta Teachers' Association Discipline Committee recommended to the minister of the day that the licence be suspended. Finally, the licence was canceled not as a result of the charges that are before the court but as a separate process. I therefore see no reason to reconsider that decision.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Supplementary, Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you. To the Attorney General, who is in charge of the administration of justice. I'm wondering whether the Attorney General wouldn't agree that it's important to undertake an appeal of the Keegstra decision if only to ensure that the highest court of this land, the Supreme Court of Canada, gets an opportunity to adjudicate on the boundaries of freedom of speech under the Charter of Rights in the most important case to arise yet in this country?

MR. HORSMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I indicated in the answer to the Member for Edmonton-Highlands that that was one of the options which is under consideration. Certainly, as the hon. member will know, as he is a lawyer, the circumstances of having a Court of Appeal decision striking out a section of the Criminal Code insofar as it applies only to Alberta is certainly not a tolerable situation. So one way or another it is my expectation -- but I can't be too clear on how it will get there -- that the matter is going to have to be determined by one of the three options that I outlined in my answer to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands. I think that if there are other options that can be considered -- given the legislative jurisdiction for this matter resting with the federal government very clearly, I can't think of any alternatives at the moment. But my law officers are reviewing the matter with a great deal of care.

The judgment in itself, while there was a four-page summary, was 50 pages in length and will have to be reviewed very carefully in order to ascertain what appropriate steps should be taken whether by way of appeal reference or change of legislation at the federal government level. But in any event, the hon. member makes a very clear and valid point, and I accept his premise.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

Hazardous Waste Management

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of the Environment. Since last Thursday Ed-

montonians have had a chance to dispose of their household toxic wastes at the annual roundup of such wastes held by the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation. But before the roundup and of course again after the roundup, was the minister aware that employees of his department did not know where Edmontonians could take their toxic wastes during the year and instead told the callers to phone the city's garbage department?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, that's just silly. In September of 1987 the Alberta government, through Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation and Chem-Security, opened the Swan Hills facility. On April 1, 1988, we brought into effect some of the most stringent regulations that exist anywhere with respect to the handling of special or hazardous wastes. We're implementing a program in our province whereby the large generators of hazardous and toxic wastes will be able to use one of five alternatives in having those toxic or hazardous wastes disposed of. One of those alternatives is the Swan Hills special waste management system.

In the month of May of 1988 we conducted with the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association and the 665 pharmacies in this province the Great Drug Roundup, that was announced in April. Mr. Speaker, what we are implementing now and into the future is an opportunity for individual households in this province to basically, first of all, understand what a hazardous or toxic waste is and, secondly, to sort those items and have them delivered to the local and municipal landfills throughout the province of Alberta, pending a program that we would hope to have implemented over the next several years that will allow all households in the province of Alberta to ultimately have those goods delivered to either Swan Hills or to utilize one of the other four alternatives we have with respect to this matter.

Employees of Alberta Environment have been telling individual households in this province that the place to deliver hazardous and toxic goods today is to their local landfill system. The local landfill operators are completely aware of what they have to do with it.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, that's not the point at all. The point was that his department was telling them to call the city. When you call the city -- and I would ask the Minister of the Environment to try that -- the answer will come back to you that you can deliver it to a landfill site, but landfill sites we're trying to clean up. So doesn't this demonstrate some sort of a need for a year-round pickup thing at the householder's door?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what I've been talking about for the last year, that we are going to set in place in the province of Alberta a mechanism whereby every household in the province of Alberta will be able to participate in this system. Before you can do that, first of all you have to build a special waste management plant, which we have done. We're the only place that I'm aware of that has one, despite the opposition of some members of this Assembly to even having a special waste management plant in the province of Alberta. That plant has been operational since September 11, 1987.

Then we move to the next step, to basically put in place the regulations which would govern the collection and the disposal in that system in our province, which has come into effect on April 1, 1988. Then we move to the next phase by way of an educational program with the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association and then recently the toxic roundup here in the city of Ed-

monton and in the last two weeks also circulated . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. It's very much similar to the first answer.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, you interrupt him when he gets to the chapter just when I want to listen to him. He goes back in ancient history.

MR. SPEAKER: Question, please.

MR. TAYLOR: Let's go on then. I only need your answer from where you sat down last time. Wouldn't it be a better idea to have a central point year-round where they could drop off toxic waste?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, that's exactly the point that I'm leading up to. That's where we are going to be hopefully within a period of two years from now. What we want to see implemented -- we go, first of all, with building the foundation before we eventually put the attic on the house. We're building the foundation, and we're going up one floor at a time, and that's exactly where we're going to be.

If the hon. member would have read a very colourful little magazine that was circulated to every household in the province of Alberta in the last two weeks called *Blue Sky Alberta*, a pamphlet that went out to 1.5 million households in this province, there would have been an article or two in there which would identify exactly where we're going. That's what this government is all about, that's what our commitment to protecting and enhancing the environment is all about, and that's the direction we're going in, hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the public doesn't want to wait two years to get rid of toxic waste, unless it's the Conservative Party. What I'm interested in trying to get across to the minister is that the public is educated ahead of the minister. They want to now have a place to put away their toxic waste, not wait for two years.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, just to repeat once again, within two years from now I would hope that we would have every household in the province of Alberta participate in this particular program. What we have today is a very sophisticated system of regional waste management infrastructures throughout the province of Alberta, and I've talked about this on many, many occasions in our province. There's not one individual in our province today who has a toxic or hazardous waste who has a difficulty in finding a home for that hazardous or toxic waste or cannot have such a home found. If that individual, number one, just simply takes it, puts it in a little plastic bag, then we'll make the arrangement to have it disposed of very safely in consort with all of the municipal officials in the province of Alberta who are being trained as to how to handle these materials. The system is working with a greater degree of rapidity than in any other jurisdiction in Canada. I would ask the hon. member to find one Liberal government in Canada that's even made a decision to have a special waste management facility in this country established. He'll find there is none.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Main question, Member for Little Bow. Well, Edmonton-Glengarry. We just might get on to Little Bow.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The minister mentioned the Swan Hills plant, and I'm wondering if it is yet ready to accept, shred, and treat used pesticide containers and, if not, when it will be.

MR. KOWALSKI: Gee, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Swan Hills plant will never have to do that, because what we would like to do with the 700,000 containers that we currently have stored in the province of Alberta is use them as a resource to establish another very important environmentally sound industry, and that's the recycling industry. It seems to me that it would be absolutely ludicrous to simply take containers that are a resource and have them melted down and burned, and I've talked about this.

Again, I think there's an opportunity for entrepreneurs in this province who come to me and basically say, "Hey, can we have these 700,000 containers?" I will have them delivered to those particular entrepreneurs, and they can recycle. It seems to me that what the people of this province want to see is less wastage and less wastage being advocated by the New Democratic Party and a little more innovation of the type that the Progressive Conservative Party is talking about.

Hail and Crop Insurance

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture or the Associate Minister of Agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture indicated last week that there would be a review by the ongoing committee on June 6 in Regina with regards to hail and crop insurance. Could either minister indicate the results of that meeting, and will some announcements be made in terms of policy changes?

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, the committee did discuss the crop insurance as part of the agenda on Monday of this week. They did not make any more changes in the crop insurance program immediately because the seeding date for most crops is June 20, and there is still a chance of most areas of both provinces being seeded prior to that date. In fact our information is that 90-some percent of the crops are in at this point in time. I was just talking to the member to my right here, and he indicates that a number of seed drills were going today after a shower last night and the night before.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. In the review of the policy was there any consideration with regards to having an agreement between a crop insurance officer and the farmer that potentially lands could not be seeded and that as of June 20 if they're not seeded, there would be some possibility of qualification for crop insurance benefits?

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I certainly recognize the problem that the hon. member is discussing. I had a couple of calls from farmers in southern Alberta on Friday, in fact about the summer fallow and the problem they'd have with wind erosion if they disturb the summer fallow at this time. One of the farmers said, "I wish I could show you the problem." So Saturday afternoon I went down to Vauxhall and looked at some of the crop conditions in that area. I can assure the hon. member that we will be looking at ways of ensuring that we do not create wind erosion.

One aspect of the discussions at that meeting was to maybe allow for later seeded forage crops, which would in the long run provide a lot more protective cover and protect against erosion

far better than leaving summer fallow at this point in time.

Mr. Speaker, I might say that I was really impressed with the Russian thistle down there. I think we ought to do a beginning farmer program on crossing that with some other useful grains.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, we appreciate that the minister comes to southern Alberta.

Could the minister indicate whether there will be a ministerial statement on this prior to June 20 so that it's clear to farmers what the options are for them prior to June 20 if the situation exists where they cannot seed before June 20?

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I think that I would certainly give serious consideration to making clear what position we will take prior to June 20. I know that the hail and crop insurance board here in Alberta is going to be discussing that problem and also the problem of spring seeded crops, because I think that if the conditions continue, we may have to take a look at allowing spring seeded crops to be used for forage also.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Vermilion-Viking.

DR. WEST: Yes. To the associate minister. Will the forage crop component of the insurance program have flexibility for those producers who have hay land that's stunted pretty good and want to turn their cattle in on it at this time? Will it have the flexibility to allow them to do that and still be eligible to collect insurance on that loss of hay production?

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, the forage insurance program is certainly going to be tested this year, and I would think that it's only common sense to allow the farmers to ask for an assessment and to keep a test strip, as they do under the fall seeded crops in order to have insurance coverage.

I might say that when I was in southern Alberta, I noticed a number of new fences. I've also in my own area, in driving down to Rocky Mountain House, noticed a number of new fences. So there's certainly every effort being made by the agricultural community to ensure that they are utilizing the livestock forage and pasture that is available.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary to the associate minister. Would the minister outline to the House the exact procedure the farmer must go through not to jeopardize his crop insurance if he intends to convert the crop to forage and turn cattle loose? Does he get written permission, phone permission, and who from?

MRS. CRIPPS: Well, Mr. Speaker, farmers should contact their local crop insurance office if they want to utilize their crop for forage. My understanding is that within about 48 hours they can have someone out, because they're not really busy at this time of the year, and an assessment will be done. If it's in a very, very dry area where it would be written off, that can happen, but in most cases they would probably be asked to keep a strip so that they can do an assessment in the fall.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of forage is heading right now, and it makes common sense to turn the cattle in on it, eat it off, and then if we do get a rain, it'll grow up. I mean, that's just good management practice that farmers do on a regular basis.

