

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTAhead: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Title: **Friday, June 24, 1988 10:00 a.m.**
Date: 88/06/24

[The House met at 10 a.m.]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, we give thanks for the bounty of our province: our land, our resources, and our people.

We pledge ourselves to act as good stewards on behalf of all Albertans.

Amen.

head: **NOTICES OF MOTIONS**

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I rise to provide oral notice to members of the Assembly that I intend to move under Standing Order 40 at the end of question period today a motion regarding the excessive use of closure in the Assembly, and with your permission I'd like to hand copies of this motion out during question period.

MR. SPEAKER: Through the Chair, please, first, and then distribution.

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table copies for all members of an amendment I intend to propose to Bill 21, the Employment Standards Code, when it is debated later this morning.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the Department of Tourism's annual report as required by statute. It is for the year April 1, '86 to March 31, '87.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Northern Alberta Development Council it's my pleasure to table the annual report for 1987-88 and at the same time file the conference report on Water in Northern Alberta and Family Violence in Northern Alberta.

MS MJOLSNES: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table for all members copies of an amendment I wish to move to Bill 21, dealing with minimum wage exemptions for disabled Albertans.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure this morning to introduce to you and through you to my fellow members of this Assembly, 40 very energetic young students from grade 6 of the Murdoch school in Crossfield. These students are accompanied by Mr. Barrett and Mrs. Minte, both teachers at the school, and parents Mrs. Brigan, Mrs. Schlender, and Mr. Barry Williams. I wonder if they would stand and receive the very warm welcome of this Assembly.

Report of Commission on Future Health Care

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care. My question is relating to the report tabled yesterday from the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans. First of all, the report I believe has some excellent suggestions, many of which were put forward before by my colleague from Edmonton-Centre, and these include the idea of a hospital ombudsman, regional hospital councils, and increased funding for nursing education. However, the government appears to have stymied the commission in terms of dealing with such major issues as the high turnover and burnout rate of registered nurses, the role of nursing assistants, nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, community-based nurses: those sorts of issues. My question is to the minister. I say to the minister that these are glaring omissions from any report dealing with the future of the nursing profession, and I wonder if the minister can explain the oversight in terms of the reference given to the commission.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, it would be the government's intention, as the Premier indicated yesterday, to take some relatively early action on the recommendations presented by the Hyndman commission. But before that we would certainly want to get some reaction from the people who are most directly involved -- the nurses, hospital boards, and others in the system -- to the recommendations in the report. Indeed, if there are other recommendations that are brought forward by some of the players in the system, we would want to look at those as well.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, so the minister is then saying that they would take a look at these things. Even though it's not been part of the commission, these things could be looked at in the future then?

MR. M. MOORE: Well, what I'm suggesting, Mr. Speaker, is that I don't believe the commission meant their report to be all-inclusive of every single problem or concern that nurses might have. It deals with a lot of major concerns, but there are obviously other areas that arise from time to time that need extra work on them. In fact, in many of the commission's recommendations, they indicate that there ought to be some progressive work by hospital boards and nurses and others in the system to deal with the issues, and they recommend co-operation for dealing with the issues. Now, that's going to take a lot of additional work and effort on behalf of all parties.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, to go into what is in the report, one of the things they should have looked at is the right to full collective bargaining. But they were clearly told that this wasn't in their commission.

But, Mr. Speaker, to make matters worse, there's one major concern that I have with this report, and that's that the government is going to encourage pilot projects involving private nursing companies which would contract their services to an entire hospital or nursing home or particular units within a hospital or nursing home. The minister knows full well this may square with Conservative dogma, but it would make the situation much more difficult, especially with the United Nurses. My question to the minister. Will he show some leadership at this particular time and reject this particular recommendation before someone gets carried away and creates a confrontation unnecessarily?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, that's certainly one of the recommendations that falls into the category of those that we would want to get some reaction, from those most directly involved, before implementing. In fact, we need the co-operation of those most directly involved before implementing such an idea even on a trial basis. That means that we would want to hear from hospital boards, the owners of private-sector nursing homes, the nurses themselves, perhaps people like the registered nursing assistants as well, before we would get involved in that sort of a recommendation. I think it's a very interesting one, and it's a timely recommendation in terms of the evolution of our health care system. But again, we want to carefully assess the reaction of those who are involved in the entire system before we would move on a recommendation of that nature.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I know the word privatization excites Conservatives. They start to salivate with excitement every time they hear the word.

MR. SPEAKER: What is the question?

MR. MARTIN: But my question is, specifically, flowing from the minister's answer then. It's clear that at least one group has publicly opposed this particular recommendation. Is the minister saying, then, that unless there's unanimity, they will not proceed with this particular resolution, and if so, Mr. Speaker, are they saying that if that's not the case, they are actively going to proceed with privatization of nursing services?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, no. What I'm suggesting is that that's one of the recommendations that we would want to carefully review with respect to the comments that are made by the various groups who are involved -- hospital boards, nurses, and others -- before we would take any action. I think it's far too early to prejudge the support or lack of support for any particular recommendation. The report's been out for less than 24 hours. People have not had adequate time to reflect on the recommendations that are made in total, and we would like, I think, to see that reflection before we take any action either rejecting or accepting any of the recommendations.

As the Premier said yesterday, generally the report is a very effective one in coming to grips with many of the concerns that have been expressed by nurses. Certainly it was not meant to be totally inclusive of all their concerns, and we do want to hear from the players in the field before we implement it.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. I take it from the answers -- can the minister then assure the House that there will be no unilateral implementation of any part of this report without consultation and meeting again with the various sectors involved?

MR. M. MOORE: No, Mr. Speaker, I'm not about to suggest that there won't be some action on some parts or all of the report. It's not expected that everyone would agree totally. Some of the hospital boards may not agree with recommendations in the report, and some of those who are involved with the United Nurses of Alberta, for example, may not agree with it. But certainly we're going to look at the entire report, and we're going to listen to the responses that come from the community, those who are involved, before we take any action. But as the Premier said, we do intend to follow up as quickly as possible and resolve some of these issues.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Were these recommendations made based on submissions of briefs from the various groups such as the United Nurses of Alberta and the Association of Registered Nurses?

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Hyndman advised me that as far as the commission was concerned, they felt they heard from everyone who was interested in the issue of problems associated with nursing, certainly from all of the major players including the hospital boards, the Alberta Hospital Association. I believe that the appendices to the report would indicate that there was every opportunity for Albertans to be involved.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. One of the main concerns of the nurses was the number of nurses on duty on various floors and during various assignments. Could the minister indicate whether that decision would be dealt with by government as such because it's a financial one, or would that matter be left to the hospital boards in terms of final determination and allocation of staff?

MR. M. MOORE: Well, firstly, Mr. Speaker, the agreement between the Alberta Hospital Association as representatives of the hospital boards, the United Nurses of Alberta, and the other unions involved does deal with the issue of staffing. The report, however, makes a recommendation with respect to the flexibility of working hours, which I think perhaps is at least as important or more important an issue than the total number of staffing. The report doesn't provide a solution but does suggest that management and labour ought to get together and try to work out more flexible working hours for the nursing profession, and that's referring particularly to weekend work.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question.

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

Use of Closure

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, if you listened to the Premier or the Government House Leader recently, you'd think that closure was commonplace in Legislatures and the Canadian Parliament. But as of today all Albertans know, for instance, that it has never been used in Saskatchewan and only once in the history of Manitoba. So I wonder if under the circumstances the House leader will stand by the Premier's statement of yesterday that closure is as much a part of democracy as question period is.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, obviously, the role of question period is quite different from that of the role of the processing of legislation. However, in the processing of legislation, inasmuch as the rules provide for considerable leeway in making amendments and subamendments and going on at length by many members in the Legislature, I believe that closure is necessary as a component of that complex set of rules in order to prevent undue delay.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ. I think . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me, hon. member. The Chair will have to listen very closely to what the questions are, because the member, having proposed a motion under Standing Order 40,

puts us into a situation that perhaps this is anticipation of what's ahead.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be carefully crafting my questions so as not to anticipate the motion I'll be moving. I just want to call these people on being the power junkies that they are.

Mr. Speaker, I noted that the minister wouldn't say he does agree with the Premier, so I wonder if he'll now tell the Assembly if it's his intention to invoke closure on Bills 21 and 22 prior to them being called for third reading.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I explained the different role of the question period and of the set of rules that deal with debate, and I did not disagree with the Premier.

With respect to the question just asked, Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding of the rules that it is quite out of order to move closure prior to there having been debate on any matter.

MS BARRETT: Well, supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Government House Leader then. Can he tell us just what the government's timetable is for basically stripping all working Albertans' rights under 21 and 22? How soon after calling third reading is he going to invoke closure?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, this clearly is a question of anticipation, but dealing first with the preamble, the hon. member well knows that the objective of the legislation is to try to provide for what some have called a level playing field to try to balance the respective interests within society.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the question itself, it is quite impossible for me to indicate what timetable the government would have with respect to any matter that comes before the Assembly. That is a judgment call, and it is, I think, a requirement of the government to listen carefully to the comments from various members of the Assembly. We do that and then make a judgment as to how much debating time is necessary to hear all of the innovative new concepts and suggestions that could be advanced. When those become recycled and it becomes clear that we're into a delay, then obviously we have to take a decision.

MS BARRETT: Oh, I don't call 55 amendments recycled, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary question.

MS BARRETT: Sure, Mr. Speaker. Will the Government House Leader, for a change, after moving his government's Bills through closure at every successive stage of reading in the Assembly, now commit his government to reviving the democratic tradition of parliaments by agreeing not to invoke closure at third reading? Why doesn't he do that?

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, obviously any commitments on my part not to use certain rules of the Legislature which are provided for eventualities where there could be -- and I will use this expression because we're talking about democracy and how it works, and this Legislature is part of democracy. Democracy is only effective when there can be decisions made effectively. If it is possible for a group to stop decision-making in a democracy or in a Legislature, I consider that to be tyranny of the minority.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Boo.

MR. YOUNG: And that's exactly what those rules are there to...

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, I believe, the phrase of "boo" is not common to this Legislature and should not be tolerated. [interjections]

Member for Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: I'm trying, Mr. Speaker. I have to wait for the din across the floor to settle a bit.

To the Government House Leader. In light of the fact that we have had many hours and days of debate, many times until after midnight, on these Bills, can the House leader verify whether the opposition has faced countless points of order based on needless repetition and total irrelevancy?

MR. YOUNG: Well, Mr. Speaker, I cannot respond because part of that is a question of judgment, and I wouldn't wish to offer a judgment on the opposition other than to reflect on undue delay. I would confirm, however, that as of 1 o'clock today, I believe by my count, we will have spent 39 hours and 50 minutes thus far on these two Bills and have filled roughly 135 to 140 pages of *Hansard*.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Westlock-Sturgeon, supplementary.

MR. TAYLOR: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Without discussing whether anything's more irrelevant than the Member for Red Deer-North, I would like to ask the House leader: in view of the new-found delight in closure that the government is obviously indulging themselves in, is he considering a system of hours and minutes for each Bill as it comes up? You know, 10 minutes for Agriculture, 39 hours for Labour, 42.5 hours for Education...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for the question.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer the hon. leader of the Liberal Party a different perspective. In my position, I see my position as having a responsibility for the effective conduct from the government's point of view of the Legislature in terms of its allocation of time and also for achieving the directions of government for which we were elected. Therefore, as I said before, I will have to make my judgments on the amount of time which each Bill deserves based upon the interests of all members of the Assembly, in whatever chair they're sitting, to assure that if they have innovative new ideas, if they have improvements to suggest to legislation, if they have additions to suggest to legislation, there should be time to do that. It's on that basis that all judgments on any Bill will be offered.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

Programs for Disabled Adults

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Social Services. Despite the glowing praise this government often heaps on itself, its record on matters pertaining to disabled Albertans is a sad one indeed. For example, in Calgary alone there are some 150 adults with developmental disabilities who are awaiting placement to vocational programs;

another 74 are graduating in the next week or so from school. My question to the minister: could the minister indicate what steps she intends to take to address this shortfall on available space for these valuable programs?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I think it's important to note that we don't believe that the best kind of programming that could be made available to these special folks is necessarily in an institutional kind of setting. There are many, many more organizations now offering assistance in taking people out to specific jobsites and seeing that they receive on-the-job training.

