

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Tuesday, June 28, 1988 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 88/06/28

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We give thanks to God for the rich heritage of this province as found in our people.

We pray that native-born Albertans and those who have come from other places may continue to work together to preserve and enlarge the precious heritage called Alberta.

Amen.

head: NOTICES OF MOTIONS

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 21 I wish to give notice that I intend to move, when Bill 21 is called for resumption of debate at third reading, that debate on the Bill shall not be further adjourned.

Pursuant to the same Standing Order 21 I wish to give notice that I intend to move, when Bill 22 is called for resumption of debate at third reading, that debate on the Bill shall not be further adjourned.

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give notice of my intention to move at the conclusion of routine orders today the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly commend the *Edmonton Journal* for the innovative decision to print its newspapers with ink manufactured from canola oil that is produced and processed in Alberta, thereby providing much-needed support to farm families in this province, diversifying the markets for Alberta's agricultural industry, and engaging in an effective program of import substitution.

I have copies here.

MR. SPEAKER: Under what standing order?

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, 40; pardon me.

MR. SPEAKER: Standing Order 40; okay.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give oral notice of an amending motion that's quite appropriate now, that I intend to move at third reading of Bill 21: the annual review of the minimum wage and its indexation to the inflation rate. I have copies here for all members.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give oral notice of an amending motion that I intend to move at third reading of Bill 21 urging that Alberta families be strengthened through extending the Bill's parental leave provisions. I have copies here for

all members.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I wish to give oral notice of an amending motion I intend to move at third reading of Bill 22 seeking a reconsideration of that Bill's provisions dealing with picketing and boycotts that both may be more freely allowed. Again, I have copies for all members.

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give oral notice of an amending motion I intend to move at third reading of Bill 21 urging that the Bill's coverage be extended to include employees of a farm or ranch employing 20 or more employees. I have copies here for all members.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give oral notice of an amending motion I intend to move at third reading of Bill 22 urging that the decertification powers of the Lieutenant Governor in Council not have effect until such time as the parties involved have pursued the matter as far as they wish in the courts and this Assembly has by resolution approved the order. I have copies for all members here.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give oral notice of an amending motion I intend to move at third reading of Bill 21 urging that overtime rates paid to employees be double the normal pay rate. I have copies for all members.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give oral notice of an amending motion I intend to move at third reading of Bill 22 urging that informal board hearings be without prejudice to either party's rights to pursue further remedies. I have copies for all members.

MS LAING: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give oral notice of an amending motion that I wish to move at third reading of Bill 22 that would stipulate the

continuation of previously effective collective agreement's terms governing . . . pay . . . conditions of employment, and the rights and privileges of employees.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give oral notice that I intend to move a motion amending Bill 22 at third reading that would refer the Bill

back to the Committee of the Whole for consideration of an amendment to provide that part 2.1 not be proclaimed in force between the end of the fall sittings of the 1988 session of the Legislature or January 1, 1989.

I have copies for everyone.

MS MJOLSNES: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give oral notice of an amending motion I wish to move at third reading on Bill 22 urging that the Labour Relations Board be empowered to impose a first contract under certain circumstances. I have copies.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give oral notice of an amending motion that I intend to move at third reading of Bill 22 urging that an application to revoke a trade union's bargaining rights if it originates with a party other than the bargaining unit employees must be approved by the Lieutenant Governor in

Council before it takes effect. I have copies here for all members.

MR. PIQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give oral notice of an amending motion that I intend to move at third reading of Bill 22 urging that the Bill's coverage be extended to include employees of a farm or ranch employing 20 or more employees. I have copies here for all members.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give oral notice of an amending motion I intend to move at third reading of Bill 22 urging that the Labour Relations Board be empowered to certify a bargaining agent automatically in instances where employers have violated the Bill during an organizing drive.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I wish to give oral notice of an amending motion that I intend to move at third reading of Bill 21 urging that the annual vacation entitlement normally accorded to employees be extended. Again, I have copies for all members of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to give oral notice of an amending motion for third reading of Bill 22. I intend to move that "the use of replacement workers by an employer during a strike or lockout" be prohibited.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give oral notice of an amending motion I intend to move at third reading of Bill 22 urging that spin-off companies not be permitted to escape the parent company's collective agreements. I have copies for all members.

MR. SPEAKER: Anyone else? No one else.

The Chair would just point out that having received a few notices here, the Chair will review the amendments. Because they've been submitted doesn't necessarily mean they're all in order. Just a reminder to the House.

head: **TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file with the Assembly copies of the Questions and Answers document relating to the Canada/United States free trade agreement. Copies will be made available to all members of the Assembly for wide distribution.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a response to Written Question 205 by the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a response to Question 206.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and the other members of the House this afternoon, Dr. Moustafa Abdallah, from Fort Vermilion, whose case I raised in the Legislature earlier this month regarding difficulties in gaining

access to an internship. Dr. Abdallah is looking forward to meeting soon with the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care to further discuss the barriers he's facing in trying to serve the residents of that northern Alberta community. I'd like him to stand now and receive the warm welcome of the House.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Debate of Bills 21 and 22

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. The Legislative Assembly is currently in the final stage of debate on two of the most important Bills facing working people in this province. In the final stage, debate has consisted of 35 minutes on Bill 22 and 55 minutes on Bill 21. Today, Mr. Speaker, we have a House leader announcing closure again. It now seems that any amount of debate on these two Bills is too much debate for the government. My question is simply this to the Premier: why is it that the only way people representing ordinary working families can avoid closure on this Bill is really to surrender the right to debate completely?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, clearly, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is incorrect. These Bills have had more time in this Legislature than any legislation in the history of Alberta. Now, the members may have mishandled the way they used their time, but that's their fault, not the government's. I had the document before us the other day; it happens to be here again today. This document is pages and pages and pages and pages of debate on these Bills. The hon. Leader of the Opposition should have thought about how he was going to deal with it rather than merely wasting time and also running about or having members of his caucus run about saying, "One thing we're going to do is not allow those Bills to pass." Clearly, that's the ultimate arrogance towards the Legislature.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the ultimate arrogance of this Legislature is this Premier, who doesn't believe in democracy. He can talk about this being thicker than the phone book. The only thing thicker is his head.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there were 35 minutes on one Bill and 55 on another. That's what I'm asking. Is this Premier saying that's enough debate on two of these major Bills that affect all the working people in the province?

MR. GETTY: As usual, when the hon. member has a very weak position, he tries to get into personal comments or raise his voice. But frankly, Mr. Speaker, he is trying to cover up for the fact that he mismanaged the time of the House. It's obvious that when you set out to just delay and prevent legislation from being passed -- future and past parliamentarians have anticipated this. The fact is that they have put in place a procedure that deals with it. Now, the hon. members have every right . . . [interjections].