I also talked to a couple of auction marts.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. The Chair is very concerned at how slowly question period is moving today.

Bow Valley, main question, followed by Vegreville.

Assistance for Storm Victims

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the Environment, and it has to do with the severe storm on June 5. Is the government now prepared to announce an assistance program to help those people who suffered damages over the past weekend?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I've just received some information which I think, with the indulgence of the House, perhaps in view of those people who might listen to question period, we might want to make available. Environment Canada has just issued an Alberta weather warning update. Some very, very severe thunderstorms are going to be taking place in our province in the next number of hours. It affects a large part of central Alberta from really the city of Calgary, with severe storm warnings that will be in effect until at least 8 o'clock this evening with a pointing out . . . [interjections] Mr. Speaker, this is not a flippant matter. There is a warning in here that severe thunderstorms do produce tragic tornadoes, and I think that this is a message I would sincerely hope all the media in the province are now making available to all the citizens of the province of Alberta. This is not a flippant matter, hon. member of the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, to respond to the question, last evening the government announced that registration centres would be open this afternoon at 3 o'clock in five locations to deal with claims that would be coming in from people who were affected by the storms of last Sunday. Those offices will be opened at Ryley, Camrose, Lamont, Ponoka, and Vilna this afternoon at 3 o'clock. But on the basis of what I've just received from Environment Canada, I would certainly hope that everybody would stay home and take due caution.

MR. MUSGROVE: Does the government have any idea what sort of assistance will be necessary to assist these people?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the program that we will be implementing with respect to the events of the past weekend will be the program that we announced that would cover the tornado-related events of 1987. In essence, we would come forward with the very unique program that we invented one year ago to deal with catastrophic loss. Catastrophic loss would deal with assistance for individuals who lost homes, and by definition that is that any home that's unlivable. We would assist in a very compassionate way. In terms of severe damage to a farming operation, it deals with damage of the infrastructure on the farm that really affects the production capability of the farm. That program and the information will be available at these offices, so that will allow people to come and register this week with respect to their claims, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MUSGROVE: Further supplementary. Were there any public-owned properties that were affected by this storm?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, for the most part, the storm that ripped through Alberta in the wee hours of June 5 essentially moved from the Red Deer area north to Willingdon-Vilna. It seems that the greatest amount of damage essentially was in

the Bittern Lake-New Norway area. For the most part, the damage affected homes, farmsteads, shelter belts, granaries, and there was very limited damage to public buildings other than that which might be a few windows knocked out and some shingles done away with.

MR. MUSGROVE: Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. According to the 1987 program is there a maximum amount that any person can claim under that program?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the details with respect to the 1987 program had a number of items attached including that those who suffered catastrophic loss could receive a re-establishment allowance, a maximum of \$15,000, and could receive cleanup assistance to a maximum of \$40,000. Dollars were made available for shortfalls for what was insured and what the actual loss was. There was no maximum, Mr. Speaker. It was administered on an ad hoc basis to look at each circumstance and its own peculiarities, and some 1,500 files and applications were dealt with and, in my view, dealt with very, very admirably by the people involved.

Moisture Conditions

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Minister of the Environment. In light of the fact that we've been having these storms and we seem to be getting sufficient rainfall in the north and we've apparently just received some in the south, can the minister indicate if the situation has changed rather drastically in the last week as far as the drought situation goes in the province?

MR. KOWALSKI: Once again, Mr. Speaker, the conditions in our province are different. If you basically took the Athabasca River as a division line in the province of Alberta, everything to the north of the Athabasca River in the province of Alberta, save for the Grande Prairie area, has received a considerable amount of moisture in the last two weeks. That area of Alberta south of the Athabasca River for the most part has received less than what would normally have been received from the time of five or six weeks, going from May 1. There's absolutely no doubt at all that most parts of Alberta, other than, I guess, the east-central part of the province of Alberta, which would be the Coronation-Hanna area down to Brooks, have received some moisture but still not at all what we would normally receive in this part of Alberta. That water has essentially soaked right into the ground. So it would be really, really helpful for agricultural production for crops and lawns and the like. There has not been enough yet to do anything to replenish the depleting amount of water in the surface dugouts and lakes and the like, and of course there would be little of that that would ever seep into the groundwater situation.

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville, main question or a supplementary?

Assistance for Storm Victims (continued)

MR. FOX: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, if I might, to the Minister of the Environment. A couple of my constituents, Mr. Leonard Hudema and Andy Homeniuk, have just recently gone through the process of rebuilding facilities with assistance from Public Safety Services for a serious storm last year. They lost

those facilities again this year in this most recent storm. Will the fact that they've received assistance previously prejudice in any way their ability to access help from the program this year?

MR. KOWALSKI: No, Mr. Speaker. They would be eligible for the events of 1988.

MR. SPEAKER: Your main question, Vegreville.

Farm Debt

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Alberta Court of Appeal awarded a unanimous 10-round decision to Mr. Peter Holowach over government lending agencies. Now, this is a rare victory for farmers who are coping with poor prices, drought, bankruptcy, and mean-spirited Conservative governments, because it means that the farmers alone won't be forced to shoulder the burden and responsibility for falling land prices. Because the Associate Minister of Agriculture claims to be unaware of any cases where the ADC is pursuing or harassing farmers with threats of further action beyond the terms of the mortgage, I'd like to make that information available to her. I wonder if she would agree to meet with me and a person I know who is in possession of several files that substantiate my claim?

MRS. CRIPPS: Certainly, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FOX: Well, thank you. I'll make that arrangement with the minister.

This court decision mentions the federal farm credit stability corporation specifically and makes reference to the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and I would assume by implication binds the ADC. Has the minister instructed her agents through the Agricultural Development Corporation that they have no legal right to go after farmers for more than what is secured under the land mortgage?

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, the board of directors and the staff of ADC are reviewing the decision and are in contact with the Attorney General's department to ensure that what they do is in keeping with the law and the decision.

MR. FOX: Well, if I might then, I'd like to ask the hon. Attorney General if he is considering making any changes to section 41 of the Law of Property Act or any other legislative change that would have an impact on the outcome of the Holowach decision?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the decision referred to by the hon. Member for Vegreville was a case involving the federal Farm Credit Corporation and not a body directly associated with this Legislative Assembly. But the answer to his question is: no, it is not proposed to change the Law of Property Act or any other legislation which would have a similar impact.

MR. FOX: Well, final question to the associate minister then, Mr. Speaker. After going through the expensive and demoralizing process of bankruptcy or foreclosure or quitclaim, many farmers often see the government sell the land at a considerable loss, an average loss of over \$100,000, to a new purchaser. I'd like to ask the associate minister if she's considering changing this policy of debt write-down so that the benefit could be

passed on to the farm family struggling to make ends meet so that we can perhaps stem this tide of rural depopulation?

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, we've discussed the possibility of debt write-down on many occasions. The farmer that the hon. member is talking about has already had a substantial benefit from the people of Alberta and from the government of Alberta. In many cases they've had 6 percent loans for five years, which, if they were at the 12 percent interest rate, amounts to about \$60,000 up front. If they are reaching the 9 percent interest rate, now it amounts to \$45,000 or to \$50,000 up-front benefits. One of the things that we've tried to do as a government in dealing with farm lending and in terms of meeting the needs of the beginning farmers in this province is to give that benefit up front. The member will recall that I've outlined a couple of cases where the borrower has made very few, if any, payments. A creditor and a borrower do not come to the decision to either foreclose or quitclaim unless there is a substantial inability to pay. We certainly have to look at the other people who want to get into agriculture.

I might say that we met with Unifarm last night, and they indicated to me that we have met almost all of their criteria and proposals made to the ADC Review Committee in terms of restructuring farm debt.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Vermilion-Viking.

DR. WEST: Yes, to the minister. Debt . . .

MR. SPEAKER: With respect hon. member, the time for question period has expired. Might we have the unanimous consent to complete this series of questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.
Vermilion-Viking.

DR. WEST: Yes, to the minister. In the '30s debt write-down and forgiveness created a credit rating for farmers that lasted right up till 1972, when this government had to form ADC. Could you assure this House that those moves will not come into place and destroy the credit rating of farmers today, in 1988?

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, we've been very, very careful in the decisions that we've been trying to make in regard to ADC to ensure that we don't prejudice the ability of our agricultural community to borrow. I can assure the member that the decisions we make in the future will be done in a manner which will not prejudice farmers who borrow from other institutions from obtaining cash or, for that matter, beginning farmers from getting operating capital.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the associate minister. In view of the fact that the argument that you can pursue a farmer for his personal covenant is now clearly ultra vires, out of sorts, out of everything you can think of, would the associate minister now promise the House that those few farmers the Alberta government did pursue and collect on their personal covenant in the last five years will have their money returned to them?

MRS. CRIPPS: I can assure the House that there will be a

review.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. We have at least two points of order to be dealt with from yesterday, but I wonder, because we have some guests in the gallery from other parts of the world, if we might have unanimous consent to vary procedure and revert to Introduction of Special Guests.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.
Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. SHABEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to introduce in the public gallery, 64 participants in the sixth annual Alberta summer institute for petroleum development. Each summer since 1983 individuals from around the world come to Alberta and take part in this program that is put on by the University of Alberta, the energy industry, and the government of Alberta. It's a two-month program that involves the review and the study of the latest in petroleum technology. This year we have 68 participants from 25 different countries, and I would like to ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Yesterday in question period there was an exchange between the Minister of Labour and the Member for St Albert. At the end of question period there was some considerable discussion that took place. The Chair, having reviewed *Hansard*, really finds this as two different versions of an incident which took place that really falls within the area of a disagreement between members rather than a point of order. Nevertheless, the House would refer hon. members to *Beauchesne* 322, which reads:

It has been formally ruled by Speakers that a statement by a Member respecting himself and particularly within his own knowledge must be accepted, but it is not unparliamentary temperately to criticize statements made by a member as being contrary to the facts; but no imputation of intentional falsehood is permissible. On rare occasions this may result in the House having to accept two contradictory accounts of the same incident.

The Chair leaves that as where the House is.

With respect to another matter as raised as a query at the end of question period by the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View as to the Chair having ruled one of the supplementary questions out of order, the Chair stands by its decision to have ruled that particular question out of order. We'll proceed to read to the House the reasons for that, because it's germane to the whole discussion of the Assembly with regard to the issue of the Lubicon people, in concert with the Alberta government and the government of Canada, that there is a real difficulty involved with questions regarding this whole matter.