But I think it's important to note that a major study has been undertaken by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury, who has compiled information from people across the province, including those who were involved in programming. That information will be discussed widely later this summer with an expectation that recommendations will come forward as to how to better enhance the programming available.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, while admitting that they can do a certain amount under private enterprise, the fact that there are no vacancies there must concern the minister. For instance, the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute, VRRI for short, is undertaking for the first time in 10 years a drive to try to raise funds to cover the shortfall that this niggardly government isn't able to make up to educate and help these people. What will you do about that?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the organizations who are contracted by Alberta Social Services enter into a contractual arrangement. If they wish to go to the community to enhance their programming, surely that's up to the individual organization.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, something is the matter when we can upgrade Husky but we can't upgrade our disabled adults.

Mr. Speaker, the VRRI, as you are well aware, coming from Calgary, has a great reputation for innovative research and programs. It has developed over the years in dealing with the needs of disabled Albertans. Obviously, that's going to have to be put aside. Does it not concern the minister that she should be able to go to the Treasurer and get some money to at least keep the research program going and keep these people from going out and begging on the streets to do a very necessary task that the government should be doing?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, once again the hon. member is placing the emphasis on one particular component of programming. It is my expectation, certainly, in light of all the evidence available from other jurisdictions and where it has been tried in Alberta, that programming that is available directly in the community seems to be far more satisfactory for a very high percentage of these individuals.

MR. TAYLOR: My final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, is to the Deputy Premier. If this government can find millions, nearly billions, for the Husky upgrader, to upgrade Mr. Pocklington to make him feel that he is a capitalist along the way, to upgrade Cargill, why can they not find a few measly tens of thousands of dollars to help upgrade our disabled adult Albertans?

MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. leader of the

Liberals is aware that each department has its own budget, and on a per capita basis the services given to Albertans are far above that given to any other province. I hear from the leader that even more should be spent. Of course, those kinds of decisions are always under consideration.

Perhaps the hon. member is not aware of the percentage of our revenues that go to pay these bills, of the high percentage that does come from the energy sector. It's essential that that industry be kept healthy, that our Alberta young people be kept employed, and that the economy be kept in a healthy state. I know it's rather easy, Mr. Speaker, to do as the opposition is prone to do, to say spend, spend, spend, but they have a short list when it comes to ideas as to how to pay the bills.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Edmonton-Calder.

MS MJOLSNESS: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Groups in Calgary that work with persons with disabilities have expressed to me a concern that they are not being listened to by the department. I would ask the minister: would the minister undertake to meet with service deliverers in the Calgary region and discuss the numerous concerns that they have?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I believe I have met with all groups who ever requested a meeting with me. Just a few weeks ago some came out to my constituency office, which is available to them on weekends as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Supplementary question to the hon. minister. As I understand it, IRTC and VRRI were rather centennial projects in co-operation with the federal government. At that time the object was that these operations would be rather self-sufficient by being able to supply certain services to the general community. Does that objective still apply? In terms of the government's policy, what is the government doing to enhance that objective of those organizations?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a very good question, because it is one that over the course of the last few months I have been speaking to with a number of private-sector businesspeople who feel that they are now competing against government dollars going into programs. I think the hon. member will be well aware that in many cases products are sold on the market that have been produced in a sheltered workshop or rehabilitation type of centre. It is my view that government should be involved in enhancing the capacity of those special folks to work in those places or be rehabilitated in those places but should only pay the amount that is the difference between their capacity to produce and what it is that would normally be met in the private-sector area.

MR. HYLAND: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Social Services. I wonder if the minister can assure the Assembly that the Department of Social Services will continue to work with volunteer groups such as suggested to look after these people, rather than the Liberal attitude and the Liberal policy of discouraging volunteerism in this province.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that certainly our paper Caring & Responsibility hopefully lays very carefully

the base for the type of participation and co-operation between the voluntary community and government. I think it is well known, and hopefully the leader of the Liberal Party has examined all the programming in the province and will realize that community organizations for the most part are those that are directly involved.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Little Bow, followed by Red Deer-North, followed by Vegreville.

Agricultural Financing

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Associate Minister of Agriculture, in a general sense with regards to the Agricultural Development Corporation and, as well, a specific focus. The Alberta Court of Appeal made a decision with regards to deficiency payments, of which the minister is aware. Could the minister indicate whether ADC has applied any policy since that ruling that has requested deficiency payments to be made by various farmers that are having mortgage and payment problems?

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, ADC is very carefully reviewing the judgment that the member speaks of, and they are not actively pursuing the personal covenant under their foreclosures or quitclaims. But in many cases the hon. member will recognize that in terms of a quitclaim, it's an agreement between a borrower and a lender to agree to the resolution of a debt. In terms of the borrower, the borrower agrees to take certain assets. In some cases they may agree to take some funds over and above those assets in order to release the borrower from the total debt. In this case it's a negotiated settlement, and it has absolutely nothing to do with a personal covenant.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Following the decision of the Alberta Court of Appeal there was room for amendments of some of the Alberta statutes in order to prevent the Farm Credit Corporation from taking deficiency payments. Could the minister indicate whether she has received representation from the federal government or anyone else for amendments to the Alberta statutes; for example, the property Act of Alberta?

MRS. CRIPPS: No, Mr. Speaker. I have not received any requests. I do not know if the Attorney General has, but certainly I have not.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate whether any directives have gone from her office or any other office of government to the Treasury Branches of the province that would prohibit their ability of collecting on deficiency judgments?

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, no directive has gone from my office. I certainly can't speak for the Provincial Treasurer or the Attorney General, but no directive has gone from my office with regard to this, with the exception of a directive to ADC to review the situation and give me an evaluation of it.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary. In terms of some farmers that hold ADC loans and others, at present the grazing associations of southern Alberta are unable to keep the cattle on the grazing leases. For example, the Lomond

grazing association has to return cattle as of July 8 and August 1. Could the associate minister or the Minister of Agriculture indicate whether the government is considering any kind of financial assistance in these cases?

MR. SPEAKER: First question?

MR. R. SPEAKER: That was sneaky.

MR. FOX: That's not a supplementary. That's a whole new question.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I know that the ADC borrowers in the province who may have cattle on the grazing reserves are certainly concerned with the lack of moisture to provide adequate grazing, and certainly the government recognizes that problem. The minister may want to add to my comments, but I can only tell the member at this time that I've noticed farmers using their ingenuity to provide pasture. There are lots of new fences going up. I've talked to the Burnt Lake, Fort Macleod, and Ponoka auctions. At this point in time there is no panic selling of cattle. There are a few more than normal cow/calf pairs reaching the market but certainly no herd liquidation. The only one I heard about specifically was at Fort Macleod. The fellow had sold half of his herd, the half with the bull calves, so that he had the heifer calves for replacement next year. I know that farmers all over the province are thinking about the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. We've really gone astray, grazing on this issue. The Chair showed its prejudice for southern Alberta on that one. I apologize to the House.

Supplementary, back to the main issue, Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, do not apologize. You're on the side of the angels on that one, because I'm going to continue.

MR. SPEAKER: Do the angels know that?

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the minister. While expressing disappointment that she still hasn't informed her watchdogs to call off foreclosing or chasing on a personal covenant, would the minister for her bedtime reading put down the new Saskatchewan Farm Security Act, which puts into place legislation which forbids the foreclosure of farms for three years on the home quarter and, in addition, stops any pursuance by the FCC or the ADC type of arrangement they have over their . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR: . . . foreclosures in Alberta, which forbids their . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, horse! Thank you.

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, I do hope that you will allow me some leeway in responding to this question, which has been asked again and again and again. The member doesn't like the answer. On June 3 the member asked the question; on May 17 the member asked the question; on May 12 the member asked the question; on April 26 . . .

MR. TAYLOR: Tell me how often you answered it.

MRS. CRIPPS: I said that you don't like the answer.

On April 15, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. TAYLOR: What is the answer?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister, may the Chair assume that the answer is still the same? [interjections] Good. Then the member will now look up *Hansard*, and we now recognize Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I assume the 25-year veteran gets the opportunity to chew his cud once in a while in question period. But back to the original topic. I'd like to ask the minister: if an ADC client is unable to make all or part of his or her mortgage payment because they've used the funds that they have available to make payments on operating loans or trade accounts, does she consider, then, that they have tampered with ADC assets and as a result ADC has the right to try and realize on the personal covenant?

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, in the preface to his question he talked about chewing one's cud, and I can assure him that the hon. member to his right has never had a drought situation where there's a shortage of forage. But in direct response . . . Only you and I caught that. But in direct response to your question, each situation has to be dealt with on its own merit. Certainly if borrowers are trying to meet their debt obligations throughout the community and through ADC and are talking to the lender, they would not be penalized. It's only in cases where there's blatant misuse of and/or transfer of ADC property. In some cases the new indexed deferral plan will be of assistance to those people.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The Member for Red Deer-North, followed by Vegreville.

Student Employment Programs

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Career Development and Employment. At this particular time of year in Red Deer, and as a matter of fact throughout the province, thousands of high school students are hitting the streets in anticipation of finding employment. Their anticipation is high, and I'm wondering if the minister can tell us if his department is doing anything to help high school students in their job searches.

MR. ORMAN: In response to the Member for Red Deer-North's question, Mr. Speaker, there's a couple of things that we try and do to assist high school students that are coming into the labour market this time of year -- as a matter of fact, within the next week, I would assume. Firstly, the hon. member should know and all members should know that we have more students employed in Alberta today than in the history of this province. Some 99,000 students are working in the province, and we expect as a result of high school getting out for the summer about another 30,000 to 35,000 students will be out looking for jobs.

Now, two things that we try and do to address this issue: the first thing we do is that hire-a-student conducts job search techniques in the high schools. They go in, and they have conducted these programs for some 23,000 high school students to give them an idea of how to look for a job in the summer. The second thing, of course, is that the career and life management pro-

gram that is instituted by the Minister of Education in the schools also has job search techniques incorporated in that curriculum.

The other thing we have done and announced yesterday, Mr. Speaker, is we have put another \$1 million into the summer temporary employment program to facilitate high school students coming into the job market for this summer.

MR. DAY: A supplementary to the minister. Has the minister been able to analyze some of the factors that have caused this significant drop in unemployment, for future reference and anticipation then?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the unemployment rate for youth has dropped from 19.1 percent last year to 12.4 percent this year. It is a very significant drop in the unemployment rate. [interjections] Now, coupling the drop in the unemployment rate with the increased number of students looking for jobs . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please, in the House.

MR. ORMAN: . . . makes that number even more significant, because it's not young people leaving the labour force; they're coming in at the same time the unemployment rate in that area is going down. So it's very significant, and one of the reasons, obviously, is that the health of the economy is significant enough to be able to absorb young people looking for jobs while companies are trying to expand their businesses, need temporary summer help, or for people who are going on holiday, vacation. So it is for those reasons. Obviously, we have record numbers of young people working in the labour force for the summer. We haven't changed our budget substantially since last year, so it's very encouraging.

I should also note to the member that the average wage has increased this year compared to other years too.

MR. DAY: For information purposes for high school students doing their job searches, has the minister been able to categorize the types of jobs they may anticipate finding? [interjections]

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the opposition may not find youth unemployment interesting to them. It certainly is to the members on this side of the House, so I would hope they would allow me to continue, because we take this matter very seriously.

The types of jobs for young people in the summer vary, Mr. Speaker. We have various elements. We have the provincial government department that allows young people to come in and get on-the-job experience in jobs that are related to their career path. We also have the community element that allows for nonprofit organizations and Metis settlements to hire young people through the summer months. It is difficult to try and determine the nature and the types of jobs, but I think suffice to say that any work experience for young people at this age is very important and the experience that they will carry with them for the rest of their life.

MR. DAY: Well, Mr. Speaker, to the minister of career development or the Minister of Education. Is the minister concerned that with the strength of the youth job market and the wages being offered, students in the fall may in fact be discouraged from returning to school and may stay in the job market?