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. This is question period. We still need to hear the answers as well as the questions.

Hon. Premier.

MR. GETTY: The hon. members have every right to conduct the style of delay and stall that they have, but the Legislatures over history have provided for a way to deal with it, and the government is. If the people of Alberta had wanted to have a

couple of pieces of legislation that were socialistic pieces of legislation, they'd have elected socialists. They did not elect socialists. They elected this government. The government has taken two years to talk to people, to prepare major pieces of labour legislation, and now in a responsible way the government has the responsibility to proceed with them. [interjections] The members can talk and yell all they want. That's the fact of a Legislature moving.

MR. MARTIN: This undemocratic, autocratic Premier talked about history, Mr. Speaker. This is the first time in the history of our province in which closure has been invoked by a government at all three stages of a Bill, and I expect it's the first time in the history of Canada. It's probably the first time that it's been brought in after less than an hour of debate. My question -- because these were important Bills -- is to this Premier. Will the Premier explain how this confrontational style of his can possibly lead to improved labour relations in the province?

MR. GETTY: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I come back to say to everybody that the Legislature has taken a great deal of time on these Bills. The Bills were presented to the House on April 15. That's the result of being laid over from the year before, when the Bills were presented to the House, and before that a year of discussion. We then had the legislation placed before the House. The hon. members decide they will do something that hasn't been done in Alberta before, and that is that they, in order to . . . They're having kind of a bad session; I admit it. So they get extreme and they try to stall the business of the House. Well, Legislatures over the years have looked ahead and provided for this, and the government is then following what a responsible government should do.

This legislation provides a balanced playing field for labour negotiations in the future. This labour legislation allows management and labour to negotiate on a level field, work out the negotiations between themselves, and enter into contracts. That's the kind of legislation the people of Alberta want, and that's the kind of legislation that is coming through this Legislature.

MR. MARTIN: Obviously, the Premier refuses to answer the question because he can't. He knows it's unheard of in Canada to do what they're doing.

MR. SPEAKER: The problem is still that it's inappropriate parliamentarily to comment on the answer. Final supplementary.

MR. MARTIN: Well, big deal, Mr. Speaker. People . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much for the "big deal" comment. Perhaps the final supplementary.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The point that I want to make is that this is unheard of in Canada, an undemocratic process to take away workers' rights. I want this Premier to answer the question for once. Will the Premier explain how he can possibly expect his new labour relations regime to be successful in the workplace in the face of such sleazy tactics?

MR. SPEAKER: Hold it. In this session we've already had the word "sleazy" withdrawn at least once by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods. Perhaps you could change your adjective.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, surely we have to base it on something.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, again the hon. member draws up all this indignation when, in fact, he's really covering for the performance of himself and his caucus in the Legislature. They have badly mismanaged their time, badly misjudged the public, badly misjudged the government. We have presented legislation that will provide the base for the future in Alberta for negotiations on a responsible basis between management and labour.

Now, everybody knows that this party and this opposition have no interest in having smooth labour relations in Alberta. I mean, they run around, following the policies of their pal Mr. Werlin, just looking for upsetting labour relations. We've seen that before. What they don't like about this legislation is that it provides for negotiation and it provides for fewer strikes in this province and more consultation. [interjections] And they don't even have the guts or the nerve to sit there and listen to an answer when they themselves asked the question.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, supplementary, followed by Calgary-McCall.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, if I may also, supplementary to the Premier. I think the public is indignant too; it's not only the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, we've been subjected to 63 Bills in this session, probably one of the heaviest and most crowded going. What is the real reason for trying to move closure now? Is it that he's trying to get out of having a fall session and sweep these contentious issues under the rug as soon as possible? Isn't that what he's afraid of: a fall session?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, we're not trying to do anything as quickly as possible. It's taken two years. What kind of nonsense for the hon. member to say we're trying to deal with these things quickly. First of all, we're established into the longest session in the history of Alberta, and we have the longest time spent on Bills in the history of Alberta. So they look very foolish standing up saying that we're rushing this. Neither party is interested in having legislation go forward which is going to establish a new, sound basis for labour negotiation in Alberta. They prefer -- and we've watched it -- to have labour unrest. Well, it's not going to happen under this new legislation, and that's too bad.

AN HON. MEMBER: That's a lie. That's a lie.

MR. SPEAKER: All right, Calgary-Mountain View, you've made the statement twice. Are you prepared to stand and retract?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, the Premier's statement is untrue when he's describing our position.

MR. SPEAKER: Did the hon. member withdraw the original statements? [interjections] I didn't hear it. Did he do it?

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, I said that what the Premier had said was not our position; it was untrue. I would withdraw the statement that he had, in fact, made a lie.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McCall.

MR. NELSON: Thank you. Mr. Speaker. [interjections] Mr. Speaker. I won't get into any sleazy comments.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. hon. member. You've just withdrawn that word, that adjective, haven't you?

MR. NELSON: Certainly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a question to either the Premier or the Minister of Labour. Could the minister tell us in some exacting time what amount of time in hours has been given for the complete debate on Bills 21 and 22 -- that includes first and second reading and committee study -- and the cost of this nonsense to the taxpayers?

MR. SPEAKER: Government House Leader.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, the greatest precision that I can give is that the debate on the Bills has extended to in excess of 41 hours. The pages in *Hansard* are somewhere, I believe, between 245 and 255 at this point. There will, of course, be some additional debate.

AN HON. MEMBER: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

Economic Outlook

MR. MARTIN: To the Provincial Treasurer, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Democratic Dick.

MR. MARTIN: Yeah, democratic Dick. I'm sure we'll get better answers than we do from what's his name.

Mr. Speaker, the Treasurer made certain comments recently in the course of justifying the government's latest borrowing Bills, which, I point out, bring the direct government debt up to \$7.5 billion. In the course of these comments to the Legislature the Treasurer indicated that he expected the deficit on the general fund to be in the range of \$800 million to \$900 million compared, I point out, to \$670 million in the budget. He also indicated a Capital Fund requirement of some \$300 million, up from \$225 million. My question to the Treasurer is this: will the Treasurer explain why we're less than three months into the budget year and the deficit has already mushroomed by some \$200 million to \$300 million, by the Treasurer's own account?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'll try to provide a calm and reasoned reply so that the member from across the way has an opportunity to follow the fiscal plan, which I might say, in terms of time of this Legislative Assembly, certainly has been carefully examined.