An examination of the statement of claim relevant to the Attorney General of Canada's suit against the Alberta Crown and the Lubicon Lake Band reveals that the Member for Calgary-Mountain View's question was most certainly touching on specific matters pleaded by the federal Crown before the court. Paragraph 17 of the statement of claim specifically pleads the negotiations taking place by our present Attorney General and

Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs with the Hon. Bill McKnight, federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Full details of the alleged negotiations are given to the court, and further, in paragraphs 19 and 20, the failure of the Alberta government to negotiate is pleaded as a specific factor in demanding that the court impose a settlement to end the matter. In the final prayer or summary various remedies are asked of the court specifically rising from an alleged failure on the part of both the Alberta government and the Lubicon Band to negotiate. In subparagraph (e) of the prayer costs for this legal action are also claimed against the Crown of Alberta and Lubicon Lake Band.

The Member for Calgary-Mountain View's question specifically asked the minister to accept responsibility for this legal action having to come about due to a failure on his part to negotiate successfully. Even ignoring all the other facts of the negotiations pleaded in the statement of claim, costs as laid out in subparagraph (e) of the prayer and the statement of claim will be demanded against those who are responsible for this litigation having to arise in the first place. An admission by the Alberta minister to any element of the Member for Calgary-Mountain View's proposition as put forward in his supplementary question would prejudice both the Crown of Alberta and the Lubicon Lake Band in respect of the whole claim in general but even more specifically to the costs, which could be in whatever extent -- astronomical, perhaps -- of this action. It is not insignificant that courts have on occasion used *Hansard* and other parliamentary documents as proof of things admitted to or said in the Chamber if not actually proved independently out of the Chamber.

Therefore, that was the reason for the Chair not allowing that supplementary in the course of yesterday's question period.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I move that written questions on the Order Paper stand and retain their positions.

[Motion carried]

head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I move that motions for returns 190 and 197 stand and retain their place on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

head: MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask the unanimous approval of the House to withdraw my Motion 213 on the Order Paper, for much the same reason you just outlined a little earlier when speaking on the question by the Member for Calgary-Mountain View. Since the time I put this on the Order Paper and to date, the legal action has come about, so I believe it would probably be sub judice. I'd ask the unanimous approval to withdraw.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Is there unanimous approval?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

214. Moved by Mrs. Hewes:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of Alberta to review and assign food, shelter, and clothing allowances for social assistance recipients to a level that reflects costs of and access to essential items and provides recipients an adequate measure of security in meeting these essential needs.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the motion, it is in a sense a request and in a sense a plea for an objective review of the rates for social allowance based on the actual cost of living. I have to admit that since placing this motion before the House and on the Order Paper, the government has seen fit to make some moves, and I must refer to those. The first is that the government has, in fact, increased the minimum wage to \$4.50 an hour. This is a modest improvement only. However, it may mean that some people can achieve more acceptable living standards but still will fall greatly below the poverty line at that wage. Contrary to some ideas and notions, many people are living on this wage. Many people living on it are part-time or temporary workers without the customary benefits available to full-time workers, and even this modest increase may make it possible for some to continue an independent life-style. It's hard to imagine how people are managing to keep themselves and their families at this wage, but many are still trying to do it.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

The second move the government made was to increase the food allowance to social assistance recipients. They increased it approximately \$3 a week. This increase was long overdue. We haven't been able to determine as yet exactly how the magic number was arrived at. Questions revealed very little, except that we used Canada's Food Guide. Well, let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, if you are on social assistance, you really don't have access to bargains and access to low-cost food stores. You don't have a car. You're not able to go in for bulk buying. You don't have a freezer. You aren't able to acquire things at lower prices. You must buy from day to day, and \$3 a week on top of the present food allowance really doesn't amount to a great deal.

The current allowance for food for a single adult is \$140 a month, approximately \$35 a week, which isn't for just your day-to-day food but takes into consideration the requirement to buy all your staples; for a child 11 years and under, \$89; for a child 12 to 17 years, \$128 a month. This is what we've increased by \$3. As I say, one wonders how that magic number was arrived at and what it is significant of. The food bank still records very, very high demands, so we haven't seen an appreciable difference.

Mr. Speaker, the result, of course, is that people living on social assistance are dependent on high-carbohydrate, cheap foods. Their nutritional needs are often not met. We experience particular problems with children who find themselves in school hungry or with inadequate nutritional needs being met. We don't seem to be able to organize ourselves, and we've requested that the government take some leadership in our communities to work with communities to provide school lunch or snack programs for children with special needs. We don't think an awful lot about hunger in our province. We don't like to see

people starve on our streets, and I suppose they don't. But there are many people suffering from poor nutrition in this province who will have health problems as they go along in their lives.

Mr. Speaker, the third move the government made that I want to refer to is the social policy paper, *Caring & Responsibility*. Upon request, the government has denied that this paper can go to the public for public input, which I think is a great pity. I think they need to see what it is we're saying and what it is we're doing and look at the juxtaposition of those two things and understand what's lacking here.

If I can just quote, related to my motion, on page 10 that describes the role of the government, one of the items is:

To promote a society which respects the beliefs, values, worth, and contributions of all individuals and allows them to participate fully in all aspects of Alberta life.

Well, I suggest our social allowance rates certainly don't allow that. The second is:

To provide equitable opportunities for all Albertans, on the basis of their needs, to access government programs.

I don't think any one of us can be assured that people who have the most desperate needs for a leg up, for some extra funds for recreation purposes or proper nutrition for their children, have good access to government programs.

The third I want to read, Mr. Speaker, is:

To provide special programs and support to those who, for a variety of reasons, may need either temporary or permanent assistance.

These are special programs, and it's perfectly obvious, it's demonstrable, that they are not working effectively. And the last one in the role of government is:

To work cooperatively with the federal government, other provinces and municipal governments in areas of shared responsibility in order to ensure that the needs of Albertans are addressed and that they receive their fair share of benefits and support.

Mr. Speaker, the social assistance program is shared 50 percent through the CAP program by the federal government and it seems to me it falls in the realm of this particular item as a role of government. I think we too often lose sight of the fact that social assistance recipients are also taxpayers -- in an indirect way probably, but they are, in fact taxpayers and are contributing to the economy of our province as well.

The next page, Mr. Speaker, has some even more flagrant anomalies. In the responsibility of government one item says:

Government policies must support the individual's ability to make choices and decisions.

Well, I'd submit to you that a social assistance recipient has no ability to make choices and decisions. He is extraordinarily limited and confined. Next:

Government policies and programs must be adaptable and responsive to the changing needs of Albertans.

Well, we've certainly seen some major changes in the kind of people who need and require social assistance, on a temporary basis in particular, and the program has in no way responded, as I view it, to those needs and those changes.

The last one I want to mention, Mr. Speaker, reads:

Priorities for government services and programs should be established on the basis of responding to the greatest needs; should take into consideration the financial circumstances of the individuals affected; and, where possible, should be designed to help individuals regain their self-sufficiency and independence.

"Regain" being the operative word, nothing I see in the social assistance program really assists people to regain anything. They are locked into a life of dependence.

Mr. Speaker, from this paper one would assume that every-

thing possible is being done and will be done to encourage people to remain independent and regain independence. If that is the assumption, it is clear that it's not working. On the contrary, the system seems determined to keep people down. There is, I believe, a belief that if you make it possible for people to live with dignity and decency, they're not going to want to work. Well, I don't happen to be one that subscribes to that theory. I think we are an adventurous working people in Alberta. I think it's extremely hard to be independent in this system of social assistance, and it's probably impossible for those locked into it to get out of it.

The basic rate structure, Mr. Speaker, has not been revised since 1982. There have been some changes in some areas, but they are not comprehensive, and the review has never been comprehensive. The rate structure, I submit to you, needs to be reviewed, amended, and the system of monitoring and accountability needs change. Now, we've recently seen a newsclipping that says the Edmonton region of Social Services has been restructured so that "specialized offices serving clients with needs in specific program areas" will be set up. Further in this news release, it says that in this city "this will result in four of the existing offices being dedicated to handling Income Security cases" -- that's social assistance cases -- "only, while the other three offices will deal exclusively with Child Welfare matters."

Now, on the surface that would appear to be a move towards more efficiency within the Social Services offices in our city. But take a good look at it. If you're in need of social assistance, you need food and shelter, and you also want to find out about retraining and the potential for getting a job under the employment alternatives program, you've got to go to at least two different offices and possibly more. You don't have a car. You don't have bus fare. If you need food, clothing, and shelter and you have a child who is experiencing difficulties at school, whom you cannot control and is a runaway and so on, you have to go to at least two different offices, possibly more. We are not, by what I read in this paper, making it more convenient; we are making it less convenient. One wonders if that heaven forbid, is part of the purpose: to make it difficult for people to access, contrary to what is being said in this noble paper about caring and responsibility.

Let me go to one or two specifics, Mr. Speaker. I don't know about the utility rates in your family, but in mine they certainly have changed. Utility rates between January '82 and July '87 have not been changed whatsoever. In this city of Edmonton they've increased by almost 28 percent, and there's been no adjustment. Housing? Well, there is no high vacancy rate in low-income housing. In '83 there were shelter cuts made on the basis that the vacancy rate had changed, but there's no evidence whatsoever to say that there is a high vacancy rate in the level of housing people on social assistance are forced to acquire. There have been further cuts this year to single employables, and again no evidence of the supply. There's no differentiation allowed for here in community A versus community B, where the housing vacancy rate and the cost of housing might be quite different. There is no consultation we know of with the gatekeepers in our major urban centres, with the providers of low-income housing and those who help people seek and find low-income housing.

Mr. Speaker, in all of these the rates have not changed in some years. So what is happening is that when there are little increases such as \$3, a week more for food, it has to go into paying the utilities or into paying an increase in housing. The renters' tax credit the elimination of this program further re-

duces purchasing power of the poor, and one wonders what the government is thinking of when they introduce tax programs of this kind. The damage deposit for singles is not there. It is extremely difficult for one single person, two single people, to acquire low-income housing without any damage deposit. Not many of us are prepared to rent to a stranger who has no job and cannot produce any funds for a damage deposit. It's a major barrier to finding housing, to finding a location from which you can seek work.

Clothing? The increase in the allowance for clothing has not been changed between '82 and '87, yet the cost of clothing has gone up by almost 14 percent in Alberta. It's hard to get a job when you're dependent on Goodwill stores for clothing. And as the Edmonton Social Planning Council report clearly states, the clothes seldom fit. You know, unfortunately we are tremendously swayed in our world by how people look and how they conduct themselves.