MR. ORMAN: That is an obvious concern of myself in this

responsibility in that if we are encouraging young people to find a job, particularly if it's a summer job after they finish grade 12, that they understand the importance of continuing their education. I had the opportunity to speak to the graduating class of Immanuel Christian school in Lethbridge, and that subject did come up, Mr. Speaker. All we can do is point out to them that we have the highest level of educational attainment in this province, and for that reason it's very competitive in the labour market. You have to have a high level of education to be competitive, and a high level of skills training. I would hope that the teachers, the educators, the parents, and we as MLAs and legislators can encourage young people to take temporary employment but at the same time encourage them to go back and improve their education.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Belmont, supplementary.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the third summer that the minister has announced STEP programs late in the year, two announcements for the same buck. I'm wondering if the minister is ever going to come clean and announce one project with two different start-up dates rather than making cheap political points at the expense of young Albertans.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, we've just seen an example of the opposition's attitude towards youth unemployment. We have moved on an initiative to put another million dollars into the STEP budget for the 30,000 to 35,000 young people coming into the labour market who will be looking for jobs this summer. If he thinks that's a cheap political action, I take exception to it, and so will the young people who get jobs under this program.

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville, main question.

Environmental Concerns

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are to the Minister of the Environment. The release of massive amounts of carbon dioxide into the earth's atmosphere is generally considered to be the major cause of the so-called greenhouse effect. Now, this warming trend is predicted to disrupt the earth's climate in a number of ways and certainly disrupt agriculture, not the least of which is a trend towards increasing drought in the province of Alberta. Recognizing that seven world leaders gathered in Toronto last week at the Economic Summit, identified global climate change as a priority issue and made reference to the important world conference on the changing atmosphere to be held in Toronto next week, I want to ask the minister . . . Because Alberta has a chance here to truly lead the way, I'd like to know what innovative, made-in-Alberta approach to combat the greenhouse effect the minister is sending with this government's representatives to that conference in Toronto next week.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, what a delightful question, Mr. Speaker. It's a chance to recount a little bit of history here. The hon. member should be aware that in September -- September 11, in fact -- of 1987 at an international conference sponsored by Canada for some 60 nations of the world, a conference held in Montreal, the first ever environmental protocol was signed. That particular protocol dealt with such matters as the ozone

layer, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and basically called on the signatories to the agreement to take certain steps. That information has been provided to all members of the Assembly. That international conference, which was held in Montreal in September of 1987, was a direct result of input provided by this government of Alberta to the federal authority in previous years to that.

I would also like to point out that it was in the year 1986 that this Minister of the Environment served as the national president of the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers and was very active in providing information, dialogue, and suggestions to the federal authority with respect to that matter. The conference that will be held in Toronto very shortly is a direct result of this continuing impact.

I should also like to point out that it was one week ago, in Halifax on Friday of last week, that I signed and was a signatory to a communiqué that went to the Prime Minister of Canada asking the Prime Minister of Canada to raise environmental matters at the summit. Such matters were raised by the Prime Minister of Canada in Toronto earlier this week, and the communiqué that did come out listed three clauses associated with environmental matters on an international level.

MR. FOX: Well, Mr. Speaker, a lot of talk and no answers. But is the minister aware that authorities around the world identify the major cause of the greenhouse effect as the burning of fossil fuels? Would he agree with the statement by the federal government's atmospheric advisor, Dr. Hengeveld, who states that when you use the biosphere as your energy source, you're not contributing to the net increase of CO₂ in any way. In other words, the best solution to reverse the greenhouse effect is ethanol.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, I think, Mr. Speaker, there's absolutely no doubt what one of the causes is of the greenhouse effect in the world. We've talked about that. Surely if the Member for Vegreville had any degree of decency and honesty with respect to the question he just raised, he would then simply also, with some degree of admiration, congratulate the current Minister of the Environment in this province of Alberta for talking about this matter for nearly two years and raising it on frequent occasions. The Member for Vegreville, I'm sure, missed the opportunity to join with me when I stood on the steps of this Legislative Assembly some months ago and met with a series of environmental groups in our province and basically said that there are a number of initiatives that we have to take, not only in Alberta but in Canada.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you, hon. member. Time for question period has expired. Might we have unanimous consent to complete this series of questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, supplementary. He may not be the best one, but we're certainly hopeful that he's the only one.

But seriously, though, I will send the minister a copy of our background paper that explains the role that ethanol has to play in combating the greenhouse effect and hope he'll take that to Ontario. My question: recognizing that the minister himself signed the National Task Force on the Environment and the

Economy, that refers to the importance of having a sustainable economic development -- in other words, linking the economy and the environment -- is the minister prepared to commit the resources of his department to work for a made-in-Alberta solution; that is, developing an ethanol industry that will help improve our economy and clean up our environment at the same time?

MR. KOWALSKI: Gee, Mr. Speaker, I simply once again don't know where the Member for Vegreville has been for some period of time. He presents himself to this Assembly with a fair degree of religious zeal and fanaticism on this particular subject but conveniently seems to ignore certain very important steps that have occurred. I would like to draw to the attention of the hon. Member for Vegreville the Budget Address of 1987. I would like to refer him to page 85 in that particular Budget Address of 1987 -- not 1988 but 1987 -- when it basically says, in talking about a fuel tax in our province, that propane, methanol, ethanol, and natural gas will not be subject to tax. Now, that initiative was taken nearly 15 months ago. There is a subsidy provided in the province of Alberta with respect to ethanol, notwithstanding all of the subject matters that have been raised.

In addition to that, one member of this Assembly, the very distinguished Member for Ponoka-Rimbey, has on the Order Paper, Orders of the Day, on this particular agenda that we have, talking and asking the Legislative Assembly to take certain steps with respect to ethanol. Now, these matters are before the House. These matters have been put in place. Discussions have been held. [interjections] The responses have been provided by the very dynamic Minister of Agriculture in our province with respect to ethanol. I am a signatory . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you. [interjections] I wonder if people in the galleries think that today happens to be Friday?

Vegreville, final supplementary.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I'd just about given up hope for an ethanol industry with this oil industry cabinet. But if we've found an advocate, I'm thankful, and I'll do all I can to help the minister. I'd like to ask him this question. He's had a little time to think about it because I asked his colleague the Minister of Community and Occupational Health last week. Will the minister support the more rapid removal of toxic lead compounds from gasoline and its replacement with clean-burning ethanol rather than the petrochemical replacements for lead that are . . .

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

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the removal of lead in fuels in this country will be complete no later than the end of 1992. That has been an initiative that ministers of the environment in this country have worked with the federal authority in putting in place. That announcement has been made, initiative has taken place, alternatives to lead are in place, and we have a very clearly defined policy for implementation across this country. Once again it seems that the simple recanting of a policy by the NDP is simply saying, "Well, it's not enough, and it's too late." The fact of the matter is that a very dramatic initiative has occurred in this country that has been agreed to by all of the provincial jurisdictions of this country. That policy will be implemented. It is on schedule, and quite frankly it's ahead of

many jurisdictions in the world. I think we should be very proud of what we're doing, and we should look back periodically to see what it is we're doing. By the end of 1992 lead will not be a factor in gasolines and fuels in this country.

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

MR. DOWNEY: A supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if he would also comment and perhaps press for the removal as well of another heavy metal compound used for raising the octane in fuels, commonly known as MMT?

MR. KOWALSKI: That matter is already under way, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is one of the very few provinces where the tax structure on gasoline leaves leaded gas two or three cents cheaper than unleaded and encourages its use. I'm wondering whether the Minister of the Environment, who is responsible for this area, has been pushing for an increase in tax on leaded gas and might even consider using the funds from the tax to help develop an ethanol industry in this province.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important to bring the Member for Calgary-Buffalo up to date with respect to the fuel taxation regime that does exist in the country of Canada. By way of that I would like to draw his attention to the Budget Address given in 1988. If one takes a look at the gasoline taxes that do occur across the country of Canada, one would look that in Alberta the fuel tax per litre is 5 cents in Canada. By comparison, in Liberal Quebec it's 14.4 cents; in Liberal Ontario it's 8.3 cents; in British Columbia it's 9.9 cents per litre. I can provide that information by simply recounting the situation in the other jurisdictions in this country. But there's absolutely no doubt that Alberta has the smallest amount of gasoline tax of any jurisdiction in our country. Just to repeat again, it goes from a minimum of at least 7 cents per litre in Saskatchewan to 14.4 cents per litre in Quebec, and in Alberta it's just a very modest, paltry 5 cents per litre.

MR. SPEAKER: Time for question period has expired. Request under Standing Order 40 by Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, under our House rules we have the opportunity to consider a motion when it is determined to be of an urgent nature by the Assembly. Prior to arguing the urgency of the motion, I'd like to read the motion out and get your agreement to proceed with the urgency debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. The motion was circulated earlier to the whole House. No need for that. Please just speak to the . . .

MS BARRETT: On the urgency right now, Mr. Speaker? That's fine with me.

Mr. Speaker, the urgency of this matter is that if we don't contemplate now requiring the government not to further invoke closure on Bills that have in both levels of their debate, both

stages of their debate, suffered closure motions, we won't get a chance again. In other words, today is the only day that we can contemplate this motion. I urge members to agree to the urgency of the matter, because both at second reading, which is the first opportunity for debate, and at committee reading Bills 21 and 22 suffered closure. That's after Bill 10, the Interprovincial Lottery Amendment Act, suffered closure at third reading. That makes five times in a matter of six weeks. I'm sure this is a record not only for Canada but . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Urgency.

MS BARRETT: That's my point, that it may also be a record for parliamentary democracy. I'd like to see that record stopped now while we have the opportunity to stop it. If we don't stop it now, Mr. Speaker . . .

Quite frankly, we know that what's up for debate later today is Bill 21, in committee, and closure will be invoked; we've had notice. Monday: government business. We have no guarantee now, following the questions that I raised with the Government House Leader today in question period, that Bills 21 and 22 might not come up for third reading, after which he has the right to invoke closure again. I'm asking members of this Assembly to say, "Stop this." It really is reckless. It's unnecessary. It's damaging the democratic tradition in the Alberta Assembly. The urgency is that today is the day. It is the only day we can agree to do this, Mr. Speaker. If we don't agree today, it may be too late, and that would be a real shame. I've made the point about, you know, the power addiction that I see happening here. I urge members of the Assembly to agree with me in this motion. It really is important in the name of democracy.

MR. SPEAKER: Under Standing Order 40 only the mover may state the case of urgency.

Those in favour of giving unanimous consent, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: Request fails.

MR. TAYLOR: Double closure. Double closure.

MR. SPEAKER: That's not closure, hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. It's Standing Orders of the House. It's necessary procedure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. SPEAKER: Standing Orders are Standing Orders.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: May we revert briefly to the Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce, on behalf of my colleague Dr. Buck, a group of grade 6 students from the Pope John XXIII school. They're 44 students in the public gallery with the teachers Mr. Larry Sheriff, Miss Sowinski, and Miss Brenda Critch. I'd like them to stand and be recognized by the Assembly here today.

[On motion, the Assembly resolved itself into Committee of the Whole]

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (Committee of the Whole)

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Committee of the Whole will please come to order.

Bill 21 Employment Standards Code

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Government House Leader.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, with respect to Bill 21, I move that further consideration of any or all of the resolutions, clauses, sections, or titles of Bill 21 now before the committee shall be the first business of the committee and shall not be further postponed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Having heard the motion by the hon. Government House Leader, all those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The motion is carried.

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

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Adair	Heron	Pengelly
Anderson	Horsman	Reid
Betkowski	Hyland	Russell
Brassard	Isley	Schumacher
Campbell	Jonson	Shaben
Cassin	Kowalski	Shrake
Clegg	McClellan	Sparrow
Cripps	Mirosh	Stevens
Day	Moore, R.	Trynchy
Dinning	Oldring	West
Downey	Orman	Young
Elliott	Osterman	Zaruský
Fischer	Payne	

Against the motion:

Barrett	Laing	Pashak
Chumir	Martin	Sigurdson
Ewasiuk	McEachern	Taylor
Gibeault	Mitchell	Wright
Hawkesworth	Mjolsness	Younie
Hewes		

Totals	Ayes - 38	Noes - 16
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[Motion carried]

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move that the committee agree to the following: that amendments numbered 16 and 22, as sponsored by the Official Opposition, be segregated for the purposes of voting, as I am given to understand that the government is inclined to accept those on Bill 21, and that the remainder of the amendments sponsored by the Official Opposition be further contemplated as a collective as opposed to a set of individual amendments.