Mr. Speaker, when I talk about the borrowing requirements. I think it is well understood that the increase in the funds required by the province to \$7.5 billion from \$6.5 billion includes two major funds that the province operates: the General Revenue Fund and the Capital Fund. From time to time. Mr. Speaker, instead of being precise in terms of the dollars that are reflected in our bottom line, we tend to use general numbers. In terms of both funds, Mr. Speaker, it is the deficit of around \$900 million that is referred to, and of course it is those dollars that we'll be borrowing for. I also went on to say that this would

allow us some comfort, that we don't expect to use the full amount of the \$7.5 billion. But as prudent managers of the resources of this province and having a forward looking attitude to managing the fiscal plan of this province, we want to have that opportunity to move to that level. I should say specifically that at this point in the fiscal plan I don't see any major problems with the projected deficit. It is below our targeted forecast of last year by \$200 million.

MR. MARTIN: We understand that the Treasurer made just a little mistake in the way he reported that. We thought that was the case.

But, Mr. Speaker, to go into this in more detail, the government's budget was based on oil at \$18.50 per barrel. I would point out to the Treasurer that so far it's averaged around \$16.36, and it's currently trading even lower, around \$15.76 today. My question: is the Treasurer building a revised average price for oil into any revised budget figures, and if so, what is that figure at this time?

MR. JOHNSTON: Again, Mr. Speaker, that's a very reasonable question, and I think in the context of what has happened in the marketplace, obviously our forecast of \$18.50 oil when the New York mercantile market is now trading below \$17 over the past few weeks would raise the question: what is the reliability of your revenue forecasts? As I have said before, the fact is that we put that \$18.50 forecast out there so the people of Alberta can appreciate the kinds of difficulties that Alberta has, because much of our revenue is driven by the world changes in oil and gas prices.

But it doesn't mean, as I said in the earlier response, that I am as yet concerned about our forecast position. Mr. Speaker, you should know that the \$18.50 forecast is a composite index, one that reflects not just the value of oil prices to the province of Alberta but also reflects the price of natural gas going into that very lucrative and forecasted strong market in the United States. So we have to go until March 31, 1989, and over that period you will see firmness come back to the price, and you will see a very strong market develop, as the Minister of Energy has reported, in the United States. So we are very optimistic that the price will become fairly close to what we're forecasting. We believe the revenue forecast on oil and natural gas is fairly accurate. It's also reinforced by the oil plays generally.

But if I was to say that it was an infallible comment, that would be wrong, of course. We do make mistakes, obviously. We're the first to admit it, because we're speaking to the people of Alberta right now and saying to them, "Here is the best we can do." It reflects the composite view, reflects the best information we have from the departments, from the private sector. We're giving that information to the people of Alberta so that they along with us can judge the problems we have in terms of establishing a fiscal plan. I should say, Mr. Speaker, that at least we have a plan, at least we've taken the determination to focus in on the problem we have in the size of the deficit, and we are controlling the size of our expenditures.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the Treasurer may want to see things through rose-coloured glasses, but a lot of forecasters would disagree with him at this particular time, because the price is actually going down at this point. It's not \$17; it's \$15.76 today. But I'll throw this out: I think the deficit could be greater, but in lieu of the Treasurer now admitting that the possibility is at least there that the deficit could be higher, and

much higher than he projected in March, would the Treasurer, though, assure the Assembly that essential services such as health care and education will not be cut next year to meet some arbitrary guideline in terms of the budget deficit that he talks about?

MR. JOHNSTON: First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me be clear of what it is, in fact, I did say. I've been trying to go fairly slowly here so the member can understand the issues. First of all, I have not said that the deficit will necessarily increase. I have indicated clearly that in terms of forecasting oil and gas prices, they are subject to a range of confidence intervals, if you like. That is, they could be up or they could be below it. But that doesn't mean necessarily that the rest of the revenues of the province in any way should be expected to drift down. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the corporate tax levels are expected to drift up, and therefore in terms of a compromise between oil and gas revenues and other taxation revenues they may in fact balance out.

What we have also said, Mr. Speaker, is that we are doing our darnedest to ensure that those high priorities that we outlined in our Budget Address will be carried through. We've shown already our commitment to education and to hospitals. Historically over the past year we have shown that we are a caring government, one which provides for those people who are in difficulty. We have also shown in terms of the tax regime itself that we have taken additional Albertans off the tax schedule, not just by the selective tax reduction but by also reducing income taxes and maintaining that very clear principle that is so important to us in this Conservative government: that there will not be a sales tax in this province. That's an easy point to communicate, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I do not recall asking about a sales tax.

Mr. Speaker, I know it's very hard to forecast, but I'm saying that there may be some difficulty with the forecast that was already there, which could lead to a deficit, and the Treasurer has acknowledged that could happen, all other things being equal. All I want from him is not to talk about the past, because they did cut a billion dollars two years ago and they did cut back. I'm asking for assurances that in this next year, next March, they will not do that if the deficit is slightly higher than they anticipated.

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I know the tone and theme of the ND Party across the way develops its strength and its character around the doomsayer's philosophy. There's no question about that. If it's not negative and not bad and not dour, then they're not happy. Well, that's not the resolve that this government has. We're optimistic. We can see investment flowing into this province at a high rate, we can see the unemployment numbers dropping off, and we can see real economic growth coming back to the province. The future lies ahead for us on a very positive note. We believe in it. We're going to ensure it happens, and we're providing the government to ensure that it takes place in this province. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark. [interjections] Edmonton-Meadowlark, not Vegreville.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Dollar up, oil down, deficit up: is the government reassessing financial com-

mitments to mega energy projects in this province?

MR. JOHNSTON: Yes, Mr. Speaker. We are very firm in our belief that a variety of investments are necessary in this province to ensure diversification takes place. Over the past few weeks and few months many of my colleagues -- the Premier, the Minister of Energy, and others -- have been devoting a lot of effort to ensure that the great economic future which is ours in this province will come to us built on the natural strengths that we have. Together with the diversification which is already taking place, we're ensuring that oil and natural gas will be driven by new investment in this province.

Yes, the province will take a role where necessary, as we have traditionally done. We'll ensure that other kinds of investment take place in this province, because we do have an economic regime that is attractive to the private sector. Good government mixed in there is an important ingredient. That is the kind of profile that we have taken. We've explained it to the people of Alberta. We'll continue to ensure that economic growth takes place here as a result of private-sector activity. That's the mandate we were elected on, and that's the promise we will continue with, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A supplementary to the Treasurer. The Liberal and NDP doom and gloomers were shrieking over a year ago that we would not meet the deficit projections of the '87 budget. Could the minister please jog our memories and inform us if indeed the 1987 deficit projections were met?

MR. JOHNSTON: A very excellent question, Mr. Speaker. That shows the way . . . [interjections] I know the socialists know that the fiscal plan is working. That's why they support what we have done. In fact, you have seen that our forecast, moving from an aggregate deficit of \$4 billion to a reduced deficit last year of just over \$1 billion, has shown the kind of performance and determination we have to deal with the deficit. We explain that to the people of Alberta, and on a wide mandate they agree: do not leave a legacy of debt to future generations, tighten the ship up, be good managers, and get on with making this province a great place to reside. We're doing just that.