The whole business of eligibility: last year or the year before the government department did acquire a book put out by the Edmonton Social Planning Council called *The Other Welfare Manual*, which helped people understand those items for which they are eligible. I regret to say that social assistance workers, who are excellent people . . . The income security workers work very, very hard in our province; they have an increasingly heavy load. Their cases number around 300 a month, families that they're caring for. But these caseloads are far higher than those of the welfare police who go out to check and make sure you're not misusing the funds. Mr. Speaker, these people are poor; they're very poor. They're poor in pocketbook, and they're poor in spirit.

AN HON. MEMBER: And the Liberals will keep them that way.

MRS. HEWES: And we're keeping them that way, hon. member, and I'll have to tell them that you agree. Because they are kept down and kept locked in.

Now, I know we've talked about poverty lines in this House, Mr. Speaker, and I suppose they're arbitrary lines and they differ from community to community and province to province. They're not always applicable, but they are good indicators of how one can live with a reasonable sense of dignity. And this is a government responsibility. This is a statutory responsibility. Here we've written the paper saying we do care and you're responsible and we do share the funding 50 percent with the federal government. Mr. Speaker, I think we've lost sight of the fact that welfare recipients are producers in our community. They do pay taxes. They do contribute in large measure. They are not simply freeloaders, as they are often described.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just read into the record the difference -- because I think it's an indication of how badly this review is needed -- between welfare rates for children and the rates allowed for foster care for children. Now, to be sure, there may be extra expenses. I can accept some differential, but I can't accept this. On social assistance a parent receives the following allowances for a child: \$77 a month for food, \$23 a month for clothing, \$15 to \$60 extra for shelter. Over 12 years old: \$110 per month for food, \$26 for clothing, \$15 to \$60 for shelter. But in foster care, a care giver is paid a per diem rate from \$7.70 to \$13.25. For a child who is 10 years old, that equals about \$311 a month, more than twice the amount allowed for a parent to look after his or her own child. The needs of a 10-year-old are basically the same no matter who is the care giver. I believe the

children of all families, regardless of their income, have a right to decent food, clothing, and shelter. Mr. Speaker, these rates hit particularly at single women, single women with dependants, and single older women. This is where we talk about the feminization of poverty and where we experience it and see it in our communities increasingly visible.

People don't want to be on welfare. They're reluctant to ask. Suddenly you're unemployed and perhaps you wait too long to go for help. You use up all your markers: your work associates, your family, your friends, your neighbours. You sell off and get rid of all your assets. Mr. Speaker, this is a soul-destroying experience, and it is always accompanied by loss of motivation and loss of self-esteem. We have in the province a Work for Welfare program. People who are in need of social assistance can access this program, depending upon a variety of eligibility requirements. The training programs, I submit, are insufficient. The funds are going to the employer and are not always accessible for training or retraining by people who need assistance. It in no way meets the needs of the hard to employ; it really supplies any support and assistance only to people who probably had the best chance of getting a job and who've been out of work for the least amount of time. There are no new jobs, and there's no real permanency in any of this. Ultimately, this entire program as it's being operated is going to cost all of us more. It's going to cost more in health care and social costs.

Mr. Speaker, in our province we desperately need to change our thinking, change our attitudes, change our methods, change our system, change our rates. In the spirit of fairness and justice, just good common sense -- a good investment, economic benefits to all of us -- I would ask all members to support this motion that asks for a review of social allowance rates.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury.

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Canadians we are proud of our long history of helping one another. This was a tradition begun by our pioneers, who worked together to build our communities and to enhance the quality of life in those communities. Because of our history, we know a kind of sharing and common concern that many countries have never known. Nowhere is this more obvious than in Alberta. Our community spirit is indeed the envy of the world. In the latest Statistics Canada report, Albertans showed they were a full 13 percent more generous in lending their free time to help others than any other Canadian province. We have proven our dedication to caring for those around us.

But, Mr. Speaker, our community spirit is not what it once was. I believe one of the greatest disservices we have done is to build in a set of expectations that discourages initiatives. This is the case not only in Alberta but throughout the western world. It's hard to believe that in 1958 the provincial budget in public welfare amounted to \$18.2 million or \$85 per person in 1988 dollars. Last year the Social Services department spent \$1.1 billion. That's \$478 for every man, woman, and child in Alberta. The implications of this are broad.

I remember moving into a new home, Mr. Speaker. We didn't have a skating rink. We had a bit of property set aside for community activity. I remember holding hot dog feasts and selling chocolate bars and spending weekends trying to construct an arena for our children to play in. After we got the rink built, we went on to build a shelter where children could change their skates. The net result of that was that everyone in that community had a feeling of ownership about that facility. When

I saw someone kicking at the boards on the rink, I got after them because I had helped nail the boards on there. The most important person in all of that was the fellow that could organize all those people, bring them together, and help construct something that wasn't there in the first place. Now it seems we've created this expectation that if a grant isn't available, the whole thing dies. In fact, the most important person in our communities now seems to be the man who is most familiar with and can obtain a grant to get this whole thing off the ground. It seems if this grant application fails, then the project fails. I remember several times getting involved in this project myself and discussing the sense of pride that was there because we were helping each other. If my son was playing hockey on Thursday night, it was my responsibility to make sure the rink was cleaned off. Maybe this doesn't seem like it's consistent with this member's motion, but I honestly believe it is. I think we have lost that sense of shared ownership, what was really the foundation of this province.

Social Services are like that too. I think we'd all agree -- in fact, I know we would -- that no one in this province or in this country should go to bed hungry. But by choosing to just let government do it, people learn to put up a wall and ignore the world outside the family room. We have to start taking more responsibility for ourselves and our neighbours. We have to start letting Albertans get involved again. Nobody wants to see the social safety net dismantled, but in a time of government cutbacks, the system can no longer support the full range of services it used to take on. I think Albertans are beginning to realize this, and perhaps more importantly, they are beginning to see that reliance on state support retards personal responsibility and initiative. This may be the greatest problem of all.

As the hon. minister of special projects, Neil Crawford, wrote in his statement of social policy -- and I'd like to read it to you, Mr. Speaker:

It is the role of the Government of Alberta:

To foster a social, economic, political and cultural environment in which Albertans are able to participate fully in their society.

That's all phases of their society, Mr. Speaker. This climate is what we are working to build right now. It doesn't mean merely adding feathers to the social cushion by throwing money in the direction of the problem. Government must foster a more constructive social environment through innovative programs such as the employment alternatives program, which was specifically developed to provide people receiving the social allowance with employment opportunities. Unemployment has fallen 2.7 percent since this program was initiated.

I believe Motion 214 is unnecessary. Firstly, the hon. Minister of Social Services is constantly reviewing levels of social assistance, and secondly, she raised the food allowance this year. Two years ago perhaps this motion may have been expected. An increase simply wasn't possible in view of the economy at that time. But things have changed since then. The 1987-88 budgetary difficulties forced the government to take a hard look at social assistance funding, but the minister was able to maintain funding levels for all but single employable recipients. In fact, she increased funding by \$175 million to \$638 million to accommodate the growing caseloads. Cutbacks had to be made somewhere, and the minister decided single employable recipients were most able to handle it. However, at the same time, funding was reduced for the single employables, special employment placement programs were initiated, and rates were increased to seniors and the physically and mentally

handicapped, who were most in need. Our existing social policy adequately meets this need for Albertans, Mr. Speaker, and is consistent with prices in Alberta.

Our policy is working. Hundreds of Albertans are sharing in over \$1 billion of social assistance programs, programs that are unlike any across the country. Over the last year the number of single employables receiving social assistance has dropped 14.1 percent. Unemployment has fallen 2.7 percent, and when, under special circumstances, our rates are not sufficient to provide the basic necessities with dignity, there is a provincewide system of appeal with the ability to provide additional funding. The value of this program has been proven time and time again. We not only have sufficient funding in these areas but funding that has, in fact, been recently increased. More importantly, we have in Alberta a broad social policy framework which cannot be viewed in isolated snapshots as this motion implies it should.

Motion 214 looks only to the narrow aspect of social policy; namely food, shelter, and clothing allowances. The policy of this government, as I have said, is to create programs that promote and facilitate individual initiative. This means that we must always view social welfare policy in a broader perspective. We cannot criticize the efficiency of the system simply by looking at the money given to these three areas; other programs may be more effective and more productive in the long run.

We cannot overlook the value of the Social Development Act, for example, which provides not only social assistance but also, number one, provides

advice and instruction to assist the person in devising and following a reasonable rehabilitative program.

Two, it provides

guidance in the management of . . . personal affairs as related to the use of financial assets, orderly payments of debts and domestic problems.

Three, it provides

assistance in obtaining any vocational, technical and other training that is prescribed by the regulations and which may be necessary in the preparation of a person for employment.

Fourth, it provides

assistance in obtaining employment and special financial incentives [to encourage employment].

Fifth, it provides

advice and instruction to assist the person in remaining employed.

And probably the most provision it does provide for, Mr. Speaker: it provides

any other assistance necessary in aiding the person to become [employed].

Alberta's social programs and services exist for the betterment and enrichment of our people. This can best be accomplished if they are consistent with and reflect a single unified social policy, not a patchwork of stopgap measures of questionable value. The minister is in constant receipt of suggestions concerning levels, levels which are set by regulations, which means they are flexible and easily adjusted. This is an ongoing process which reflects a holistic approach to the social policy.

Alberta is a province rich in resources and potential, but people are our greatest strength, Mr. Speaker: people who have proven that they are willing to work together and take responsibility, people who are committed to Alberta and committed to themselves, as a matter of fact. We must continue to build on the strengths that are so much a part of our history and our future. We cannot lose sight of this goal, as Motion 214 would have us do. Therefore, I can't support this motion, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support Motion 214 introduced by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. I think this is a very important motion, and I think we have to start addressing the issue of people on social assistance and the rates they receive. The Official Opposition also has a motion on the Order Paper, Motion 228, that deals with the same issue, and that is to urge the government to adjust the social allowance rates in order that they reflect the true cost of shelter and other basic necessities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one would wonder what would be objectionable about this particular motion, what would be controversial about this particular motion. It seems to me we should be discussing rates in this debate, and I'm quite appalled that the member that just spoke on the government side was, in fact, not discussing the rates as much as he was discussing the need even for social programs in the first place.