[Motion carried]

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I further move that for the purposes of division for the remainder of this morning's debate on Bill 21, we proceed as follows when division is called: that the division bells ring for 30 seconds followed by a time lapse of 60 seconds, followed by division bells for 30 seconds, whereupon the standing votes be recorded.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: On the advice of Parliamentary Counsel, we're not able in committee to change the Standing Orders. So if we wish to do that, we'll have to go back into the Assembly.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, could you please explain the reasons? I thought that whether it's in committee or in the House, by unanimous consent you can do anything.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: My advice is that the unanimous consent rule applies in the Assembly but not in committee.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, under the circumstances, I'll withdraw the motion.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
Edmonton-Highlands?

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't know at what time the government would like to contemplate amendments 16 and 22, but perhaps what I could do is now move those amendments as individual amendments. I'm sure everybody's had the time to review them, and certainly the New Democrat caucus is prepared for the question on each of them.

AN HON. MEMBER: Read them on the record.

MS BARRETT: Oh. All right. I'll read the two amendments.
Amendment 16 to Bill 21 reads as follows:

The following is added after section 35:

"35.1 No employee shall be disentitled from qualifying for vacation entitlement after 12 consecutive months of employment solely by virtue of his employer setting or

having set a common anniversary date."

We'll agree to the question being put on that amendment.

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, after due consideration, I think this amendment is acceptable, as it does clarify the potential confusion between the different subsections of sections 35 and 36. Those subsections could be interpreted, I suppose, if one wanted to, to the extent that conceivably if there was a common anniversary date in an employer's establishment and somebody was hired the month after that common anniversary date, it could indeed be interpreted -- I would hope wrongfully -- as meaning somebody had to wait 23 months before the first vacation. Now, there are other provisions that would prevent it, but I think the addition of the amendment as put forward by the Member for St. Albert does make it crystal clear what the intent of the legislation is. I would therefore suggest that this amendment be accepted by the committee.

[Motion on amendment carried]

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to also read amendment number 22, as sponsored by the Official Opposition New Democrats, into the record. It says:

Section 87 is amended by striking out the words "to which the employee claims to be entitled" and substituting "to which, in the opinion of the officer, the employee is entitled,".

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, again on this one, the amendment put forward by the Member for St. Albert I think does clarify a possible confusion and avoid some misconceptions that otherwise might arise, since the amount of the money that is received is of course that which has been, in the opinion of the officer, the amount to which the employee's entitled, and that is the amount that should be payable. For that reason I would recommend to members of the committee that this amendment also be accepted.

[Motion on amendment carried]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to now proceed with some comments on the remainder of the amendments sponsored by the Member for St. Albert and, similarly, the members for Vegreville and Edmonton-Calder with respect to Bill 21. I think the exercise that has just occurred here in committee demonstrates the importance of taking the time to contemplate amendments as sponsored by the opposition.

As I've said before in the Assembly, the Member for St. Albert alone, since the day these Bills were introduced, spent three to three and a half hours a day working downstairs with one researcher and one lawyer, going through these Bills with a fine-tooth comb, and worked very hard over a two-month period to develop the amendments we're now looking at. I think the exercise has proved worth while, inasmuch as the government has agreed now to three of the amendments we have proposed to Bill 21. And although I know this is not a debate about closure, I do believe adequate time in committee can invoke a co-operative attitude in which those amendments are seriously considered, and I'd like to see that in the future.

Now, the next one I would like to speak to specifically again

deals with overtime agreements. Mr. Chairman, we are arguing that we need an economic disincentive to be available, I suppose, to those employers who would prefer to have the cost savings measure of providing a relatively low rate of overtime pay as opposed to hiring additional people, particularly in the economic environment in which we find ourselves which is characterized by chronically high unemployment. So we propose in our amendment numbered 11 that the rate of overtime pay be increased so that those who are asked to work overtime on a regular basis not only receive fair remuneration for their additional efforts on behalf of the company for which they're employed but also receive due compensation for the taking of their valuable time away from their families and their individual endeavours, and finally, to provide the disincentive for an employer to use employees on a frequent overtime command as opposed to hiring more employees.

It is true that the increase would be felt by an employer, but increases by 50 percent on regular overtime or going to triple time on extraordinary overtime we believe would be sufficient disincentive for those who abuse the current system. There may not be many employers, Mr. Chairman. I think the government has argued that they are not common. I can't prove how common they are, because the statistics gathered by Statistics Canada indicate, for instance, the hourly earnings of individuals and then the hourly earnings of individuals including overtime, or the weekly or monthly earnings of an individual and then the weekly or monthly earnings of an individual including overtime. But no separation is made, so it can't be determined how many employers are using overtime as a full-time feature of their employment, Mr. Chairman. So I have no objective basis on which to dispute the government's contentions, but similarly, I would argue that they have no objective basis upon which to contend my arguments.

Therefore, I think we need to take the position that conforms to logic and reason, and that is that if an employer is not abusing the rights to ask people to work overtime, then that employer or those employers will not be adversely affected by the incorporation of such an amendment. Those employers which declare themselves to be adversely affected by inclusion of such amendment have implicitly declared themselves to be abusers of the system or of the rules of the game, Mr. Chairman. I think those employers should be asked to create more full-time employment opportunities for people to substitute for those who are being asked to work overtime on a frequent and chronic basis.

Mr. Chairman, another of the amendments that we propose to Bill 21 -- this renumbering system is not working, Mr. Chairman; I beg your indulgence for another 15 seconds -- is the minimum wage mechanism. Now, I'd like to see this issue debated for a full few hours, just this one alone. I'm not asking members of our caucus or anybody else to do that, because I know we're under very restricted time limitations now. We have just slightly more than one and a half hours under which we may contemplate the rest of our amendments. But let me argue that I think this is one of the most important ones, and I for one would be extremely happy if the government would agree to this amendment.

This calls for an annual review of the minimum wage and the consumer price index here in Alberta. What it argues is this: that on an annual basis the minimum wage shall be automatically indexed to conform with the rate of inflation. The reason this is so important is because people find themselves losing ground when the minimum wage does not enjoy inflation protection. When last I looked, prior to the announcement from

the Labour minister that the minimum wage would be raised on September 1, 1988, the extant minimum wage -- that is, at \$3.80 an hour -- actually constituted the equivalent buying power of less than \$2.50 an hour when compared to the year it was last raised, that being 1981. In other words, the minimum wage had lost the equivalent value of more than \$1.30 per hour. It was in reality reduced to the equivalent of less than \$2.50 per hour. That is because it was not raised for seven years. In fact, it will be seven years and two months by the time the new rate comes into effect. That is a very underhanded way, I believe, of impoverishing the people who by necessity, just by virtue of the fact that they are working for minimum wage, constitute the working poor here in Alberta.

I do not believe we can conscientiously argue that the poorest sector in our society should be further punished by a minimum wage which does not reflect annual increases in the rate of inflation. It is the easiest and fairest thing to do. Adopting this amendment would ensure that the lowest income quintile -- that is, the lowest income-earning 20 percent of Albertans -- would no longer have to live, by virtue of their being on minimum income or working for minimum wage, in the order of 4 to 5 percent of all earnings accrued in the province. It would give them the fighting chance to get ahead, at least get ahead of the poverty that has been imposed upon them over the last seven years in the absence of the automatic indexing mechanism, and at least make them no longer vulnerable to the ravages of inflation as it takes its toll on the minimum wage.

I think you understand the logic of the argument, Mr. Chairman. If you're earning a high amount of money -- 60, 80, 100 grand a year -- an inflation rate of 4 percent is not likely to affect your ability to buy the next loaf of bread. If you're working for \$3.80 an hour, which after taxes comes to about \$580 a month to live on, believe me, 4 percent per year can add up. I remind you that inflation continued to be rampant after 1981, the last year the minimum wage was raised in Alberta. Bank charges went to 21 and 22 percent in that year and the following year. People lost a lot of money just by inflation. I think those people should not be made into what amounts to political footballs; that is, the recipients of a minimal granting of a modicum of fairness a year before an election is called. That's unfair.

So I would argue that the Assembly, in committee, agree to this amendment. It wouldn't cost you anything. Even the Pockingtons of this world, Mr. Chairman, would have a hard time arguing that the Tories messed up by adopting this amendment. Even the most right-wing people would have a very hard time arguing that. Quite frankly, sometimes I wonder why we spend all the time we do combing through the government Bills, working on amendments, attempting to fix these Bills, when I know darned well that if the government accepted the amendments, they'd take the credit for it. Because most of the people in the world don't read *Hansard*; they don't know who initiated what amendments. Now, I think it bodes well for the Official Opposition that several of our amendments have been adopted, and I think credit can be given not only to the people who worked on the amendments, like our research director and John Heaney, who works in our research department, and of course the Member for St. Albert, Bryan Strong, and labour lawyers from around the province. It bodes well and it speaks well, and I give credit to the essence of democracy right here in Alberta, which is study of Bills in a democratic environment. I urge that the Assembly give similarly due consideration to this amendment as it has to those which it has otherwise adopted.

Mr. Chairman, we have argued that general holidays are an

important time for working people and their families. Three out of the nine holidays we enjoy under the existing Act give us long weekends, and that very often is the only time many families and friends can get together. With the exception of Remembrance Day, the rest of our statutory holidays are days of religious observance which have their own special meaning, and they fall on specific days, not on specific weekends or parts of weekends.

Now, I think that needless to say it would be somewhat difficult for the law to be overly generous to those who are forced to go to work on those days. But in our amendment on general holiday pay, what we're seeking is to be more generous where it is due. Under this section people who work general holidays should be entitled to three times their regular pay, or their regular pay plus two days off between the holiday and the next annual vacation. Now, you think that this is extraordinary, but it's not. Already in Newfoundland and Quebec provisions allow that if you work on one of the statutory holidays, you automatically get double time.

We're sponsoring an amendment that says those rare days off are too few and too far between, particularly given our track record when it comes to holidays in general for all working people. Alberta does not exactly come in very high. Vacation with pay after the first year is two weeks. There is no provision for X number of weeks thereafter. Well, there is in the new Bill, but it's nowhere near as progressive as those in other provinces such as Saskatchewan, where they have three weeks' vacation with pay after the first year of employment and after 10 years, four weeks.

Now, in lieu of changing our Bill to keep up with other provinces in their more generous and progressive attitude with respect to the extremely valuable and invaluable time off that people may get on statutory holidays or automatic vacation after a year's employment, we make the gesture to working people by arguing that the time they ordinarily would have off -- and that most of us do, quite frankly: most in the public sector and very many in the private sector, although not all -- be duly compensated for having had to work on a holiday. Now, Mr. Chairman, I speak from experience. I used to work at Alberta Government Telephones, and quite frankly, we used to get double time and a half for working a holiday. Now, that was a contract agreement. When I worked for Edmonton Tel, we got the same sort of agreement: we got due compensation for having to work holidays. So when we had to work Christmas Day or New Year's Eve and miss the fun time with our families and friends, well, we were duly compensated. But that was in an agreement. And that's a long time ago; that's 15, 16 years ago that we had that in our agreements.

What I'm arguing is that maybe now is the time to make that available to everybody who's asked to work on those important statutory holidays. They are primarily in the service sector, although increasingly in one component thereof, and that's the retail sector. That's another issue, and you know that I've fought that one hard as well. Maybe I have to say that I can't change that law now, or I've not been able to convince the government to, but I think it's important that if they're not going to consider putting a stop to widespread retail activity on statutory holidays -- and especially those of religious significance and those of, shall we say, patriotic significance such as Remembrance Day -- if I can't win that one, let us win the other one which says: if you poor sods have to go out and work on Christmas Day or New Year's Eve or Remembrance Day, you will be duly compensated.

Mr. Chairman, because of the time, I don't want to spend much more time on these amendments, because I want my colleagues to be able to get their comments in under consideration of these amendments.