Assistance for Farm Families

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, my main question today is to the Premier and concerns the thousands of Canadian farmers who have left the farms. In Alberta it may be only in the hundreds, but it's still very many and a large part of it because they've been forced off the land by the rather heartless and stupid policies of this government when it comes to foreclosing. The government has announced a program which will provide farm management assistance to debt-ridden farmers, but it focuses only on farm financial stress and is being administered by the very department that's causing most of the stress, in the minds of the people; that is, the Agricultural Development Corporation. To the Premier. Why is the program focused solely on financial management and not on other adjustment?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the Minister of Agriculture to deal with the question, except to say to the hon. member that he's obviously responding to some media reports about the

number of people leaving farm employment. It's clear that while there was something like 10 times as much leaving other parts of Canada than in Alberta, we have to accept the fact that there are some cases where everyone will not stay in any industry in any province. Nevertheless, in Alberta our farmers and our rural towns and communities get the greatest level of assistance from this government than any government in Canada. It's not just in the area of reducing costs of money, but it's reducing costs of energy, reducing costs of fertilizer, helping to build strong, viable communities. All of these things are a part of creating an atmosphere and attitude, if you like, that this government is committed to the family farm and to the strength of the agricultural economy in Alberta.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, maybe I didn't phrase my question well enough. It's with reference to family stress, which I'm sure the Premier is most interested in. Many people are losing their farms, losing homes that they've had for generations. Would he not consider expanding the program of consulting and advice to the farm families that are in a transitional stage to cover the whole aspect of alcoholism, suicide, the whole stress on the family of moving from one major industry into another occupation entirely?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, that type of counseling is available to all Albertans. If the hon. member has some specific program he's interested in, he could spell it out in more detail for me, either in the House or out of the Legislature, and I would consider it.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplementary. The fact of the matter, though, Mr. Speaker, is that they've voted \$300,000 only, and it's to give financial management. But we have a crisis in our rural families. If the Premier would get out and tour the province, he'd understand that. We're not putting the money and the consulting in that. Could the Premier say, for instance, how much of the measly \$300,000 is going to be budgeted for social consulting and advice to farm families that are losing their homes and their livelihood?

MR. GETTY: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, it's impossible to pinpoint an exact amount of money, except to say that the hon. leader of the Liberal Party continues to express such a negative view of the capacity and the strength of the rural people and farm families in this province. One of the things that the government is doing is strengthening this part of our economy, the agricultural sector of our economy, trying to, again, attract people into lending money in this area, to have companies come and invest in farm implement operations: all of these things. You have to have a positive attitude when you're doing that. The hon. member goes about knocking rural Alberta and knocking our farm economy, exactly the opposite that should be done to help our farmers.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, there's nothing wrong with the farm economy that a change in government wouldn't cure; there's no question there.

Maybe I'll move the supplementary over to the Associate Minister of Agriculture. Would the minister consider expanding the program, which now involves only financial counseling, to try to cure some of the faults that her own department has caused, to cover the social aspects and the rehabilitation aspects of these farmers who are being forced off their land, being

squeezed out of their occupation and their life-style?

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, the beauty of the new amalgamated financial program between Alberta Agriculture and ADC is that we do have flexibility. The \$300,000 that's in that program is above the services that we already have, and one of the aspects of the program is that the DHEs or the DAs or the Alberta loans officers who may be the first initial contact . . .

MR. TAYLOR: They're not social workers.

MRS. CRIPPS: Would you just listen and quit chewing that cud all the time?

MR. TAYLOR: She doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. CRIPPS: How would you like to listen?

The program will do exactly what the member is asking for. The people in Alberta Agriculture and in ADC under this program are able to call in special services if they're necessary and would be of some help to the farmer.

MR. TAYLOR: These are financial people, not social workers.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. You've had your four questions, hon. member.

Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. PIQUETTE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier. We have lost 4,000 farmers and farm workers in Alberta during the past year, so it is a real tragedy when we start looking at the farming situation. Now, how can the Premier claim that he helped reduce input costs for farmers when last year his government raised the fuel tax by 5 cents a litre?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would check, he'd notice that the government protected the farmers of Alberta by providing them with the lowest energy costs in Canada, probably in North America. We also provided them with a \$2 billion program of low money costs, fixed 20-year lending at 9 percent. We also provided them with the lowest costs for fertilizer. Now, the hon. member can try and draw up whatever kinds of scenes he wants, but this government is providing rural Alberta, our farmers and ranchers, with the best assistance of any group in Canada, of any part of the Canadian farm economy.

MR. R. SPEAKER: A supplementary to the associate minister in terms of the counseling. Is the counseling for ADC loan recipients only, or is it for the broad cross section of farmers? Is the thrust in terms of social counseling, or is it just financial counseling?

MRS. CRIPPS: Mr. Speaker, that's an excellent question, because that was the situation that we ran into with the ADC enterprise counseling service. Farmers felt that it was only for ADC borrowers and only for those borrowers who were already in a very financially stressed situation. We had many requests from farmers and other people representing the agricultural sector saying that this counseling and financial service and other services should be provided on a more across-the-board basis. So the program is available to any person in agriculture who needs the services, and certainly if there are other services necessary outside of straight financial counseling, we would make that

available or at least make known to them the resources that we have available that the Premier mentioned earlier.

MR. SPEAKER: Main question, Member for Little Bow.

Free Trade

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, it's to the Attorney General, and it's with regards to the free trade agreement. One of the aspects in terms of the latest agreement is that countries outside of the North American continent have the opportunity of establishing businesses in Alberta or Canada which, in turn, can do business in that broader North American market. Could the minister indicate whether we have had contacts by businesses at this point in time to take advantage of that situation and prepare for the time when the free trade agreement is in place?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, the question is an important one. Of course, as the hon. member has indicated, this free trade deal will open up an opportunity for foreign investment to come into Canada and provide opportunities for Canadian employment. Of course, we welcome that and have done so for a long time. Our government welcomes foreign investment that stays here and provides new businesses and opportunities.

With respect to specific inquiries I can indicate that my colleague the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, who is not here today unfortunately, heads the department that is actively involved in dealing with such inquiries. I cannot therefore give specific examples to the hon. member, but I can assure him that the Economic Development and Trade department is very active, both through our foreign offices and through their other contacts, in encouraging foreign investment to take advantage of this opportunity to access the North American market.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. Interprovincial trade barriers are certainly an aspect that we have to deal with as a provincial government. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association made a number of recommendations to resolve that matter. Could the minister indicate whether the government endorses the recommendations of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and will those recommendations be taken to the federal/provincial Committee of Ministers on Internal Trade?