[Mr. Musgrave in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, I would submit that people have a right to security. They have a right to food, shelter, and other basic necessities. I would also say that I do not believe it's a privilege for people to have these things, nor should it be delivered by charity. I find it quite ironic that this government has money to spend on golf courses, money to spend on racetracks, money to send the Minister of Labour around the world on a tour, and yet they question the right people have for the basic necessities in life. I think that's appalling. They freely talk about responsibility, Mr. Speaker, but when it comes to themselves and themselves taking on some responsibility, then we have to question where their motives are.

Now, when we are discussing rates, we're talking about true costs and the fact that those rates should reflect the true costs of certain items like food, clothing, and shelter that need to be purchased. When something costs \$10 and you're receiving \$10 to buy that item, then the government might have a case when they say that people don't know how to budget if, in fact, they can't afford to get these certain items. But when something costs \$10, Mr. Speaker, and you're only getting \$2 to buy it, then I think we need to take a look at this whole issue, because we do hear the government saying that people don't know how to budget. Now, if we're giving people on social assistance the amount of money that does reflect the true costs, then again I say that the government might have an argument, although I do recognize that in many cases the problems are more complex than simply giving out money. But I think we do have to adjust the rates to reflect the true costs of basic necessities.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Social Services continues to argue that rates do reflect the true costs of shelter and clothing. Now, what is the basis for her conviction that the rates are adequate? Well, last May, in 1987, I asked the minister in this House to state specifically what the criteria were in terms of setting the rates for social assistance. The minister responded -- and again I was asking for specific criteria -- by saying:

As I've indicated in the past, obviously there is a survey of a number of areas with respect to the items the hon. member has raised, and when those various components are taken into consideration, along with market pricing and so on, then a judgment is made.

So, Mr. Speaker, the minister went on to say, and I quote:

We have identified in the province of Alberta the relative cost of shelter, food, and clothing, and on that basis that's how we have evolved the figures for social allowance.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister to table what those relative cost figures were so that all members of the Assembly could see them. The minister responded by talking about the differences in philosophy between the Official Opposition and the government and that people would just simply have to change their life-style. But the point is that we never did get any specific criteria in terms of how those rates are set.

If we take a look at figures of October 1987, CMHC indicated through a study that an average one-bedroom apartment in Edmonton costs \$388. When I brought this up in the House last week or whenever, the minister responded by saying that 215 times 2 is 430. Now, I've never been particularly good at math, but I will admit that the minister was right 215 times 2 is, in fact, 430. But what the minister forgot to say, Mr. Speaker, was that 180 times 2 is 360, and that's what single employables get the first three months they're on social assistance. That does not equal \$388. So even if people are willing to share and have found someone to share with, they would not be eligible to rent a one-bedroom apartment for the two of them. So like I say, if they found a roommate and were to find a one-bedroom apartment, then they would certainly have to pay more than \$360.

I also would like to mention, Mr. Speaker, that they're not eligible for a damage deposit either. I would like to ask the members of this Assembly: how many of them have ever gone out and tried to get an apartment without having a damage deposit with which to get that apartment? I think what we would find is that there would only be a certain type of accommodation available to those members who went out without a damage deposit and I would also suggest that they would find accommodation where they would never stay. So the damage deposit is quite a concern.

It's quite clear that, in fact, the rates do not reflect what the costs are. So what happens to people when they are on social assistance and they are not getting enough money to buy food, clothing, shelter, and the other basic necessities? Well, Mr. Speaker, what's been happening in this province is that they're having to take their food money to purchase and pay for the other necessities. I know of cases where parents have gone without eating in order that their children could have food, and in other cases the whole family is eating very poorly and the children and the adults are going without food on many occasions.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at the amount of money available for someone on social assistance. We're talking about \$5 each per day. We're talking about meals, we're talking about clothing, we're talking about all the personal expenses one has. Now, I know the government has increased the food allowance, and of course this is commendable. We don't know, like the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has stated, where the figure has come from. It works out, however, to be about a 50-cents-a-day increase per person -- not a heck of a lot of money. If we look at the consumer price index, it indicates that the average cost of clothing has increased by 10 percent, and utilities since 1982 have increased by 30 percent. Now, I don't know how in the wildest dreams of this government they can say that these rates, which haven't been adjusted, could reflect the true costs.

So, Mr. Speaker, if they want to make their case, I think they should be willing to prove it and be forthcoming with a study, a cost-of-living study that would, in fact, reflect what the rates are

and if those rates are sufficient compared to the real costs people are having to spend in terms of buying their basic needs. There are a number of agencies that would be very interested in seeing a study done, including the Edmonton Gleaners Association.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the rates should be arbitrarily set, and I believe that's exactly what's happening in the province.

When we look at who will most likely be poor in this province and across this country, we see that of single-parent families headed by a female, one in two will be poor; one in three young families with a family head being under 25 will be poor; 11 in 20 elderly unattached over 65 will be poor; all minimum wage earners will be poor. I note that we did increase the minimum wage in this province, and I also note, Mr. Speaker, that there are many members in the House who still reject the notion of the increase in the minimum wage.

DR. WEST: Who?

MS MJOLSNESS: "Who?" says the Member for Vermilion-Viking. Need I say more.

We also see that all unemployed people with no outside income will be poor, and we still have very high unemployment in this province. Last but not least, Mr. Speaker, all people on social allowance with no outside income will be poor. I think that's quite significant.

Mr. Speaker, we could argue, "Well, what is poor?" We've had that discussion in this House as well. I think it's important that we are able to define what is "poor"; certainly this is open to debate and is quite subjective. Nevertheless, the National Council on Welfare publishes a document called Poverty Profile. They've got one out in 1988. They use statistics gathered from Statistics Canada, and they have determined poverty lines. A poor or low-income family who would have an income below the poverty line, and the report states:

Statistics on the low income population are calculated using Stats Canada low income cutoffs which are set at levels where on average 58.5% of income goes to food, clothing and shelter. The low income cutoffs are updated each year according to the change in the cost of living as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

So they do have a measurement, and they do adjust the measurement every year.

Mr. Speaker, if we are to look at who is poor -- and I've gone through the list -- we can also note that many children are poor. I think being poor means a lot of things. I recognize that being on social assistance is only one area where we find people who are poor, but I'd also like to say that we know that the majority of people using the food bank happen to be on social assistance. I would say, too, that people using the food bank are going to charity to get their food. Many are going to charity to get their clothing and other basic necessities, and I think that is shameful.

Mr. Speaker, what happens to you when you are poor? Well, in this province it means that you do have to go to charity. Now I know there are a lot of members who wouldn't think there's anything wrong with that, but in this province we have thousands of children under 12 years old depending on charity for food. These children are at an age when malnutrition becomes a very serious, serious concern because they are in their crucial developmental stages. Mr. Speaker, if you are malnourished when you're a child, not only will the child experience many difficulties but the family will as well. We know that poor children have the highest rate of health problems compared to other

healthy children. We know that many children that come from poor families miss school due to illness. We know that hearing loss, visual problems, speech impediments -- all are more common in children that come from poor families. When you couple these with the fact that they are lagging behind in their physical and emotional development, these children are experiencing serious concerns.

Mr. Speaker, the problems go on and on and on. The effects of poverty and the effect that poverty has on children have been well documented. One other interesting fact of children that come from poor families is that children from poor families are apprehended more often than children from other families. So it's easy to see, when we have a number of our population that falls into this category, that the costs to society are indeed tremendous. Also, the effects on the family are in many cases devastating.

So we know that poverty is a serious issue, Mr. Speaker, and we also know that we can only deal with real changes through structural changes within our society. But I would also say that we can ease the pain by adjusting rates so that people are more apt to be able to purchase necessities.

Mr. Speaker, we've had a lot of discussion in this House on school lunch programs. Now, again I know this isn't the total answer in dealing with poverty, but it can ease the pain, it can make these children feel a little bit better. But of course the government refuses to act in this area.

Mr. Speaker, being poor also means that you live in inadequate housing, and oftentimes people are put into overcrowded housing. Oftentimes it's underheated. Being poor, of course, means not having adequate clothing. Whenever I think of this -- as a school teacher I experienced a lot of cases where children would come to school and perhaps not have appropriate clothing. It's easy to blame the parents, sure. Nevertheless, these families were very poor. To see the kinds of things that were going on -- it was very difficult for these families and especially for these children. I think these are areas we need to take a look at, and we can't keep blaming people. We have to start taking action, especially when the evidence is clear that the costs of the basic necessities are, in fact, more expensive than what people are getting in income.

So, Mr. Speaker, the government has said that we don't have the cornerstone on caring in this province -- the Official Opposition. Well, I would challenge them to prove, then, that they do care. I would suggest that they take some action in terms of dealing with unemployment, because we know that unemployment is the cause of poverty, and we still have a very high rate of unemployment in this province.

I would also say, Mr. Speaker, that they give these people who are accessing social assistance -- that they do adjust the rates so that these people would be getting allowances . . .

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. If hon. members could please keep quiet while the hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder is debating.

MS MJOLSNESS: . . . that would reflect their true costs. And if we don't quite know what that is, then I would suggest that the government take the initiative to do a cost-of-living study. This has been called for for many years by many agencies working with the poor throughout this province. It would enable families to provide a quality of life for their children -- at least attempt to begin to provide a quality of life for their children. I also think we need to give support to these people in order that

they can improve their particular situation.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to mention briefly, though, when we're talking about single employables -- I'd like to revert back to that for a second. I think the fact that we blatantly discriminate against single employables in this province when it comes to these people accessing benefits is shameful. If you're a 50-year-old divorced woman or a 59-year-old man or a single mother with one child, you are labeled a single employable, and you will find that you are discriminated against when you go to get benefits. I think this is shameful, and I would call on this government to take a look at that regulation and correct that injustice as well.

Thank you.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, I've been listening to the discussion . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: What for?

MR. DOWNEY: Good question. . . . on Motion 214 this afternoon with some interest. I will say at the outset that I think the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar's motives are pure and laudable. [interjection] So enjoy that, Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, while you can, because that may be the last good thing I'd say.

I do want to say in setting out, Mr. Speaker -- and it's been said in this House before -- that the opposition parties, the Liberals and the NDP, don't have a monopoly on caring in this province and that our Minister of Social Services is very sensitive, and sensitive on an ongoing basis, to the needs of clients of her department. So I would say at the outset that the intent that's outlined in Motion 214 is unnecessary.