Let me close my comments by saying that the amendments we have called for on parental leave would go a long way in putting substance into the mouth of the government's Premier when it comes to his putative commitment to the family. I say: put your money where your mouth is. And in this instance, I believe we do need to introduce paternity leave in Alberta. It's long overdue. I think we need to agree that maternity and paternity leave should be increased to 24 weeks without pay, and I also believe we need to be sensitive to those who are adoptive parents and allow them 24 weeks as well. This doesn't cost anybody anything, Mr. Chairman. This is not one of those items that the government loves to get up and say: spend, spend, spend. We believe in spending where it's appropriate and not spending wherever we possibly can. Let me be on the record saying New Democrats have never called for more government; we've called for better government. New Democrats have always called for fiscal responsibility, and have always attempted -- and I think made a good job -- in presenting balanced budgets to the electorate at election times and budgets that are well targeted. This is not a spending item. This wouldn't cost anybody anything. The employer still has the right to replace that person on paternal or maternal leave for the period of up to 24 months, and the parent or parents have the right to go back to their jobs. No cost. Let's start speaking up for the fairness of families, Mr. Chairman, both for mothers and for fathers, natural parents and adoptive parents.

On that note, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that I am a strong advocate of every single one of the amendments in front of us, and I know all our colleagues in the Official Opposition are. I urge due consideration of every one of them, especially those I've had the opportunity to highlight this afternoon.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Chair has received some further advice. If it's the desire of the committee, we are able to amend the Standing Orders with regard to the time for a division. So if the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands would like to make that motion?

MS BARRETT: Mr. Chairman, I will move again the motion, which would be as follows. That the Committee of the Whole agree that when division is called, the process followed thereafter is this: the bell shall ring for 30 seconds; there shall be an elapse of one minute thereafter, and the bell shall ring for a further 30 seconds, after which the standing vote shall be recorded.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Chairman, the government would be very, very pleased to support that motion, and we've encouraged all members to support it as well.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Having heard the motion, all those in favour of the motion of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Opposed? The motion is carried.

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Chairman, this is the last opportunity that members in this Assembly will have to debate and discuss

Bill 21, the Employment Standards Code, in committee reading. I think it's very unfortunate that our amendments were not given further consideration by this Assembly, by the government members, because they address very major concerns that we have with this particular Bill, and I feel very strongly that our amendments would have improved this Bill immensely.

I would like to remind the government that in the throne speech of June 1986 this government assured Albertans that the laws of this province, for the present and for the future, will be responsive to the needs and aspirations of employers and employees.

Bill 21, Mr. Chairman, which does not come close to meeting the needs and aspirations of working men and women in this province, certainly does not follow along the lines of the commitment made in this throne speech. The government had a terrific opportunity to bring to this Legislature and to all Albertans some very progressive labour legislation that could have addressed some very serious concerns, concerns that face working men and women of this province, and would also have improved the quality of life for them. And even though this government has chosen to accept two of the amendments the Official Opposition has put forth, Bill 21 still contains many weaknesses.

To begin with, Mr. Chairman, women are shortchanged in this particular Bill. Nowhere is there a provision that would implement pay equity. There is wage discrimination that now exists in this province, and women in this labour force are being discriminated against. This is unfair, and it's not addressed in this particular piece of legislation. The government had an opportunity to support women, support families, demonstrate that they believe women are valuable and they deserve equality, but they have failed us. They have failed to do this in Bill 21.

Something else, Mr. Chairman, I think I would like to make mention of is that our amendments would amend section 25 from a 44-hour workweek to a 40-hour workweek. I believe this is a very important issue, because if we look at history, the reduction of the hours of work per week, the limitation of the numbers of hours that employees would be required to work, came about by humanitarian motives. If we look at what happened during the industrial revolution when factories began operating, we will see that a high proportion of women and children worked extremely long hours in those factories. They often worked 11 or 12 hours a day for six days a week. Sometimes, Mr. Chairman, they worked up to 14 to 16 hours a day.

Not too long ago, Mr. Chairman, my grandfather was describing to me how in the 1930s he worked from 8 o'clock in the morning till midnight for \$2 a day, trying to support his family; not to mention that after many hours of labour that hard-earned money went to paying for operations they had to have, because they didn't have medicare. I would say we have progressed since those days, thank goodness, but that progress has come through very concentrated efforts and through a commitment to working men and women. I would say that many individuals have fought long and hard to bring about improvements to the working conditions and wages for working people, and Bill 21 just does not address these issues. As a matter of fact, as has been expressed by the Member for St. Albert along with many of my colleagues, this legislation takes us back.

Mr. Chairman, it's interesting to note that the other day when this issue about a 40-hour workweek was being debated, I had a page go to the library and bring me back two books that dealt with the shortening of the workweek. One was called *Hours of Work in Industrialised Countries*; the other one was called *The Reduction of Working Time*. Mr. Chairman, there was a tremen-

dous amount of information in these two books. One book lists study after study conducted after World War I and then again after World War II that had information regarding the longer workweek. It stated that the longer workweek meant falls in hourly and weekly outputs in production in those days. It went into the physiological considerations, which I think was a very important consideration. It talks about mental stress and nervous strain that were on the increase due to the long hours, especially when people had to work on assembly lines. The people that worked on the assembly lines and had the greatest amount of concentration if they were working with computers or typing or whatever, seemed to be affected the most. They talked about economic considerations of a 40-hour workweek, of lessening the workweek: the productivity increases in direct relationship to the reduction of the hours of work that an employee must put in. This is very useful information, and I would like to say that it didn't cost me anything. It didn't even cost me 25 cents to go and get these books from the library.

Mr. Chairman, something that I think needs to be addressed in this particular Bill is section 34. I would like to read into the record what that section says. Section 34 of Bill 21, the Employment Standards Code, says:

The Director may issue to the employer or prospective employer of an individual who is handicapped a permit authorizing

- (a) the employer to pay the individual a wage at less than the minimum wage to which he would otherwise be entitled, and
- (b) the prospective employee to receive less than the minimum wage.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I feel that this section of this Bill is extremely offensive. It clearly discriminates against individuals with a handicap -- this particular section, 34. It treats people with disabilities as unequals. It treats them as second-class citizens, and I would say that in a year when this government saw fit to put in place a Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities to improve their conditions in life, we see a clause like this in this Bill. Again, this government made a commitment in their throne speech in 1986 that they would work toward persons with disabilities having full and equal participation in our society. Well, Mr. Chairman, is this section, section 34, the minister's way of demonstrating that these words in the throne speech were just that -- just words, nothing more; that this government can include all kinds of motherhood statements in their throne speeches and can pretend to have a commitment toward equal and full participation of people with disabilities in society by announcing a Premier's council, and then turn around and put in their legislation and endorse discrimination against these individuals in the work force?

Mr. Chairman, resources have been made available to pre-employment and employment programs for special needs groups, and these programs emphasize the abilities of people with disabilities rather than zeroing in on their disability. These programs -- one such program is On-Site Placement Services in Edmonton -- have been very successful in their goal to place people with disabilities in the work force. I feel strongly that we as a society must recognize that these individuals with disabilities are not a dependent population and they can, in fact, meet the standards for employment set out for them by an employer.

Recently, Mr. Chairman, I attended a meeting where this very topic was under discussion, and there was a bit of an argument that broke out because some people were saying, "Well, these people can only achieve a certain percentage of produc-

tivity," that they may perhaps only work at, say, a 75 percent, a 50 percent, or an 80 percent level of productivity and they should, therefore, be paid accordingly. But I would say to you that I feel this argument is unacceptable, because when we go out into the work force to get a job, nobody says to us: "What is your productivity level? Is it 60 percent? Is it 65 percent? Is it 70 percent?" We are given a job to do, and if we cannot do that job, then the employer has the right to terminate our employment. It's as simple as that: either you can do a job or you can't. And if you are hired to do a job, then you should be expected to do that job.

Now, in this particular meeting that I attended -- and there were several groups there that deliver services to individuals with disabilities -- somebody asked one of the agency persons what they would do or what they would say to an employer if their employee that has gotten a job is, for example, late for work: what would happen to that particular individual? And this person that was representing this agency responded by saying, "Well, what would you do to other employees that were late?" If that employer had a policy that that employee would be fired, then that is exactly what they would like to see happen to the individuals with disabilities. They want equal treatment; they don't want special treatment. A section such as 34 in Bill 21 I believe will have a very negative effect on people with disabilities in the work force.

In one of the documents I received from one of these agencies, they outlined four negative impacts that Bill 21, section 34, will have on individuals with disabilities. Number one would read that it reinforces the concept that a person with a disability is not equal or entitled to the same rights in employment as a nonhandicapped individual. The second impact, Mr. Chairman, would be that it encourages coworkers, employers -- and inevitably the community -- to develop a stereotype of the person with a disability as someone who is not able to produce at the normal, acceptable rate of production. The third concern is that it hinders employment opportunities for those persons with disability. The fourth concern is that they would be earning less than a coworker, less than even minimum wage, and this must have a very negative effect on the self-esteem of any individual.

Now, I think it's wrong for this government to assume that people with disabilities have less economic needs than the rest of us in the work force do, because I think this is unrealistic and it's unfair. We can talk about home care that people have to pay for. These costs have increased drastically over the last few years. We can talk about rent, clothing, food, transportation expenses these people have to pay for, wheelchairs that have to be purchased. I know personally of people who can't afford these wheelchairs and are having a very hard time, a very difficult time, trying to get the correct wheelchairs that meet their needs. We have user fees for various education programs that are offered, and the list goes on and on.

Mr. Chairman, I would say that the Official Opposition's amendment, which was introduced today, would read -- and I'd like to read it into the record:

- A. Section 34 is struck out and the following is substituted:
 34(1) For the purposes of enabling a disabled person to be employed in a certified training program, the Director may, upon the application of the disabled person or his employer and with the consent of the disabled person, his parent or guardian, authorize the employment of such disabled person to perform such work as is authorized at a wage lower than the minimum wage prescribed under this Act.

In other words, Mr. Chairman, if they're out in the work force, if they're doing work that other people are doing, they're hired to do a job, then they should get paid at least minimum wage. Employers should not be allowed to pay these people less than minimum wage. This particular amendment addresses the fact that sometimes they're in training programs and they would be exempt, then, under those circumstances.

Mr. Chairman, we in the Official Opposition believe that people with disabilities are not second-class citizens and that they can achieve equal and full participation in our society. We also know that this Bill will not allow this to happen. It's regressive when it addresses the needs of people with disabilities. I think this is just another reason why members of this Assembly should reject Bill 21, because it does not meet the needs of working men and women of this province, and it does not even begin to improve the quality of life for Albertans.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In rising to speak on the amendments, as it is almost an omnibus thing and there are portions that our caucus do not like but the majority we do think are quite acceptable, using, I guess, the law of averages, we will come down on the Official Opposition side on this one.

But I want to say a few words to maybe amplify on some of the opposition's amendments and maybe point out a couple of other things at the same time. Certainly we believe there has to be a section added which provides 10 working days of sick leave for employees for themselves -- or the care of sick relatives shouldn't be overlooked. This government has made much of preserving the family, preserving the quality of life in family life, and sick pay or sick leave that has expanded to actually allow time for the individual to help care for someone in the family goes a long way to strengthening the family unit, and also, I think, in the long run they make a better employee.

There is also the question, Mr. Chairman, that the government seems to be unduly harsh on termination notices for temporary employees. In other words, if they have worked three months or less, the government argues that they do not have to have termination notices or statutory vacations. I think if the minister had checked more, particularly with the retail industry, they would be able to tell you about these 90-day wonders, or the revolving door. You have a worker on for three months who moves over across the street and works for another outfit for three months and then is let go and moves over here for three months. They're bouncing around from A to B to C to D and, seeing we're now signing the Mulroney free trade agreement, all the way down to zee rather than zed. But the point is that it's a revolving door type of area, and I think it unnecessarily discriminates, most often against women. But it isn't exclusively women, and certainly the government should be doing something by looking at giving people with less than three months' terms the same rights as those who have them.

The mechanism, Mr. Chairman, for unjust dismissal doesn't seem to be very correct. I believe the employee should be able to appeal an unjust dismissal to an umpire and have the case reviewed. I'm sure the minister's mail, if it's at all like mine, once you've set aside workmen's compensation areas a high percentage of the mail has to do with people who feel they were unjustly dismissed or fired on short notice. And an independent umpire they could appeal to in areas like this would certainly give the Act a great deal of equity and at least the appearance of

justice, as it's missing some now.