MR. HORSMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, that is an extremely important question. Alberta has, of course, taken a very strong position in support of the dismantlement of interprovincial trade barriers that now exist in our own country. We recognize that to be very much a part of the task that lies ahead of all governments in Canada in terms of making the free trade agreement between Canada and the United States work, as well as our obligations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

I would just point out to the hon. member that in the document handed out today, there are questions dealing with that. With respect to federal/provincial initiatives to eliminate interprovincial trade barriers, while I cannot specifically comment on the Canadian Manufacturers' Association recommendations to the federal/provincial task force which has been established, I would remind hon. members that in Belleville, Ontario, in the spring of 1986 the trade ministers agreed upon what has now been called the Belleville declaration. It's not all that well known perhaps, but it's a very important one. That is that they would engage upon a three part process to deal with interprovin-

cial trade barriers: the first of which was to do an inventory of existing barriers; secondly, there was an agreement not to introduce any more interprovincial trade barriers, and thirdly, to devise a method by which the interprovincial trade barriers could be dismantled.

Now, that work was endorsed by the first ministers at the Edmonton Premiers' Conference here in the fall of 1986, and then again by the Premiers' Conference which was held in Vancouver. Of course, work has been going on. My colleague the Minister of Economic Development and Trade attended a meeting towards that end last week in Ottawa, but unfortunately not all the results were as successful as we had hoped.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Could the minister indicate any special types of activities taking place within his department or other departments of government that would enhance the opportunity for Alberta businesses to take advantage of the free trade agreement?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, there is a multitude of ways that my colleague and other members -- the Department of Technology, Research and Telecommunications -- are working with Alberta businesses to provide them with information. We are also co-operating with the government of Canada in their efforts to provide information to businesses. I've noted that crossing my desk in recent days there has been a number of studies put forward by national accounting firms and business advisory firms and think tanks and economic organizations, such as the C.D. Howe institute, that have provided information as to how Canadian businesses can access this wider market. It is an extremely important role that we have to play, working with the private sector. I think it's extremely important that the hon. member has raised that question.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, final supplementary. Could the minister indicate, in light of his answer, the reason for closing the Edmonton office of the Alberta trade representative here at the present time in light of the fact that there was a lot of information that came from that office relative to free trade?

MR. HORSMAN: My colleague would have to answer that question. I'm not entirely sure which office the hon. member is referring to. But certainly within the Department of Economic Development and Trade the office of that department is open and is available to all members of the Assembly.

I think I understand now what the hon. member is getting at. The office of the Alberta trade representative was closed in Edmonton. That particular office was made available to assist our government in negotiating with the federal government and other provinces with respect to the free trade agreement. Now that the trade agreement itself has been concluded, it was felt that that office should remain open in Calgary until such time as the deal had been implemented. It was never the intention to keep the office of the Alberta trade representative open past the implementation of the free trade agreement. Other government departments -- Economic Development and Trade; Technology, Research and Telecommunications; and Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs -- will be providing the type of information that the hon. member is referring to. I appreciate his question, but that role has been concluded.

I should add this before I conclude, Mr. Speaker. With the possibility and the very real opportunity that exists now for the provincial governments to become involved with the federal

government in the next round of GATT discussions, it is possible that that office will continue beyond the term that I just mentioned. That yet has to be worked out with the new Minister for International Trade at the federal level.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, a supplemental to the minister on the original question on where a plant locates. Could you give us any earthly reason why a company coming to North America would locate in Canada if they can locate in the U.S. and only get 10 percent of their North American market countervailed, whereas if they locate in Canada, they could get 90 percent of their North American market countervailed? Why would any corporation, given the choice of the two countries under free trade, locate in Canada rather than in the U.S.?

MR. HORSMAN: Well, because, Mr. Speaker, people have faith in Canada, unlike the leader of the Liberal Party of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly.

Fort McMurray Tax Assessment

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. As a result of the first tax assessment since 1978 the homeowners of the city of Fort McMurray have seen their properties rise to be the highest in the province of Alberta. In fact, for some of the residents their increase has gone up as much as 40 percent. The Municipal Taxation Amendment Act, 1988, currently before the Assembly provides for a three-year phase-in as a result of new assessments. I realize that might be too late to help Fort McMurray, in spite of their high tax increases. To the minister. Is the minister considering making any special exemptions for Fort McMurray residents so that their very large tax increases can be in fact phased in?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the member means by exemptions. The municipality certainly has the ability to phase in tax increases, as Bill 25 clarifies, which the hon. member has already alluded to. It is the municipality that also establishes the mill rate and the municipality that determines what amount of money is required to operate civic services. There's no question that there's been a very dramatic increase in Fort McMurray, but that is a decision of the council, made partially as a result of the general assessment that was carried out under the same rules that general assessments are carried out provincewide.

MR. EWASIUK: Well, Mr. Speaker. Fort McMurray is not the only city that's experiencing a dramatic increase in property taxes. In fact, Calgary is another city that's going to have the same problem. Would the minister consider adding a retroactive clause to section 18 of Bill 25 so that the municipalities can in fact phase in these tax increases in 1988?

MR. SPEAKER: This is a plea with respect to third reading. This is not the place for having that, because it's anticipation. Sorry.

Next question.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, has the minister contacted improvement district 18 and the councillors of Fort McMurray so they can begin to negotiate a new formula that's in place now

relative to the tar sands plants that pay taxes to the ID? There's a per capita formula to the city. Have you made any efforts to start negotiations in that area?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises an important point with respect to Fort McMurray and the industrial tax transfer which takes place between the improvement district and that municipality.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.
Minister.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to that particular tax transfer, I discussed it with the city council of Fort McMurray last October after just being appointed minister. I've had ongoing discussions with the member for that particular constituency, the Minister of Recreation and Parks, and as recently as yesterday talked to the mayor of Fort McMurray with respect to that issue on the telephone. Back in October I asked them for the case they would make for an increase in that tax transfer, and I'm still awaiting that particular case. I expect it to be made to me during my meeting with the mayor of Fort McMurray and the member for that constituency later this week.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, obviously, there's going to be some difficulty in getting the formula worked out, and I would suspect that perhaps there's a need for the parties to share that pot. There's going to be perhaps a need to increase the total pot, because I'm sure neither party is going to want to give. The IDs don't want to give up the funds that they now have to Fort McMurray. So is the minister looking at the possibility of in fact expanding or increasing the tax allocation on the two tar sands plants to make more money available to the county and to the improvement district?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, if in fact the industrial tax transfer were increased, that increase would come from the plant. So that would be the direct result of that. There are other considerations, one being whether or not the improvement district would consider further contracts with the municipality. That would have to be determined after assessing the costs of dealing with citizens who live in Fort McMurray but work in the improvement district and the services which the city provides to those individuals. I might say that the \$60 per person industrial tax transfer is standard in most Alberta communities where such a transfer takes place, so consideration of a change there may have implications further.