Mr. Speaker, if I may take the liberty, as the Member for Edmonton-Calder did in referring to Motion 228 on the Order Paper -- this one really scares me. I look at clauses (1) and (2). I see a push to eliminate the need for food banks. Again, in clause (2): "elimination of poverty and . . . need for food banks." Laudable as the statement "elimination of poverty" may be, care for the disadvantaged, for the poor, for the unemployed in our society has always been a co-operation between the public and private sectors. This government is consciously aware that it must be careful not to crowd the volunteers, the charitable workers, out of the public care arena. Because when we do that, Mr. Speaker, it places an additional burden on the public purse. It's fairly obvious that that public purse is stretched fairly tightly right now and perhaps would be unable to bear additional burdens to the extent that the members opposite suggest.

I'd like to go back, Mr. Speaker, if I may, to comments made by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar that the allowances that are presently allowed force social care recipients to resort to purchases of cheap food. I went through an interesting item here -- I must confess I haven't looked at it before -- the food guide from Agriculture Canada, and I highlighted a couple of items. I'm not sure whether they reflect my dietary preferences, and I'm not a nutritionist, but I look at the meat, poultry, and fish section of this guide. I see that sliced cooked meat constitutes perhaps \$1.12. Well, I look at it as the highest cost item in that group, and I guess what the members are suggesting is that everybody should have each item from each of these groups. I look at meat alternates, and I see peanut butter on there. Well, Mr. Speaker, I've done very well, thank you, for the last 37 years or so without eating much peanut butter. But it's a high cost item in that meat substitute section. And I look down here,

then, at the bottom line. A family of four: weekly food expenditures of \$106.40. That's as of November 1987. The allowances that are presently in place more than adequately cover that level of expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, to get back to where I started here, certainly this government is doing, within its limitations, everything it can in the social care area. It goes back a long ways, to our roots, I suppose, and those of our ancestors in the old country. It goes back to Disraeli in 1847; I guess that's when some of this started. But it was about that time in Europe that government directions in care of the poor resulted in an increase of the bureaucratic machinery of government and an increased participation by the state which has developed in this country and others into the sort of situation we see today. Modern social policy has evolved into, I suppose, two alternative views: the idea of a safety net, which I suppose the opposition view as the minimum annual income; and the social welfare policy, which covers other areas of social care. In Alberta basic necessities are described as food, clothing, shelter. And I think those should be separated from the next three items that are listed: heat, light, and water. I would have hoped that those were covered in the first three.

Recently there were some tough times, reflected and reacted to by the minister when allowances for single employables were cut back last year. That recognizes economic realities not only in motivating a social care recipient to move out of that area of care, but also it recognizes a reality of the economy and what the state, funded by the taxpayer, is able to bear. Now, in this past year, Mr. Speaker, in the ongoing assessment, again, that is going on by the department, those allowances have been increased. Food allowances have been raised. The Member for Edmonton-Calder seems to get quite hung up on the accommodation section of social allowance. I suppose it's a very subjective kind of a judgment about what kind of accommodation is adequate and meets the need of the recipient, but the state must make some difficult judgments when they're coming to those kinds of decisions. Certainly with the vacancy rates that we're looking at in the province -- I believe the vacancy rates in Edmonton here are close to 7 percent -- there's no reason to get inordinately hung up on the accommodation that's available here at the money that's allowed.

Damage deposits. That term always disturbs me. A deposit that is set down for rental accommodation is properly labeled a security deposit. It is possibly the only protection a landlord has for a tenant perhaps moving out without honouring his or her obligations.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of clothing I believe it's in the neighbourhood of \$33 per month for an adult. It's not designed to provide a full wardrobe, but it is designed to cover basic needs. I consider it to be adequate, and again I point out that it is under constant review by the department.

Mr. Speaker, earlier I touched on the issue of food banks and how it relates to maybe the upcoming Motion 228. I wish to take this opportunity to commend the people who are operating the food bank, the people who support it through donations. I do wish to point out that on May 20 the minister announced a \$28,000 grant, more or less, to study the need and the function of food banks. Again, I reiterate that we have to be very careful. We don't want to do away with food banks. We don't want to come up with . . .

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair is having great difficulty relating food banks to the resolution before us. Would

the hon. member please come back to the motion that is being debated?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes. Thank you for the guidance, Mr. Speaker.

What I am attempting to point out is that as part of the ongoing review process of the Department of Social Services the function of food banks and the individuals that are using those is being looked into. So the review is happening, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Now, Mr. Speaker, I believe this motion was either on or destined for the Order Paper before this year's budget announcements or indications of the budget were made, and so it is in some respects redundant. Accommodations have been made to changing situations, to inflation, to the varying conditions, the change throughout the province. Singles, it appears, have been very reluctant to make the changes in life-style that are necessary to live on their allotments.

The development of a guaranteed minimum income would eliminate the stigma attached to social allowance: we've heard that from the opposition benches. If I may, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to offer a personal opinion to the members here that it is probably not desirable to eliminate the stigma associated with social services. We've heard all the speakers so far talk about the dignity of the individual. I'm as strongly supportive of that as I am of anything, but it seems to me that the way a person builds dignity is by taking a greater level of responsibility on his own shoulders. That's what builds dignity, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, unemployment is down in the province. Social allowance rates are set by regulation that allows great flexibility, and it allows the department and its field staff to react to emergent and emergency situations. The Department of Social Services must be allowed some flexibility within its ranks in the allocation of allowances on an individual basis.

Mr. Speaker, just in closing, I would like to say that I have full confidence in the minister and her department in monitoring an ongoing study of the social allowance rates. And there is no need -- I suppose other than a possible opposition wish to establish some kind of a commission that would maybe allow for a little extra remuneration -- there is no reason to act on this motion. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support it.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question?

Hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The subject under consideration today, this particular motion, certainly is one that I think strikes at the heart chords of all of us as human beings, because I believe each person here is vitally concerned for the well-being of all Albertans. And the thought of those in our province who might be in need -- whether it be in need of food or shelter or clothing, as the motion outlines -- the thought that there are folks out there who need that kind of attention, being socially assisted, is something that I think strikes all of our heart chords.

However, it's very important to look at how we address the meeting of the need as is laid out in the motion by the member opposite, because the "how" really can make or break the problem. It can either aggravate the problem or it can make it better, in terms of how we address it. We hear phrases like elimination of poverty, eradication of poverty. If we as a gov-

ernment are able to do that, we will be the first government in the history of the world to have accomplished such a feat. If every Albertan today bought a lottery ticket and tomorrow drew a winner, so that every single Albertan tomorrow were a millionaire, Mr. Speaker, by the end of the week we would have many Albertans who were billionaires, we would have many Albertans who had lost that million dollars, and we would have many Albertans who were hopelessly in debt. The massive application of dollars to a problem is not the answer.

In this motion the member is talking about the need for a review. One of the members opposite even said that they sensed that members on the government side felt that this motion was objectionable. I'd like to say, Mr. Speaker, that there is no feeling that it's objectionable, though there is a feeling and it could probably be argued, though I won't take that line today, that the motion is redundant. Because, in fact, in our last budget this government did in a very clear way address and review social assistance, especially in the areas of food and clothing and the various allowances. Though I said I'm not taking that tack today, it could be argued that the motion is redundant.

Something else to consider when we're looking at helping people with social allowance: social allowance is basically an insurance program, and anytime that anybody offers an insurance program, be it public or private, the offer of that program runs a risk. Every insurance program, and in this case we're talking about, really, social insurance, carries a moral hazard with it. When I say a moral hazard, let me explain it this way. If my automobile insurance company was to offer me a policy for windshield breakage, and if the policy read that if my windshield ever broke I'd receive a thousand dollars and a new windshield, I can guarantee you I'd be heading down the first gravel road I could find looking for the biggest truck I could find to drive behind, hoping that a stone would fly up and crack that windshield. Now, I'm using an extreme example there to show that every insurance program contains a moral hazard, and the moral hazard is that you may actually encourage the very type of behaviour you're trying to insure against.

So as we look at this motion from the member opposite in talking about review -- and what she's really talking about is just an across-the-board raising of all the benefits -- we've got to be very careful and realize that we can create a moral hazard and actually encourage the very type of behaviour that we're trying to insure against when we offer to people in society the safety net that is needed to protect them from the things that can happen in life from time to time with any one of us that can really put us in a time of need. And any one of us here at any time, almost overnight, could find ourselves in a time of desperate need. A sudden turn of events -- the next election, for instance; members opposite might find themselves in great need. We have to realize that things can happen, that any one of us could be vulnerable to need. So on the one hand, we need to always be reviewing and looking at how we're meeting the needs of people who can't, for whatever reason, meet those needs themselves, but we have to be very careful in how we do that, that we don't actually encourage a type of behaviour that we're trying to insure against.

We're hearing about care. How do I show my kids that I really care for them? Do I show them that by just handing them everything and not expecting any responsibility? No, that's not showing them care. Showing them care, I teach them and work with them to help them to learn how they can eventually assume more and more responsibilities themselves. I don't really care for them if I just dump dollars on them.

And I see the member opposite going into her usual gyrations whenever she hears good commonsense information, because she's coming from that very liberal philosophy which says, "If there's a problem, just dump money on it." But as I've said, there are dangers inherent with that particular type of approach.

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: A point of order, Calgary-Forest Lawn?

MR. PASHAK: Yes. Citing *Beauchesne* 309, I'd just like to repay to the Member for Red Deer-South the compliment that he paid me during the debate yesterday evening when he brought me to order for reading a speech that he claimed that I had prepared for me. Now, I'd just like to pay him the same compliment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Order please.

If hon. members wish to use the time of the House, they'll have to wait their turn. Red Deer-North.

MR. OLDRING: A point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Red Deer-South.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I've been called a lot of things in my life, but once again he referred to the Member for Red Deer-South as opposed to the Member for Red Deer-North. I know how short his memory is.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't able to be watching my colleague from Red Deer-South to see if he was reading his speech, so I don't know if the point was in order. However, if the member opposite would like to join me over here, he will see that the sum total of my speech consists of about 12 words that are scrawled on . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, perhaps it's just as well that we get back to Motion 214.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I got carried away in engaging the member opposite.

MS BARRETT: He's got a lead foot.

MR. DAY: Yes, I've got that too, but it's better than having a lead head.