We have also, tying in a bit to sick leave, the case of parental leave. Parental leave, sick leave, adoptive leave, we all work together, but either or both parents should be able to share the parental leaves. Say, 24 weeks would be a good idea, or something like that. This is within the 18 or so weeks after maternity leave and before. That, of course, can go over to the question of adoptions as we get more and more of those in society. But adoptions of children who are under three years of age should have very much a similar type of time as the parental time off.

Now, one of the other things that's bothered me all through this Act -- and I think the NDs have touched on it too -- is the distinction between full-time workers and part-time workers. I believe that as our society is evolving, one of the liberties of an individual should be to not only -- we've always thought of the liberty of the individual to form labour unions, form collective bargaining units, have redress in the case of unjust treatment by employers, and also we have the case of safety in the workplace. But there's one other step we should be thinking of as our society becomes more and more developed, and that's the freedom of the individual to move around.

What we have in modern-day society is a peculiar partnership of management and the labour unions. They both seem to agree on this: they don't like mobility of labour. It breaks down the union control of the worker. Because the worker is moving from place to place, it may move him from union to non-union and back to union, maybe different unions. So what we have here is the individual freedom of the worker being attacked by both management and the labour union movement. One of the things that I think this government could break through for individual liberty is to make it as easy as possible for part-time workers to move about or for part-time workers to get all the advantages of full-time workers. Then the lever, the club, the force that both management and labour unions are working to take away some of the freedom of the individual that is working could be minimized. I believe that by making the benefits of part-time workers much less than those of full-time workers, what we're doing is ensuring the ghetto, ensuring the jail, or whatever you want to call it for the individual and not trying to . . . What a modern society should be working for is a worker that is fully free to move: the pensions are portable; the medicare is portable; the vacation is portable; everything is portable. It follows the worker, and it's done for the sake of the worker. Rather than trying to say, "Mr. or Mrs. Worker or Miss Worker or Ms Worker, if you move back and forth, if you're a temporary worker, well, you're not going to get this, you're not going to get that" So I think there is a point here that our modern government, regardless of what political faith, should be looking at as far as the freedom and the dignity of the individual is concerned.

Also, I'll maybe say just a couple of words on the need for a minimum wage review. Although the ND's amendment 15 touches on it, I think it's unduly complicated, overcomplicated. I'm not too sure that it is the proper way to go about doing it, although I think they do hit at the system of having to have consistent need for a look at the minimum wage review.

I want to compliment the NDP for pulling back from the edge of disaster in one of their amendments where they suggest that fewer than 20 employees need not be covered. In other words, I believe what they did was to try, which is something that I'm very much in favour of, to free the farmer with only one or two or three employees from getting hooked into this Employment Standards Code, because certainly the qualities and

the employment standards needed in the agricultural sector today are quite different from the industrial sector. Any amendment that would more or less recognize that by allowing the smallest of business, and in particular the farmers themselves, a chance to operate outside the standard is well worth following.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman -- I'm setting a record here in allowing you to get back to the . . . Everybody seems to be talking sense today, whether it's the end of the week or not. I just want to say that I've covered the main points, and in general we will be supporting not because we like every one of the omnibus amendments but because more of them are good than are bad, and none of the bad ones are so bad that we have to hold our nose.

Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Earlier the Member for Edmonton-Highlands alluded to the preparation and the work and to the development of these particular amendments. Of course, both Bills 21 and 22 were in our opinion so deficient that there really did need to be a great deal of effort put into them to attempt to at least bring them to a standard that might have some minimum acceptance, so many hours were spent in their preparation. It's unfortunate that the government members choose not to give them the kind of attention and the kind of scrutiny and support that I believe they deserve, because certainly by adoption of the amendments submitted by this party, both in Bills 22 and 21, we'd go a long way to enhancing and improving the two Bills that have been before us.

It's quite curious, Mr. Chairman, that quite frequently the Premier and members of the cabinet, when they respond to the questions during question period, will conclude their remarks by pointing out how this province is number one in very many areas and how proud they are that we provide this leadership in the country. Whether that's true or not, I suppose, is irrelevant. The fact of the matter is that they make those statements and they boast about it. Well, here we have an opportunity for a government to again take a leadership role in the province. Instead, we have a Bill before us today, Bill 21, that is really regressive from previous legislation, rather than moving up the ladder to become something that could be a showcase that could be displayed as number one in the country.

It's unfortunate, because this Bill is the result, of course, of intensive reviews, studies -- again, we refer to the expensive part of it in that there was a half a million dollars spent to review labour legislation throughout the world -- an extensive review in the province of Alberta, where workers, managers, corporations, and individuals had the opportunity to make their thoughts known to the minister and to the government on what they thought would constitute good labour standards legislation.

Unfortunately, for unknown reasons the government and the minister have chosen basically to ignore that information and have come forth with what appears to be -- they may very well have had only the ear of very few people, people who are normally known to be in opposition to labour. It seems that it's their thoughts and their opinions that are reflected in this legislation, rather than those who have primarily a vested interest in how these Bills are introduced.

They indicated to us in their throne speech that they were going to move labour legislation from the old ice age right up into the space age, that we were going to upgrade the legislation

so that we would have an equal process where the employer and employees would be on the same levels, and that we would have a decent and a good labour relations practice in this province.

It's particularly difficult to understand the minister's and the government's position in light of the fact that Bill 21 deals almost exclusively with people who are not covered by collective agreements. So in effect, we're really speaking about minimum standards. These are the minimum standards available to workers and to citizens generally who are in a workplace. Those who have collective agreements, of course, can fend for themselves, quite often do. I take some pride in being a member of a union for many, many years. I still continue to hold my membership. I think the gains that have been made through collective bargaining have to some degree been reflected in the conditions for the organized workers. I think that's the responsibility of labour and organized labour: to bring up the standard of working conditions for all people, not only those in the labour movement.

Certainly this Bill is not going to make number one in Canada. I'm sure no minister or the Premier is going to be able to rise in their seat and suggest that they are number one. In fact, we're really quite a ways down the ladder in terms of positioning in relative labour legislation in the country. Just to give you some examples, there are only five jurisdictions that provide for working weeks of eight hours and do not exceed 40 hours. Those are the Canadian Labour Code in the provinces of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Yukon. Only those provinces have adopted the 40-hour workweek. So certainly there's a lot of work to be done in the country but particularly in this province.

It's interesting to note that in those provinces where they now do have the 40-hour provision, former New Democratic governments had governed those provinces, and I guess the peculiar thing is that the subsequent governments that are not New Democrats have not eliminated those provisions. I suppose one could make the assumption that it's not an onerous change. Employers have simply come to live with it, and the employees in fact expect it. The government should adopt it forthwith as it is more popular and not disruptive to business or the rest of the economy. So the provision of the 40-hour workweek is not new; it's not a detriment to the economy. Certainly the workers or the employers where it exists have no difficulty with that provision. I have some real difficulty understanding why this government chooses not to introduce at least the first step towards the movement toward the 40-hour workweek.

In fact, as I look at this Bill, it's becoming very clear that this government is slowly but surely eroding the many gains that workers have made over the years. I can say that I'm proud of what my forefathers and I have achieved through many years of negotiations. We know if we study labour history that many of these gains were gained through work stoppages. Some of them may have made the Gainers strike on 66th Street several years ago a picnic compared to some of the disputes that have taken place in this country to gain those conditions for workers, and here we can, by simply a stroke of a pen, regress the legislation that was gained by workers over a long period of time. I recall again the unionized workers who over the years fought for the 40-hour workweek. When it was gained, we felt it was certainly a milestone in the history of labour that we had finally achieved a 40-hour workweek. Yet here we have a government that refuses to look at that.

Mr. Chairman, I think it can very easily be rationalized why there should be a 40-hour workweek today. In fact, I think it's even more significant, more important that we shorten our

workweeks in this time and stage of our development in this country over the past. When one looks at the high unemployment rates in this province particularly and when you look specifically at who are the unemployed in this province, you will find that many of them are young men and women. These are young men and women who to a large degree may well become sort of the lost generation: people who were caught in a situation where there was unemployment. They were cast onto the streets, they were subjected to the use of social assistance, and their entire lifestyles were changed. I believe that certainly by decreasing the workweek to at least 40 hours, there would have been room made to be able to employ some of these very capable young men and women rather than have them become lost, become part of the street scene rather than being productive in our society and our communities.

Mr. Chairman, I really do believe that society as a whole needs a shorter workweek at the present time. I'm sure all of us can attest to the fact that society is becoming a much more rushed one. We are continually in a hurry. We are spending a great deal of time attempting to stay ahead of whatever it is that we are doing. As a result, of course, this society is becoming much more stressful. Of course, those conditions add costs to our economy because we have people who tend then to require the use of medicare and so on, and there's a snowballing effect. I believe part of that problem has to rest with the work environment, the hours of work that people are putting in. Leisure time is not only a requirement for the rich and the famous; I believe that ordinary workers, the average Albertan, the average citizen in this country is also entitled to more leisure time and more vacation. We again submit in our amendments for consideration by this Assembly the extension of vacation periods.

Many in our society now work shift work. In fact, it's becoming the predominant area of work that many people need and do work shift work. Shift work in itself also adds to stress. Again, I think here we need to take that into consideration. You develop stress in the workplace; you come home. There may well be, as a result, stressful situations develop in a house, in a home. This province has a very unfavourable divorce rate. I suspect that certainly again the kind of stress that we are subjected to through the long workweek -- we don't get a sufficient vacation -- I think on the long term does have an impact on families and on the kind of society that we are developing.

Mr. Chairman, there's no doubt in my mind that a case can be and is being made for a shorter workweek. It only requires a caring government, not a government that puts its head in the sand and is blinded by the facts that are available to it and are very clearly needed.

I want to also take a few moments and talk about the portability of employment. While in labour relations management and labour do have agreements of portability, I think the labour movement has recognized the need for that occurrence. I know that the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon made reference that there is a hindrance to that. In fact, I might advise the Assembly that in the labour movement, particularly in the building trades, the availability of traveling cards for those who wish to leave an Edmonton area and go to Ontario is really quite readily available, and it is practised quite frequently. As a matter of fact, workers who wish to travel internationally are being allowed and are being given travel cards to travel to areas where employment exists, because there certainly isn't any in this province. So I think the labour people accommodate each other to ensure that we fulfill our obligations to society. I think there is a need by government to meet its part and its commitment to workers

and to society also.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I wonder if the committee could revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

MR. SHABEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the indulgence of the members of the committee to allow me to introduce a group of students who are in the members' gallery today. They're a group of students from the Kinuso school who are visiting the city and the Legislature. I'm pleased that they're able to spend a few minutes watching the Committee of the Whole House in action. I would ask that the students and their teacher, Lorraine Shelp, stand and receive the recognition of the members.

head: **GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS**
(**Committee of the Whole**)

Bill 21
Employment Standards Code
(*continued*)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise to add my words at the last chance in committee stage to talk about Bill 21, the Employment Standards Code. I regret, Mr. Chairman, that we're not going to have more time to go through these excellent amendments one by one and debate them from both sides of the House. I'd like to hear what the members on the other side think of some of these amendments in great detail, like we started the other day. We went through four or five that way, and I thought the process was working fairly well, although I would like to have heard more feedback from the other side. We still tended to get that silence, and then just vote them down, that we got on so many other instances in this Assembly.

It is rather ironic that the other side complains that we were filibustering and therefore they had to invoke closure, when they did not refute any of our arguments. Mr. Chairman, both these Bills, Bills 21 and 22, are bad enough that they should have been abandoned. We pointed that out over and over again in many and different innovative ways. The best of the arguments we got from the other side was to stand up and be disruptive and try to focus our arguments and keep it to a very narrow . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, order please. The hon. member has the opportunity to debate the amendments. That's the subject of debate and not the opportunity to . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Just a couple of preliminary remarks, Mr. Chairman. I intend to get into the amendments fairly quickly. So we could have had more debate from the other side and less obstruction of the process. It would have been a lot more use-

ful. Then we would have been able to get into the details in much more detail now, in a much more effective way.