However, we are sensitive to the issue in Fort McMurray. As I mentioned before, the member for that particular constituency has made representations to me, and we will explore all possibilities with the city and the mayor of that municipality to see if there's some way we can assist with respect to the difficult increase they have experienced in that community.

MR. SPEAKER: Additional supplementaries? Thank you. The time for question period . . . Is this a supplementary?

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, a short one to the hon. member. In view of the OSLO project that's being discussed for a few miles farther away from Fort McMurray, in the final deliberations before the OSLO project is given the go-ahead, does the Premier or the minister sit down with the town and work out just what the tax transfer will be before they give the final go-ahead?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to any future projects, one could not predetermine the tax transfer, because you'd have to assess what particular impact that project would have on the town, what services would be required, and what is necessary in that respect.

I should underline, though, with regards to this particular circumstance that the city of Fort McMurray will later this year be getting quite an increase in the AMPLE grant program. I will let the mayor know shortly what that figure will be precisely. We will, as the Member for Fort McMurray has requested, be discussing other options as well, to look at that circumstance. I do have to outline, though, Mr. Speaker, that the tax increase is something that's within civic responsibility. They've had a difficult situation because of the fluctuation of the economy in that particular city, and while recognizing that it is a totally civic responsibility, we will do everything we can to assist the citizens of that part of our province.

MR. HYLAND: A supplementary question to the minister. Because of the rapid increases in taxation that happen in towns such as Fort McMurray, I wonder if the minister would consider moving to Government Bills and Orders, Bill 208, An Act to Amend the Municipal Taxation Act, which would allow a yearly review so that we wouldn't be subject to big increases every eight years.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, the member is very perceptive in defining a base problem, which is the time between general assessments and the fluctuations that does cause. That's not the total problem in Fort McMurray, but it's a very large part of it. We hope that sometime in the future the intent of Bill 208 will in fact come into being, but that will take the computerization and sophisticated development of our assessment systems throughout all Alberta communities. We look forward to working with Alberta communities in moving in that direction, as a couple of Alberta municipalities already have.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired.

The Chair has received notification of one point of order by Edmonton-Belmont. Then we have the request under Standing Order 40 by Vegreville.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In question period today during the exchange between the Premier and the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Premier said that the opposition wanted labour unrest in the province of Alberta. Well, *Beauchesne* prevents me from calling that statement exactly what it is, but I can assure all members of the Assembly that nobody on any side of the Legislative Assembly wants labour unrest in our province. For the Premier to suggest that is, I would suggest, a violation of section 23(i) of our Standing Orders, and I would ask the Premier to consider withdrawing such a remark.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair will just have to look at what the Blues do indeed say in this regard. Therefore, we'll have to take

it under consideration.

Standing Order 40, Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking to the urgency of the motion that has been circulated to all hon. members -- that's the provision of Standing Order 40, hon. Attorney General -- it's well understood by all members of the Assembly the various problems farmers in the province face with markets and prices and finances, and I just think the innovative decision of the *Edmonton Journal* to help diversify the agricultural economy by using canola-based ink to print their newspapers is a positive step -- albeit not a large step, a positive step -- and one that deserves the commendation of Members of the Legislative Assembly for their attempts to help farmers, help the communities they support, and to engage in an effective program of import substitution.

MR. SPEAKER: Under Standing Order 40, there is a request. Is there unanimous consent to agree to urgency?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: Fails.

A point of order, the Minister of Agriculture.

MR. ELZINGA: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. I want to indicate, just to have the record clear, that not only . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: What citation?

MR. ELZINGA: Citation 315.

Not only does the *Edmonton Journal* use canola oil but also the *Edmonton Sun*, and we appreciate very much the involvement by our major newspapers, recognizing it was not an urgent and pressing necessity to discuss at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: Not a point of order but information. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I move that Written Question 208 stand and retain its place today.

[Motion carried]

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

How much has in total been budgeted by the government by way of grant or other assistance in the current government financial year for each of the following festivals:

(1) Banff Television 1988,

(2) Edmonton Fringe 1988,

particularizing:

(a) the breakdown between departments, if any,

- (b) the purposes to be served,
- (c) the amounts to be contributed by other levels of government, if known,
- (d) the amount of the total proposed budget of the recipient, and
- (e) the expected number of members of the public to be directly served?

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, accepted.

head: **MOTIONS FOR RETURNS**

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I move that Motion 209 stand and retain its place on the Order Paper today.

[Motion carried]

190. Mr. Chumir moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all documents pertaining to the April 1988 and any previous agreements between the governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Canada and Husky Oil Ltd. regarding the biprovincial upgrader project.

DR. WEBBER: Mr. Speaker, rather than reject the motion for a return on the basis that we cannot provide all the documentation, including letters, because of the confidentiality of many of those documents -- many of the documents dealt with various alternatives that led up to our final agreement -- I would rise to amend Motion for a Return 190 to read as follows:

a copy of the 1988 agreement between the governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Canada and Husky Oil Ltd. regarding the biprovincial upgrader project.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the government of Alberta has tabled on previous occasions agreements between governments relating to heavy oils and oil sands projects. For example, the 1984 Husky agreement and the Syncrude Crown agreement were tabled to provide members with details about the respective projects.

MR. SPEAKER: On the amendment, Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've had a long dialogue with the minister on this issue, and to say the least, I'm not particularly pleased to see the amendment. I wanted all the documents. With the view that I should be entitled to some, yes, it is true that some have been made public. I can accept that, but there are others that the minister has indicated cannot or will not be disclosed. Of course, that's not surprising. This government has a long tradition of not providing information to this House, and they certainly believe in tradition when it comes to that particular issue. So if it's not one thing, it's another.

But I would like to be thankful at least for very small mercies in being able to get this one particular agreement, which I would like to note, however, is merely an agreement in principle and is not, in fact, a final contract with respect to guarantees. In fact, we have not had in this House, to my knowledge, one single contract provided by this government in respect of what are now in the range of \$2 billion of grants, guarantees, and loans to private business being provided by this government. I think that's wrong, and what I look forward to is the time when the government establishes a tradition of providing to this House and to the people of this province that type of very important information that's of fundamental importance to this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak against the amendment, because I think it's too limiting. I think all members of all parties are interested in establishing good, sound public policy, and in order to make those kinds of decisions, it's important to have as much information as possible. Whereas it would be useful to just have the agreement itself, I suspect that the statement of the agreement wouldn't include the background as to why that agreement is going forward. For example, I doubt very much it would have any information with respect to price projections, any information with respect to the basic economics and the soundness of the economics of the Husky upgrader project itself. For example, what would be the differential between the price of heavy oil and the upgraded crude that would make the project feasible? Six dollars a barrel, the minister's telling me. I'd like to see some of the actual detailed information on that, and I think it would help all members to take a more reasoned view with respect to projects such as the Husky upgrader.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Additional?