Now, going on in terms of how we look at these difficulties. So that the member opposite doesn't think I'm reading a speech, I did jot down some of the points mentioned by some of the members opposite; they're right here. It really isn't a speech, but if I look down from time to time, that's what I'm doing. I didn't want to offend his sense of fair play.

This government is doing some very good things in terms of caring for those who, for whatever reasons, cannot care for themselves. As we know, and as has already been brought out, even though the province faced revenue and budgetary difficulties in the 1987 and '88 fiscal year, the overall funding for social

allowance programs was increased by \$175 million to \$638 million. That's a very significant increase. And the '88-89 budget which was presented March 24 allocated an additional \$24 million to increase social allowance food rates by 13.5 percent.

In the area of food, which is being specifically addressed by the member opposite, the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar -- I get Gold Bar and Clover Bar mixed up; it's nothing personal -- the revised basic allowance schedule allocates \$205 a month for food. Agriculture Canada, in putting out their nutritious food basket list of the four basic food groups and their cost in Edmonton -- not in Miami or San Diego but in Edmonton -- calculates a cost of \$131.20 a month for someone to buy from those four basic food groups. That's for a man of the age of 19 to 24 years. Generally and biologically speaking, not pitting men against women here, that age group tends to eat more, and so it was spread out for the person who would be consuming the most. I think that adequately demonstrates that the food allowance, though it's not something that every day a person can go out and buy lobster with, is following along the lines of our social care policy paper, which talks about caring for people but also helping them to learn and helping them to learn to care.

The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, in talking about food allowance, said that people on social assistance have no access to bargains because many of them don't own cars. Well, I'd first like to get a real statistic on that, Mr. Speaker, on how many people on social assistance actually don't own cars. I know some don't, but the percentage would be interesting. But I know that they can have a transportation allowance. They do arrive at Safeway in taxis, and I think that is wonderful, that they are able to have that provision to be able to go and buy their groceries. They also have a transportation allowance should they choose to take a bus. And I think that somebody in need should have that transportation allowance, Mr. Speaker, and I'm glad it's in place so that they can get to the larger grocery stores and get those bargains. As a matter of fact, a transportation allowance is made for families to take their children to school, so they don't even have to worry about their children having to find some other form of transportation. And I think that's good, that families in need have that transportation allowance made available to them.

What I'm concerned with in the member bringing a motion like this, Mr. Speaker, is that facts are brought out. . . . Put it this way: if I was a cynic, I would say that the members opposite were using the worst form of political opportunism that can probably be known to people, and that is trying to advance their own petty cause on the backs of the poor by not presenting facts. If I was a cynic, I would say that. But I am not a cynic, so I'm saying that the members opposite must be well-intended and are therefore misdirected in their information, because the information is very clear.

We talk about a low vacancy rate, and especially for low-income people. We're looking at a 7 percent vacancy rate right here in Edmonton. I personally have discussed the housing matter with the owners and operators of the largest property management company in this city. They assured me -- and the statistics are available if we want to plow through them -- that there is more than enough in terms of vacancies available for low-income housing. And I'm not talking about a ghetto that the members opposite want built, where they talk about building these homes for the homeless where everybody is ghettoized. But right throughout our entire communities low-income housing is available in more than adequate amounts. We have many cases, and more than adequate cases, where people are given

that housing without the damage deposit. The landlords accept at face value the social assistance factor and take these people in without the damage deposit. And, Mr. Speaker, the damage deposit guideline is something that's appealable. So I think that should take care of the misinformation about no housing being available.

The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar said that no housing was available. If that was true, then we would expect to see, especially in the area of single employables which she's been talking about, the men's emergency shelter downtown, for instance, filled to capacity. The men's emergency shelter downtown is an operation that offers three meals a day plus lunches to go if you're working, medical assistance, counseling, a nursing and medical staff on hand, and very adequate rooms. You can stay there literally for days without being asked to leave, and it operates at about 50 percent capacity. Again, another case where if I was a cynic, I'd say that the members opposite were engaging in ruthless political opportunism by continuing to stand up and say that the homeless have nowhere to go. There is a wonderful facility which I've visited -- as a matter of fact, at mealtime and at evening time -- and I've seen it to be very adequate, and yet it's only half full. That's the men's emergency shelter. Yet we hear "single employables" and "we need more housing," so I think they've got to get their facts straight.

In the area of The Other Welfare Manual, which the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar mentioned, yes, The Other Welfare Manual was published, and Social Services, in analyzing it, found it to be a very important document and purchased 30,000 copies, which are now almost entirely distributed, and from my information they have ordered another printing. So this minister and this department and this government are not at all adverse to somebody coming along with a better way of laying things out or making information available. They went after that very well.

We hear also about lack of care for single women. I am pleased and proud to say that our government has, for instance in the area of subsidies for day care, the most generous subsidies anywhere in this country. The members opposite refuse to acknowledge that, refuse to acknowledge how generous this government is in that reason. Now, there's a case where we feel that in being that generous, it allows women who so choose to further their education, for instance, and so they move to a postsecondary institution like Red Deer College, for instance.

I know many single parents, mainly women, who are availing themselves of the programs at Red Deer College because they've got very generous day care subsidies and good care for their children. They can then avail themselves of the lowest tuition rates of anywhere in Canada except for the province of Quebec and avail themselves of the most generous student finance packages anywhere in Canada to further their education or to be able to embark upon a career. For what purpose? To eventually provide for themselves. And that's exactly what this government talks about when we talk about a social care policy that encourages care but also encourages self-reliance. A lot of these single moms already are seeing, experiencing, and will see the day when, because of the programs that are offered to them through the planning of this government, they will indeed be self-reliant in caring for themselves, caring for their families, and feeling very good about that.

The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar criticized different programs. First it was said that people on welfare are adventurous people, and they do want to work. We recognize that, and because of that this government has developed the employment

opportunities program, which the members opposite just sort of shoo away. They don't want to look at hard facts like the thousands of people who were on social assistance and have been moved off social assistance in various training and upgrading programs. They can't get excited about that very successful statistic, so they try and hammer the different programs. "Well, it doesn't pay \$5,000 a month," or "It's not going to last for 100 years; it may only last for one or two years." You know, ridiculous areas of criticism for something that's very successful.

The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar said that well, that program doesn't work, because what about the people on social assistance that are hard to employ? But only minutes earlier she said that Albertans on social assistance are adventuresome; they want to work. We agree with that, and we believe that's a very positive program, the employment opportunities program, in taking people and showing them how they can be self-reliant, build self-esteem into their lives, and look once more to the future with hope and with joy because of the programs that have been offered to them and made available.

Again, the Member for Edmonton-Calder. I don't say this critically. I think the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar is a little -- a little -- older and wiser and knows better. But the Member for Edmonton-Calder is rather new and a little bit naive and just, you know, being ruled entirely by the heart and maybe not letting her head come into play on this issue when she says things like: older women are being discriminated against. And then she sits down, Mr. Speaker. Older women in the province being discriminated against. And then sits down. Again, if I were a cynic, which I'm not, I would say that that was cheap political opportunism. Not being a cynic, I say that that is just a little bit of care and initiative that's gone awry without the facts. Because in fact there is no discrimination in terms of age when it comes to social assistance in this province, in how we care for women or for men.

The member said that charity was terrible. As I look at this motion . . . Actually, this motion, Mr. Speaker, looking at food and housing and various types of allowance . . . And then to hear that charity is terrible. I thought to myself that there must be something about charity I don't know anything about that I'm missing here, so I looked up charity in the dictionary. I'm looking down just for a moment; I don't want to offend the member opposite so he thinks I'm making a speech. I just wrote quickly, scrawled out the definition. It's not a speech, honest, that I'm writing here.

But charity is described as: love of your fellow men -- I guess that could be women, too -- kindness, affection, beneficence, liberality -- if I can use that word carefully -- to those in distress. Now, what is terrible about that Mr. Speaker, that from a charitable heart, a heart of charity, we would want to help our fellow human beings in this province? The government recognizes that rather than doing that from a massive state monolithic operation that the members opposite feel would be best, a huge centralized control again, the communities, the FCSS programs . . . I could go on and on talking about at the community level, where people who know their neighbours are able to reach out to other people with charity and help them through difficult times.

For the reasons I've gone over, Mr. Speaker, which I certainly won't review at this time because it makes the members opposite quite nervous, I say that though I feel the motion is redundant that I cannot support it from the point of view that we are always reviewing our programs and always upgrading them where the need may be, I'm proud to be part not just of a

charitable government but of a very charitable province.

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to just make a few comments, and I'd like to just pose some questions. My first question is: why do we have food banks when we spend \$900 million a year on gambling in this province? Why do we need food banks when we have food stores bulging with food? We have exotic fruits all year round, fresh vegetables any time of the year. Why should some members of our society have to depend on charity when, I think, the economic strength in our community is sufficient to have enough food for all?

I have been on the receiving end of charity; at least my parents were and I was. I remember when I was a student in elementary school having to go down to the Red Cross to have a pair of boots issued to me. I remember when my mother used to go out and wash floors at 25 cents an hour. So I know what it's like to be on the other end. I find it interesting that in my constituency quite often the people I hear from the most are single women raising children alone, and I think they have a tough burden to carry out.

But, Mr. Speaker, in view of the hour . . . I would like to go into much more detail, but I think there's been a sufficient debate on both sides of the House on this item. I'd like to move that we adjourn debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-McKnight has moved adjournment on Motion 214. All those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Carried.

215. Moved by Mr. Chumir.

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to impose a surcharge of 10 percent on all fines for provincial offences, other than parking violations, in order to fund such initiatives as:

- (1) addressing the needs of victims of crime,
- (2) providing additional Check Stop programs to combat impaired driving,
- (3) improving access to the legal aid system, and
- (4) assisting important Charter of Rights challenges.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to be able to stand and move Motion 215 on the Order Paper.

The purpose of this motion is to provide for a surcharge of 10 percent on all fines levied in respect of provincial offences - other than parking offences, I might add. The purpose of this fund would be to establish a certain financial largess to be available to fund certain initiatives. Without being exhaustive, I have suggested four obvious needs which are related to our legal system. The first is the need to address the concerns of victims of crime; the second initiative would be that of providing additional Check Stop programs to combat impaired driving; the third would be that of improving access to the legal aid system; the fourth would be that of assisting important Charter of Rights challenges. Now, these aren't intended to be exclusive or exhaustive; they're presented by way of example. Indeed, one

could either add or perhaps subtract from that list as needs commend themselves to those who get into the merits in greater depth.