The minister said when he introduced his legislation that this was new and innovative legislation that would take us into the 21st century, was full of fairness and equity for all working people. Mr. Chairman, we've been through that to some extent. The preamble definitely sets out a different agenda, tells us that we're really concerned about competing with other countries: southern states, underdeveloped countries, low-wage countries. And that's the agenda. There is little protection here for the unorganized workers. Bill 21 was supposed to be sort of a Charter of Rights, if you like -- at least if you're going to lead the way into the 21st century -- for unorganized workers, for part-time workers, most of whom are women, for the working poor, for students, for people who are generally unskilled: the kind of people who do not have a professional association or a union to look after them. We didn't get that.

Now, if protection is one of the important parts of labour legislation, it's also to my mind an important part of government's function in actually carrying out the protection that should be in the laws. I've got a couple of cases, for example, of individuals within my riding who had difficulty with their employers, and we went to bat for them. We took their cases to the employment standards branch of the Department of Labour, and I want to just take a moment on a couple of these cases and point out that the trouble isn't necessarily just the rules. The section of the Bill that should cover this is section 16, as I read the Bill; there may be other parts that are also applicable. But not only are the rules not strengthened in this area, but the actual will of the government to carry out regulations seems to be lacking, or at least that's our experience. And I'll give you a couple of examples very quickly.

One is the case of a young woman called Laurie. She was employed by one Mr. Russell White in Edmonton as an office manager and secretary. She was owed back wages of some \$731.60. She took her complaint to the employment standards, Department of Labour, and they did a little investigation and said, "Oh, no, you've got \$10.91 coming." Well, she was thoroughly convinced that the officer had not understood the case very well. He'd been led to believe, for instance, that she was fired for incompetence, which was not really true. So under pressure from our office he reopened the case and agreed that, yes, she did have \$731.60 coming. In fact, it was a Court of Queen's Bench order that indicated that that would be the case. So she got the satisfaction of at least winning the case, but did she get any help from the Labour department in collecting the money? As far as we know, she's still out that money and will never get it.

Now, it seems to me that if you're going to have an employment standards branch of the Department of Labour try to help people collect their wages, then you've got to do something about seeing that they do and can. This particular employer seems to have a fairly good record -- and we passed that on to some appropriate people -- of using government funds under different kinds of programs; Alberta youth training and employment program, for example. Yet still he treats his workers in this shabby manner. And the Department of Labour, which then should have almost a double responsibility, does nothing about it.

A second case, Mr. Chairman, is that of Carmine. She was owed back wages of some \$1,048.13, including regular wages, overtime, and holiday pay while employed as a bookkeeper's secretary at Edmonton city auctions in Edmonton when she was

19 years old. Now, I accompanied her to city auction and talked to Wally Giza, the manager, and we extracted a promise from them of some \$600 in wages; however, the next few cheques that she got tended to bounce. It was to be paid over a period of time because they claimed they couldn't pay it all at once. So we took the complaint to the employment standards branch, and that was a rather extraordinary experience actually. My constituency manager did the initial contact and pointed out that what these employers were trying to do was to suggest that the people who worked for them could continue to get social services, and they would give them a few dollars under the table. Nobody would tell anybody, and that was supposed to be their main wages, except, like I say, topped up with a few extra dollars, an absolutely incredible suggestion.

My constituency manager told this to the contact at the employment standards branch in my riding. The lady wasn't interested and said: "Oh, that's not our business. You know, talk to Social Services or somebody else. It's not anything to do with me." She insisted on that so much that finally my constituency manager called me into it. So I went down there, and the lady still said the same thing to me, right to my face, right at the desk. So I said, "Well, I want to see your superior" and got to see him. Then, of course, he said, "Oh yes, of course we're interested," and I hope that something has been done about it since. But I found that most extraordinary that any employee of the Labour department in this province would not be interested in that kind of a problem. Now, we were able to get some commitment from them to give her more of her wages, but I'm not sure to this day if she's got them all or not.

So, Mr. Chairman, I just think that what you need as well as a change in the laws in this province and a tightening up of some of the specific things -- and I will go into some of the amendments that I think are particularly good in a few minutes -- you also need the political will to do something on behalf of people who are being treated like that and to do something about employers who treat people like that. That's totally scandalous. If the minister wants to follow up and see the final disposition of those cases, I would be only too happy to pass him the names and addresses and phone numbers of all the parties involved if he cares to check it out.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to just run through, and I know we don't have time. There are a lot of amendments in this document that the Member for St. Albert brought forward. I know a couple of them have been accepted and also a few of them we discussed in detail the other day. But I'm just going to run through some of the ones that strike me as the ones that the people in this Assembly really should stop and consider, rather than just sort of say, "Well, we don't want any of those amendments." The minister knows that most of these amendments make sense, and he should tell his colleagues to listen and pay some attention. If you don't agree with us on these amendments, he should stand up and give us some reason why you don't agree, instead of just sitting silent and voting them all down.

I'm thinking of section 20(1), the lower wage for part-time workers. I really find that extremely offensive, Mr. Chairman, that somebody who's doing the same job as somebody else and because the one person is full-time and the other person is only part-time, the part-time person should get a lower wage. I pointed out in the Assembly the other day that one of my old friends who has a small business says that the part-time worker is the one who will give you the best service for the hours they are there because they're fresher and have more energy and can

do that.

The other thing about the part-time workers -- and I want to look at that. If you go back to section 38 of the Bill, you'll see that in the amendment sections we've put forward an amendment suggesting that there should be parity for part-time workers not only in the wages they receive but in a number of other things as well: all kinds of entitlements, vacation pay. That was in section 38, but also in section 110 a whole series of other benefits suggested. If there are any kinds of health or dental benefits or life or disability insurance or absences for illness, the employer should not discriminate against the part-time worker. They should prorate those things and see to it that part-time workers get all the benefits of full-time employees. It would take away a lot of the incentive of employers to force people into part-time, the kind of thing that happens in so many of our department stores and in this government. Part of this government's program of downsizing government in the last few years has been quite scandalous really. They say, oh, they've not laid anybody off, and they make all kinds of claims of that sort. Yet I know former employees of this government who went from being full-time employees to becoming part-time contract employees who lost their benefits and then finally found their contract ran out and they're no longer working for the government. Mr. Chairman, I guess one of the reasons the government doesn't want to fix that for the private sector is because they want to use it themselves in the public sector in this province. It's the wrong way to go; it's the wrong thing to do.

We spent some time discussing the 40-hour workweek. Section 25 of the Bill says that 44 hours is the normal workweek. It's high time that a 40-hour workweek was brought in. When the first employer in England, Sir Robert Owen, decided to reduce the workweek and the number of hours worked per day and increase the wages, he found that his business prospered. He proved to the world that if you treat your workers right, you get better production from them and the company as a whole does better. Yet we still have employers in this day and age that think you have to have a 44-hour workweek.

If we're going to share the work around the province, if we're going to reduce the unemployment we have, if we're going to reduce the number of people on social assistance and on UIC in this province, then we need to be aware that those people who are working a lot of overtime hours and those people who are putting in a 44-hour workweek would be much better off if they had to work less hours, and those people who are not working would be much better off if they could get some hours in. So to still have a 44-hour workweek is ridiculous, Mr. Chairman.

On the overtime provisions the same kind of arguments apply. If an employer had to pay double for overtime instead of time and a half, he'd think twice about doing it. He would hire another employee instead, and that would take some people off the welfare rolls. But this government doesn't seem to be interested in doing that. Their idea of taking people off the welfare rolls is to reduce the amount of money you give for shelter for single employable males and try to drive them out to work. Well, that's all very well if you had some jobs for them to go to. So why don't you work on the other side of it, the positive side, and say to an employer, "You should hire another worker rather than work somebody overtime." To ask them to pay double time would go a long way to doing that.

[Mr. R. Moore in the Chair]

So the Minister of Labour has not learned very much from all his tours around the world and his public meetings. Well, he learned, I think, but he wouldn't listen.

One of the things that bothers me about this Bill in many, many sections -- and section 29 is no exception; in fact it's one of the more obvious ones. The government puts in an idea like in questions of extended hours of work there should be certain provisions as to how many hours you can work in a day, and then they turn around and put in a lot of loopholes so that people can break that by regulation or by the whim of the director. They did the same thing with the half-hour rest after five hours of work. They then turned around and said, sort of weasel words: "Well, if that's unreasonable, then the employer doesn't have to do it." Well, when would it ever be unreasonable for somebody to expect to get a half-hour rest after a five-hour shift of work? Mr. Chairman, the mind boggles that the minister would want to leave those kinds of loopholes around.

We could talk again about the minimum wage. It's true that the government finally got around to raising the minimum wage a little bit. Well, it hasn't been raised yet; sorry. We've still got to wait for September to do that. All those students working this summer so they can go to school in the fall have to put up with the \$3.85 minimum wage before they can get the \$4.50 minimum wage in September. But what the minister really needs to do is to build in a mechanism so that that minimum wage gets raised on a regular basis according to the cost of living and the different formulas that can be worked out, and we've put forward a formula that he could take a look at.

Mr. Chairman, I have a number of colleagues who would like to get into this debate, so I'm just going to leave with one more amendment, to section 61. I want to just raise it. I mentioned it the other day in my preamble. This minister says that this Bill will take us into the 21st century, yet his maternity leave provisions are barely past the 19th century, quite frankly. They're certainly not equal to the modern day and age in many jurisdictions, and they certainly don't point the way to the 21st century.

In any case, it is time that this minister took a look at some of the suggestions we've made here. It's time this government just quit railroading these Bills through the Assembly. They are so bad that they actually should be just scrapped, but the least they could do is take seriously the amendments we've put forward.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to take this opportunity in our final debate on the clauses and amendments to Bill 21, the Employment Standards Code, to read into the record an amendment that I tabled in the Assembly today and introduced. The amendment is that the Bill is hereby amended as follows:

A. Section 2(3) is amended by adding "which employs fewer than 20 employees and" after "employees employed on a farm or ranch".

What that basically means, Mr. Chairman, is it's a clarification of our intent, and I owe this to the hon. Member for Whitecourt for straightening this out for us the other day. It's the intention of the government Employment Standards Code to exempt all farm workers and all domestic employees from certain sections of the Employment Standards Code regarding hours of work, overtime, vacation pay, and age of people in the

employ of various companies. I can see the wisdom of exempting certain sectors of farm employees from the provisions of the Employment Standards Code, but I think we have to recognize that there are becoming two classes of farm workers. We on this side of the House support the exemption of farm workers as long as we're talking about small and moderate-sized farming operations that hire a handful of people to get work done during peak season. Farming is by nature, pardon the pun, a very unpredictable occupation, and it's difficult to establish regular routine hours of work in some farming operations that depend on the very fickle weather conditions and such.

So this amendment that I'm proposing makes clear our intent that we don't want the exemption to occur for farms and ranches that employ more than 20 people. We think there's an increasing trend, especially following the policies and directions of this government, to corporate farming situations. I don't think it would be right for some large operations, say Family Corporate Farms Incorporated, the one that operates in North Dakota, for example, to think that they can come into Alberta and hire large numbers of people to do their work for them and avoid having to live up to the terms and conditions of the Employment Standards Code, as limited as those terms and conditions are.

I just want to make that very clear. It's our intention that if the government were to accept my amendment here, the exemptions currently in place for farm workers would not apply to companies or to farm corporations that employ more than 20 employees.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to comment on a number of the provisions in Bill 21 and the amendments that are before us here. The provincial government has decided in their wisdom, or shall we say lack of wisdom, to use the jackboot of closure, so I can't really go into this in as much detail as I would like to on behalf of my constituents. But there are four areas in particular that are of significant concern to my constituents in Edmonton-Mill Woods that I feel are very important to have some discussion about.

The first one that I would draw to the attention of the members of the Assembly this afternoon is amendment 2, which was proposed by my colleague the Member for St Albert on our behalf, about section 1 of the Employment Standards Code being amended to add two holidays to the list of holidays that are already there, those being Boxing Day and the first Monday of August. Now, Mr. Chairman, it's unfortunate that we can't get some leadership from the provincial government on this. I'm talking in particular about the first Monday of August. Several of the municipalities in the province have already shown that kind of leadership. They understand the importance of the multicultural heritage of the province of Alberta, and they have designated as a civic holiday, under the Municipal Government Act, the first Monday of August for the purpose of celebrating that important cultural heritage that all of us value.