[Motion on amendment carried]

[Motion carried]

197. Mr. McEachern moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all prepared financial statements of 354713 Alberta Ltd., also called Softco, since incorporation, possessed by the government through its 100 percent ownership of that firm.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move Motion 197 standing on the Order Paper in my name, and I want to make a few comments as to why I think the information should be forthcoming. The company Softco, that I'm asking for information about, is the real estate subsidiary of North West Trust, or at least that's . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Point of order, Provincial Treasurer.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, just on a point of order, I have already sent to the member notification that we will provide an amendment and accept the motion. So I don't know what the debate is about.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, it wasn't a matter of debate so much as just putting a few comments on the record about this particular motion and why I wanted the information. I think part of Standing Orders is that I have that right.

The fact is that Softco is in some ways looked at as a subsidiary of North West Trust. Certainly North West Trust is doing the administering of Softco. They've charged some \$6 million in administration fees, and that's for the properties that were put into Softco from the North West Trust Company. There were also some properties put in from the Heritage trust company, which has now been rolled into North West Trust. For those properties I believe the administration fee was in the neighbourhood of \$1.2 million, according to the annual statement for 1987 of the new North West Trust Company.

So the reason I want the information in some detail is that we've gone about a year and a half now since the takeover of these companies, and while the Treasurer saw fit to release the annual statement for North West Trust, in fact with two back statements . . . They had to make up for the fact there was no annual statement in 1985 for North West Trust and no statement in 1986 for North West Trust. The Treasurer not only released statements for those years but also has now put out the 1987 annual statement for North West Trust. Yet we still come to this point and have no idea of what's going on with Softco, other than we know that originally there was some \$290 million of bad real estate properties put into it. That has now been increased, according to this annual statement for North West Trust, to some \$303 million. There are still provisions, according to some of the notes in the financial statements for North West Trust, that they have the right to dump up to another \$50 million into Softco. Heritage trust has the right to dump up to another \$12 million, I believe it is, into Softco. So, Mr. Speaker, I guess I'm just wondering what's been going on with Softco and why we haven't heard before, why we had to put a question on the Order Paper to get information about that company.

Before the annual statement of the North West Trust Company this year came out a short time ago, the only reference we'd seen to any obligations the government has made to Softco, this company 354713 Alberta Ltd., was a reference that we had a loan guarantee to them of \$89 million mentioned in the budget speech. So it is time we were told more about this company.

I would just say that in terms of the North West itself, the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. The Chair is having some difficulty with the matter, especially in review of *Hansard* of June 23 where some of this information being given to the House on this day was given to the House on that day. Also, with regard to the *Hansard* account of your own statements on that date of June 23, you talked about having asked the same questions of the Treasurer in Public Accounts on Wednesday preceding that. So this is a rather unusual use of House time to go on at great length here, especially when on the point of order the Provincial Treasurer pointed out that the government was prepared to accept most of this Motion for a Return 197 with an amendment. The Chair would just advise the member that indeed the member is really taking some liberty with the graciousness of the whole House and should hopefully come to a conclusion very soon.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I was just about to wind up my remarks, as a matter of fact. I would point out that I didn't get to make much of a statement about why we wanted this information on Tuesday last, because you said it wasn't relevant to the urgency of wanting the information. The Treasurer did not answer my question in Public Accounts, and that's why I wanted to get something on the record here.

The last point I was going to make -- and it won't take a second -- was that North West Trust recorded some \$8 million in profits, but that came from contingency funds set up the year before; at least an equivalent amount did. The Treasurer has indicated that Softco and the North West Trust takeover would cost the taxpayers of this province nothing. Well, at different times he said it would cost \$3 million, at other times he said it would cost \$5 million, and I guess I wonder who paid the \$6 million and the \$1 million out of Softco if it wasn't the tax-

payers. I don't know who else would do it. Also, we had \$100 million in preferred shares which we didn't get any interest on, although we were supposed to get 7 percent. So I wonder what that cost the taxpayers as well.

Anyway, those were the points I wanted to put on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. With respect to an amendment, was there some notification of an amendment? Provincial Treasurer.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I must say I did not use the oral notice of motions, as the opposition did, to advise the House that this amendment was coming. But I can say that I am going to propose a motion to Motion for a Return 197 which will allow us to amend that motion. That amendment will, as we have said before on many occasions, allow us to provide the information which the hon. member, at least in terms of the motion for a return, has requested. I'm not too sure in listening to the preamble to his moving of the motion whether or not we'll be able to provide the information, because what he has suggested in discussing the motion probably will not be covered by this. Therefore, I must say I was tempted to say that we would simply defer the motion again until I have a chance to consider *Hansard*. But since he has been so persistent and since we are so very co-operative on this side, I would like to move Motion for a Return 197.

I have copies of that amendment to that motion, Mr. Speaker. What it does in its two parts is to delete the section where it says "all prepared" and insert the words "the audited." The second amendment to the motion deletes the following words: "through its 100 percent ownership of that firm," because in fact the firm is not 100 percent owned by the province of Alberta.

Should that amendment be acceptable to the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we would then be prepared to agree to the motion.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, the amendment is perfectly acceptable to myself, thank you.

[Motion on amendment carried]

[Motion carried]

204. Mr. Chumir moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of those documents reflecting the financial statements of SC Properties Ltd., which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Credit Union Stabilization Corporation, a Crown corporation of the province of Alberta.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, again in this true spirit of co-operation for my colleague from Calgary-Buffalo, who wants to find out about a reported Crown corporation called SC Properties, I must say that we would have to propose a two-part amendment for us to accept this motion. I have copies of that amendment for those applicable, gentlemen. That amendment to the motion would delete the words "those documents reflecting the financial statements" and insert the following words: "the audited financial statements." It would delete the following words: "a Crown corporation of the province of Alberta" and simply insert a period after "Credit Union Stabilization Corporation." Now, these would allow us to then deal with the formal-

ized statements of this entity. Since it is not a Crown corporation, I thought I would also correct the record on that side as well.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I have advised my colleague from Calgary-Buffalo -- I don't know if he has any comments with respect to the amendment, but should this amendment be acceptable to the Legislative Assembly, then the motion as amended would be acceptable to the government.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I am in fact prepared to accept and support the amendment. I'm overwhelmed by the forthcomingness of the minister on this matter, although I must say it's ridiculous in my view that we have to go through this cumbersome process in order to get information that should be readily available to any member of the public. I might remind the minister that I am still seeking, through his office, information with respect to the officers and directors of this corporation which has been promised to me for some period of time and which, for some inexplicable reason, the corporation itself won't provide. Another example of the open nature of government in this great province of Alberta under this administration -- not to be for long, hopefully. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, if I could just close debate then.