Now, the concept of a surcharge on fines is not, in fact, a new idea. We have, for example, a precedent in recently enacted federal amendments to the Criminal Code -- I believe it is Bill C-89 of the federal Parliament -- to provide for a variable surcharge. Basically, it's established at the level of 15 percent in order to create a pot for the purpose of funding education, counseling, and other programs for victims of crime.

Now, another precedent has been set in Manitoba, which has what is called the Justice for Victims of Crime Act, which was Bill 30 in the 1986 legislative session. That Act sets up what is called a Victims Assistance Fund to be used for the purpose of developing services and programs for victims of crime. Financial resources for the fund are generated through the imposition, in that instance, of a 12 percent surcharge on existing nonbylaw provincial fines, and the concept is stated to be based on the belief that those who break the law should bear a responsibility for supporting their victims. The legislation, in fact, provides for a maximum surcharge of 20 percent, so it can go up. The legislation provides for a fixed surcharge of \$25 in cases where a fine is not part of the final disposition of the court. In addition, a judge may reduce or waive the surcharge in cases of financial hardship.

Now, there are many complexities in such a scheme. These are dealt with in some depth in the Manitoba legislation, and I don't propose to get caught up in that web at this time. I would note that both the federal and the Manitoba legislative initiatives are geared towards victim of crime programs. As noted earlier, the Manitoba legislation is based on the premise that those who break the law should have the responsibility for supporting victims. I agree that there is a responsibility, although not exclusive responsibility, because I believe we as members of the general community have a duty to address this issue. In fact, I would refer to a declaration of the United Nations General Assembly. It's a declaration of basic principles of justice relating to victims of crime which was recommended by the seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders. The intent of that is to declare a commitment to the principles of providing victims with access to fair treatment, restitution, compensation, and social assistance. So this obligation is indeed recognized at an international level, and that's why the first initiative I have outlined in my motion is that of addressing the needs of victims of crime.

Indeed, this concept has already been recognized and enshrined in legislation in Alberta through the criminal compensation legislation, which provides for out-of-pocket losses. But victims, in fact, need greater attention than that which is provided by the very limited legislation we have at the present time. They need access to more services, more information, and assistance in times of stress and confusion. Manitoba suggests that victims ought to be encouraged to participate in programs of informal reconciliation in order to obtain redress from the perpetrators and also that victims ought to receive restitution and prompt disposition of prosecutions.

In summary, my observation with respect to this province is that not enough is being done. I hope this motion will serve to focus both on the problem itself and also on a potential avenue of funding which has been recognized both at the federal and the Manitoba levels. Of course, should this fail, there is always the lottery.

As important as victim assistance is, I would also suggest

that this fund may serve as a catalyst and this motion may serve as a searchlight beaming upon areas related to our legal system and to law enforcement that need greater attention. I have in this motion given three examples of areas I feel particularly strongly about. One of these areas is that of Check Stop programs to apprehend impaired drivers. I've mentioned in this House previously that I was several years ago a member of the Canadian Bar Association committee with respect to impaired driving. We studied a great deal of literature. The conclusion we divined from the literature was that the greatest deterrent to impaired driving was the perception that perpetrators would be caught. If you thought you were going to get caught, you didn't drive. And Check Stop programs were the best of any programs which led to that apprehension. It wasn't, in fact, simply an apprehension; it was a reality. So awareness is extremely important. We find classic examples during the Christmas period when the numbers of apprehensions actually go down because drivers are aware that we have these Check Stops, while the reality is that we should have and we need safe roads 52 weeks of the year.

Many individual police services either don't have the resources or, alternatively, they don't have the common sense to recognize the priority that this should be. Accordingly, I think there is a role for the provincial government to directly finance Check Stop programs. The government does not like to do that. It wishes to leave this to local initiative, and that is a viable and an arguable position. The provincial programs as a result of that conception are restricted only to an advertising role. There are some hundreds of thousands of dollars expended in that manner. The Solicitor General recently announced in rather vague terms that provincial funding towards Check Stops would be beefed up, I think perhaps leaving the implication that this would be towards direct funding of Check Stops when, in fact, the increase in funding was really for more advertising. Now, I think that is the wrong approach. We do need the advertising, but we need the programs even more so, and the best advertising is word of mouth from those who are apprehended and tell their friends and themselves to watch out next time.

So I would suggest that a surtax from perhaps even liquor-related offences such as illegal possession, which is a provincial offence . . .

MR. DOWNEY: I thought you said, "All of them."

MR. CHUMIR: It could be all of them. We're talking about an allocation here. I'm suggesting that perhaps if we want to attempt to link the punishment to the crime, we could also link the source of the offence and the fine to the ultimate use by designating the surtax on liquor-related offences to go perhaps to Check Stop programs, if one needs that form of linkage.

Now, a second area that needs greater attention and, indeed, more funding is that of our legal aid system. There is a maxim stated by the noted United States justice with the very unusual name of Learned Hand. And he was learned. Justice Learned Hand stated, "Justice shall not be rationed." He wasn't referring to himself. The law is indeed very, very complex, as we all know, and it's rather a frustration to many in our community who become enmeshed with the law that lawyers are not a luxury, they are a necessity. Unfortunately, they turn out to be a luxury in terms of the cost. Legal assistance is very expensive, and the implementation of a legal aid system is a great advance in our society.

AN HON. MEMBER: Who said they're essential? Who said lawyers were essential?

MR. CHUMIR: Well, only those who have been charged with criminal offences or who get involved in litigation say that lawyers are essential, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

As appreciative as I am of the fact that we do have a legal aid system and have recognized the importance of it in concept in this province, I am equally concerned and negatively impressed by the fact that it is inadequately funded in Alberta. Amongst the problems we see is the reality that many Albertans who are in need of assistance don't qualify as a result of income limits. Our legal aid system, in addition, doesn't cover many types of criminal offences because it doesn't satisfy the test of potential imprisonment or loss of livelihood, even though the offence may be important and a legal defence may be of vital significance to the accused. Of course, it doesn't cover a great, great range of noncriminal matters that are extremely important to individuals.

Each year thousands of applications for legal aid are turned down as a result of the primary problem which our legal aid system has, in the form of lack of funding. The provincial government is, unhappily, not very generous in this area. We heard a previous speaker waxing eloquently about how Alberta stands at the top of so many programs. Well, the latest statistics with respect to our legal aid system that I have, from 1984, reflect that Alberta stands seventh in per capita funding for legal aid. Now, let there be no thought that I see a portion of a surcharge going towards legal aid as a panacea for curing the paucity of funding, but it certainly could help, and it would help focus attention on the shortcomings of our legal aid system. Finally, though, for those who seek immediate rationales, there is a common sense to having those who are convicted pay something towards the establishment of a system of defence counsel.

The final area I would like to deal with that needs to be addressed in our society is that of providing assistance to fund important Charter of Rights challenges. Now, the starting point in this area is that the Charter of Rights establishes the very most fundamental rights of our community. It deals with the most important principles of our society, and as such it's essential that our citizens are enabled to enforce those rights when they have been infringed. When they attempt to enforce them, they come up against that old problem of expense. There is no easy answer to this situation, but there are some ways in which the difficulties can be ameliorated through some government action. Of course, as in so many other areas of justice, we lag behind. The federal government, for example, has established a \$10 million fund to provide for challenges where federal legislation infringes upon the Charter of Rights. Ontario has established a fund of approximately \$1 million to that same end. Alberta, not surprisingly, remains relatively uninterested; perhaps we could even say almost totally uninterested -- which is not surprising, I say, because the government has been obviously opposed to implementation of a Charter of Rights to begin with, and on top of that it is seen to oppose the application of the Charter in virtually every case in which it is raised in our courts. Certainly I'm unaware of the government ever standing behind anyone who has sought to have their Charter rights enforced. That has to change, and the starting point would be the implementation of a fund in Alberta to finance worthy Charter of Rights challenges

which would not otherwise go forward without assistance. And this, again, would be a worthy use of some of the funds from these surcharge sources.

Now, I emphasize again that these are presented as examples only of how the funding could be used. The key factor is that these reflect needs of our community related to the legal system which are not being addressed or are being inadequately addressed. This fund can't do everything. It wouldn't be a large fund. We would have to pick and choose amongst the objectives, and it may be that we would ultimately decide that all surcharge proceeds should go to victim programs. I would then say that we should still recognize the importance of Check Stop programs to a greater degree than we do, of the needs of the legal aid system to a greater degree than we do, of access to the courts for Charter of Rights challenges even in some degree, which would be more than we do and, by so doing, ensure that they are adequately funded.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Member for Red Deer-South.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to rise and comment very briefly on Motion 215. I want to begin by thanking the Member for Calgary-Buffalo for bringing it forward. I think it is a good motion. I think it deserves the discussion of this Assembly, and it does have some merit.

I'm not sure, and I'm not sure that the Member for Calgary-Buffalo is sure, that the four initiatives he's mentioned are necessarily the only initiatives that should be funded and whether indeed there would be enough proceeds from a 10 percent surcharge to address those four particular initiatives or not. I'm particularly interested, though, in the first two initiatives. I think we do need to be doing more, in particular for victims of crime. I think we've improved in that area of late but that there is indeed a lot more we should be doing.

As it relates to Check Stop, I had the opportunity of reading

the report that the Member for Calgary-Buffalo referred to in his comments. He was a co-author of that particular review. I would have to concur wholeheartedly; that is to say that the single most greatest deterrent we can implement as it relates to impaired driving is the deterrent of being caught. If more people actually thought they were going to get caught as a result of drinking excessively and then driving, fewer people would be doing it. That's a very key factor.

I'm very pleased with some of the initiatives that our own Solicitor General has taken of late in that direction, with or without this particular motion in place. We are increasing our Check Stops considerably; we are providing assistance to the cities throughout this province to be able to have more Check Stops. I think we're going to see that have an impact as it relates to the statistics here in the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry we're not going to have more of an opportunity to discuss some of the pros and cons of the recommendation that has been brought forward. Again, I do want to compliment the member for bringing it forward. I think it does deserve consideration.

On perhaps a lighter note, Mr. Speaker -- and I know the Member for Calgary-Buffalo would want to support this -- in addition to 10 percent on all fines for provincial offences, perhaps we could put a surcharge on lawyers' fees to assist with the legal aid system.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the hour I would beg leave to adjourn debate on Motion 215.

MR. SPEAKER: Those in favour of the motion to adjourn debate, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Motion carries.

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