That's taking place already in Edmonton and Calgary and many municipalities around the province, yet we can't seem to get this government to get on board and make that an official part of the government's policy. They like to talk a lot about how they value multiculturalism, yet they can't bring themselves to put into the Employment Standards Code what already basically exists under several municipalities and give the people of the province the chance to have that day off with pay so that they can in fact enjoy the Heritage Days festivals that take place at that particular time.

It's shameful, Mr. Chairman, that the government has chosen

to ignore this amendment, the second amendment that was proposed on our behalf by the Member for St. Albert. As one of the members of this Assembly who probably has one of the most multicultural constituencies in the province of Alberta, I'm particularly distressed about this particular amendment not having the support of the government.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

Now I want to move on to amendment 15, Mr. Chairman. Amendment 15, proposed by the Member for St. Albert, deals with the question of the minimum wage and how it should be indexed for inflation. It is appalling to me that this minister and this government cannot seem to bring themselves to approve an amendment to that effect, which simply gives the people who are on the bottom of the pay scale the minimum decency, the minimum protection of having that low income protected from erosion by inflation. Yet the same members across the way there and all the backbenchers, some of whom are sleeping, are given the same kind of protection under the Legislative Assembly Act that we're asking for here in amendment 15.

I would like to know from the Minister of Labour and some of his colleagues why it is that they cannot stand in their place and offer to the people of this province who do not have the Members' Services Committee or a union or a professional association to negotiate on their behalf and protect their interests, why they can't provide in the Employment Standards Code, in Bill 21, a provision such as section 33.1, as we're proposing in our amendment today, that would provide that indexed inflation protection to the people who are working at the bottom of the pay scale. That is absolutely shameful and despicable. The government ought to be totally ashamed of themselves.

The third item I want to discuss on behalf of my constituents this afternoon, Mr. Chairman, is amendment 21. This is the amendment that deals with the question of parental leave. Now, some of the members from the government side who come from rural constituencies may have difficulty understanding the importance of this amendment, because perhaps in some of those rural communities the demographic profile is a little different. In many rural communities there's a large preponderance, if you like, of our seniors, of elderly citizens. Yet those people who have got younger children, many of whom have moved to the urban areas, the cities and so on, and who have their own children -- so now we're talking about grandchildren -- a lot of those people in Alberta understand something that this government doesn't seem to understand: that in 1988 for a government to be standing in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and giving us a lot of jaw flapping about how they care about the family yet failing to approve an amendment in the Employment Standards Code that allows fathers and mothers time off from work -- and this amendment is not even asking for that to be paid; I think it ought to be paid. I think we have a responsibility to the children of this province.

Mr. Chairman, we're trying to be ultimately and completely moderate and reasonable here. We're trying to get this government just to bring in some minimum decent provisions for employment standards in this province. So we're proposing this amendment that it be unpaid leave. Surely to goodness the minister and his government cannot seriously stand in their place and in 1988 deny parents an opportunity to have parental leave when they have a new child. Surely to goodness if they're paying any attention to the psychology studies that are taking place, they know the importance of bonding that takes place between

parents and children.

Mr. Chairman, a related concept to that is this whole issue of sick leave. Because, you know, a lot of parents, both of whom have to be employed in the work force in order to provide for their family properly and in a decent way -- what happens when the child is sick? When they have to stay home, they can't go to school, the child needs someone to give them care and attention. Yet the Employment Standards Code of Alberta that's being proposed to us here in 1988 doesn't have a provision that would allow employees, workers, to get leave of absence to look after their sick children, to use the sick leave that they would be entitled to for the care of sick family members.

Mr. Chairman, a lot of collective agreements already provide for this. I want to tell you that in my constituency, which is composed predominantly of young families, a provision like that is an important one. For this government not to have that provision in there is really not meeting the needs of my constituents, not meeting the needs of the young, dynamic families of the province of Alberta, families where both the parents have a need to be in the labour force to provide for their family. But they need to have -- and again this would be the kind of provision a pro-family government would have put in, and obviously since this government didn't put in the provision, I think it just undermines any credibility they have when they talk about their concern for the family. Any government that did have a concern for the family would have a provision in their Employment Standards Code that workers could take time that they would accumulate in sick time to look after sick family members.

Mr. Chairman, the last item, as time is moving on, that I want to talk on is amendment 28, which is the amendment proposed by the Official Opposition New Democrats regarding part-time workers. If the Minister of Labour is paying any attention to the trends in the labour force these days, he knows that there is an increasing trend to part-time workers. Now, why is that? Well, there are many reasons, and there are some legitimate reasons for that, but one of the reasons that many employers prefer to have part-time workers is because they don't have to pay them any benefits. Now, I've heard many people tell me that in just as many words. As someone who was a manager before I was elected and was concerned for the benefit of the employees that I had responsibility for, many of whom worked for us on a part-time basis -- we made it a point and it was part of the collective agreement that we were governed by that part-time workers were entitled to prorated benefits that full-time workers were entitled to. Why isn't that in the Employment Standards Code.

If employers want to have part-time workers -- and there may be some useful and legitimate reasons for that, and some people even prefer working on a part-time basis, but if that's the case, whether a person works part-time or full-time, when they reach 65, they still need a pension to live on. They still have the same kinds of needs as full-time workers. It's really just simply unfair, unjust, and inequitable that Bill 21, the Employment Standards Code that will govern the province for the next number of years, does not have specifically in it a provision like we have proposed here, section 111.1(1), providing for just exactly that: that part-time workers be entitled to prorated benefits based on the number of hours usually worked by the employee in the pay period. Mr. Chairman, that is a gross deficiency on behalf of part-time workers, many of whom are young people, many of whom are spouses in families, and I am not prepared to lend my support to any Bill that hasn't got a provision like that in it. It's simply not in touch with the modern reality of the

work force and the modern reality faced by families in my constituency and throughout Alberta.

So there are the four glaring defects in this Bill that I've alluded to and highlighted in particular: the fact that the minimum wage is not being indexed, that parental leave provisions in the Bill are totally inadequate -- and the amendment that we have proposed would be a substantial rectification of that -- and of course the provision dealing with prorating benefits for part-time workers. I want to tell this minister that if he is not prepared to move on those four areas, not to mention all the other amendments that we have proposed, he will not get my support on Bill 21.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: In the short time left, Mr. Chairman, I just want to make remarks on one of the amendments, number 10, the 40-hour workweek. I remind the government members that when it comes to labour legislation, as many other types of social reform, the Tories -- and later they became called the Conservatives -- opposed them all at every step of the way and continue to oppose them. It's just sheer thoughtlessness; unless of course it's sheer bloody-mindedness, which I think it may be too.

When there was no maximum time at all for a working day, when there were no labour standards, it was Conservatives, or Tories as they then were, who opposed the idea, then a radical idea, that there should be a 12-hour limit on a working day. The limits proposed by Lord Shaftesbury were 12 hours a day for six days a week, and that was opposed as being an impractical and woolly-minded interference with the freedom of contract. But it came in, and then it gradually worked down eventually to five and a half days and 12 hours, 10 hours, eight hours, and so on. At every step of the way, it was always opposed by the Conservatives.

So here we have the case that most people, when they're free to contract, work a 40-hour week and an eight-hour day maximum, yet we don't put it in the labour code. The only provinces or territories in Canada that have this are the ones which have had or do have a New Democratic government which has introduced it; namely, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the Yukon. In Saskatchewan it is noticeable, I believe, that the subsequent government has not altered that. People have adjusted their ideas and are used to the idea of a 40-hour week.

I just want to draw members' attention to that one example and ask them to consider, those hon. members on the other side of the House, Mr. Chairman: why can't you do that now? It won't be the end of the world. It's the way to go. It will provide perhaps some extra employment for the people who then need to be employed to do undone work. But in general, efficiency, particularly in the computer age, has meant that what a thousand workers were needed to do 10 years ago, now maybe 300 are needed. So in order to keep employment in step with progress, the maximum workweek must come down, and I don't see why the hon. members can't see that. If they can't do it on the grounds of compassion or humanity or decency, at least do it on the grounds of efficiency.

[Two members rose]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. YOUNIE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. [interjection] Tough luck, Bob. You aren't quick enough.

On Bill 21 I would like to point out to the minister that what we have here is a Bill that is supposed to protect those who have no other protection, none whatsoever. So it's very important that we look at this as the last resort of people my father used to refer to as wage slaves, those who choose either to take whatever boss man wants to give them or fail to feed their families, and I think it's very important, therefore, that we reflect on how important it is to provide adequate minimum protections for them.

The preamble unfortunately -- and I've gone into it at greater length elsewhere, so I won't now, but just remind the government that it tells every Albertan, not just members of the opposition, who it is that this government really represents, and that's the silver spoon set, the Mayfair Golf & Country Club set, not average working people in this province. It becomes apparent when you look at some of the things that are in here.

We argue of the need for a shorter workweek and point out reasons for it, and the government says: "Aw, don't worry. People really love to work and overwork and work some more." We argue about the need for equal pay for part-time workers and for prorating benefits. Now, I would point out to the minister that there are families that choose to have both spouses working half-time, and if they're fortunate enough to work for employers who, either because of the force of a collective agreement or because of the power of fairness and common sense, choose to prorate benefits and pay the same wages for part-time workers as full-time workers doing substantially the same work, then they can do that, meaning that both spouses can share equally in the raising of their families. In fact, until May 8, 1986, it was a plan devised by my spouse and myself to do just that. Obviously, victory in the election changed a number of plans.

We argue about overtime agreements and how they're forced on people unfairly as a condition of employment, and we talk very strongly against those, that workers are forced to accept them and take time off at regular pay. If they got overtime, they'd get time and a half, and we've said perhaps double time would be even better. But the employer can force them into taking these overtime agreements where all they get is time off equal to the overtime worked at the end of an already long day.

Now, I did receive a letter about an electrical company which first required employees to join an association which was created by and run by management and for belonging to which they had to pay dues. Then that association, run by management on behalf of the employees, in fact decided to accept one of those kinds of overtime agreements, and employees were told: "Well, if you don't like it, work somewhere else. Check out the. . ."

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please. I hate to interrupt the hon. member, but pursuant to Standing Order 21 the Chair is now required to call the vote on the amendments before the House.

All those in favour of the amendments as suggested by the opposition, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The motion is defeated.

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

[Two minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Barrett	Hewes	Mjolsness
Ewasiuk	Laing	Taylor
Fox	Martin	Wright
Gibeault	McEachern	Younie
Hawkesworth		

Against the motion:

Adair	Elliott	Payne
Anderson	Elzinga	Reid
Betkowski	Fischer	Russell
Bogle	Heron	Schumacher
Brassard	Isley	Shaben
Campbell	Kowalski	Sparrow
Cassin	McClellan	Stevens
Clegg	Mirosh	Trynchy
Cripps	Moore, R.	West
Day	Oldring	Young
Dinning	Orman	Zaruský
Downey	Osterman	

Totals	Ayes - 13	Noes - 35
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[Motion on amendments lost]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of Bill 21 as amended, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All those opposed, please say nay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The motion is carried.

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

[Two minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Adair	Elzinga	Reid
Anderson	Fischer	Rostad

Betkowski	Heron	Russell
Bogle	Isley	Schumacher
Brassard	Kowalski	Shaben
Campbell	McClellan	Shrake
Cassin	Mirosh	Sparrow
Clegg	Moore, R.	Stevens
Cripps	Oldring	Trynchy
Day	Orman	West
Dinning	Osterman	Young
Downey	Payne	Zaruský
Elliott		

Against the motion:

Barrett	Hewes	Mjolsness
Ewasiuk	Laing	Taylor
Fox	Martin	Wright
Gibeault	McEachern	Younie
Hawkesworth		

Totals:	Ayes - 37	Noes - 13
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[The sections of Bill 21 agreed to]

DR. REID: Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 21 as amended be reported.

[Motion carried]

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration and reports Bill 21 with some amendments.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the Liberal amendments to Bill 21 so that they may be entered into the official record of the session.

[At 1:08 p.m. the House adjourned to Monday at 2:30 p.m.]