MR. SPEAKER: No. not on an amendment. Perhaps on the motion as amended you might get a chance.

[Motion on amendment carried]

[Motion carried]

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, following discussions among House leaders, it is my understanding that there is unanimous consent this afternoon to revert to government business for the balance of this afternoon, and I would accordingly so move.

MR. SPEAKER: Is there unanimous approval given for the use of the afternoon in that fashion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried, let the record show, unanimously.

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

PROJETS DE LOI ET ORDRES
ÉMANANT DU GOUVERNEMENT
(Deuxième lecture)

Bill 59
Telecommunications Act

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In moving second reading of Bill 59, the Telecommunications Act, I should briefly like to make the following points.

One of the principles contained in this Bill is to enable the province of Alberta, through the Public Utilities Board and in other ways -- if the opportunity develops, through a telecommunications agreement between the federal government and the

provinces -- to receive delegation of responsibility from the federal government. The analogy, I would point out, would be in the line of the division of responsibilities as currently exercised in the case of motor transport traffic. Mr. Speaker, that eventuality may come about because we are, I believe, very close to and have, in fact, in place a good portion of a federal/provincial telecommunications agreement after several years of work on that matter. Of course, that has some particular interest in the case of the province of Alberta as a consequence of the matter currently before the Supreme Court involving Alberta Government Telephones and CNCP.

Mr. Speaker, a second provision of this statute would remove certain decisions to the commission of Alberta Government Telephones which are now exercised, at least in a direct over-view manner requiring an order in council from time to time, by the executive council of government. I identify particularly the appointment of certain senior officers and their remuneration and certain banking arrangements. With the growth of the corporation, these matters more and more have become ones which we believe should properly be within the mandate of the commission itself.

Thirdly, we have endeavoured in this Bill to reflect the status between Edmonton Telephones and Alberta Government Telephones. That status is identified in current legislation and also in the agreements which were entered into some three years and two months ago, I believe it now is -- the attempt, Mr. Speaker, I think to be quite well achieved. I've had discussions with Alderman Binder, who is chairman of the special committee identified by the city of Edmonton for purposes of looking at the future of Edmonton Telephones. Additionally, at the request of the city of Edmonton, we have tried to provide for the city to conduct the affairs of Edmonton Telephones in whatever manner it would choose. By that we have given them the option to establish a corporation of which they would hold the shares. We have given them the flexibility to, if they choose, have a contract with whoever to operate the Edmonton Telephones system, or they may leave it as it currently is. But those are capacities which the city does not now have and which are not normally ones of the municipal government.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would note that because of the changes we are introducing, this Bill results in a considerable tidying up of legislation and removal of existing legislation, legislation which, in some cases, has been on the statute books for a very long time. I am indeed pleased to present to the Assembly today and to recommend to members of the Assembly for second reading this Bill 59.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I am truly delighted to have an opportunity to talk about Bill 59 this afternoon in second reading. The reason I am so pleased is that it is such a good reminder of legislation that should have come before this Assembly years ago. If it had, it probably would have led to a very different outcome in the last provincial election. I'm glad to see the minister has finally come forward with a number of provisions that treat Edmonton Telephones with some respect. If they had done this just a few years earlier, they might not have taken such a trashing in Edmonton the last provincial election.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, but to the Bill, hon. member. It would be great.

MR. GIBEAULT: Having said that. Mr. Speaker, which needed to be said, there are some very good provisions in this Bill. I commend the government for finally, no matter how late it is, bringing this forward. Certainly the provisions that provide for the clarification of authority between AGT and Edmonton Telephones are helpful: the exclusive rights provisions, the provisions where in case of a dispute there is now the tribunal established, and as the minister pointed out, the provision for representation in terms of federal negotiations with telecommunications. Also, there's the provision for the sharing of toll revenue. Of course, that was at the nub of the Edmonton Telephones/AGT dispute just a few years ago. So the Bill itself has very much to commend it. It's got a number of good provisions in it, and as the minister said, it cleans up a lot of redundant legislation as well by repealing it.

So we intend to support this Bill in principle. I expect to have a few more comments to make about Bill 59, the Telecommunications Act, when we come back to it again in committee reading, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 59 read a second time]

**Bill 60
Languages Act**

**Projet de loi 60
Loi linguistique**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 60, the Languages Act: *Projet de loi 60. Loi linguistique.*

I would say, Mr. Speaker, in moving second reading of this piece of legislation, that I am going to be very brief in my remarks since last week, when I made the ministerial statement, it was of unusual length for a ministerial statement. I assume we don't intend to repeat it today. I can say, however, with respect to the Bill that it covers only some of the areas which were dealt with in the ministerial statement. The ministerial statement went on to deal with matters relating to issues with respect to education, and those are matters quite properly within the area of responsibility of my colleague the Minister of Education, who will be dealing with certain aspects of that matter in her dealing with Bill 27, the School Act.

Of course, it will be incumbent upon members of the Assembly, in due course, to take the steps necessary to amend the Standing Orders further to bring those Standing Orders into conformity with the statement made on June 22 by myself in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this being the case, therefore, I will conclude my remarks by saying it is the view of the government that this Bill reflects the reality and the realities of the province of Alberta with respect to conduct within this Assembly and in the courts, and will receive the support of the people of Alberta in the broad sense. I would, therefore, urge hon. members to give the matter careful consideration and urge their support for the legislation.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, rising to speak on Bill 60, which is rather an important Bill before us. I have to say, though, that first of all I'm disappointed in a number of aspects of it but certainly in what went on before the Bill, before we got to this particular point. Again -- and I raised this in question period last year -- it seems to me that as governments and, certainly, Premiers of the province, we can either give one message to Al-

bertans or another message to Albertans, and we're well aware of that in politics. If you like, we can either take the high road or we can take the low road, and I have to say I was very disappointed that from questions that were raised in this House, basically a red herring was thrown at us about this whole matter at that particular time.

The question, as I recall, was: are we going to change the way Alberta is? Well, Mr. Speaker, nobody has asked to change the way Alberta is. Then, when I heard the Premier repeat it and say it out publicly and on an open line show where he started to talk about all these people who wanted official bilingualism or full bilingualism. I knew this was being done, frankly, for cheap political points and we were taking the low road, Mr. Speaker. Because nobody, as I pointed out in question period last week -- absolutely nobody, including the Francophone association -- had ever asked for full bilingualism, whatever definition the Premier was giving of that, or official bilingualism. They had put forward a proposal, and I'd quoted parts of it from that letter, that I thought the tone was very reasonable, recognizing also what Alberta was, Mr. Speaker. So if it just happened once, you could say, "Well, the Premier, as he's prone to do, just said some things he didn't really quite mean." But when it was repeated time after time after time, Mr. Speaker, then I recognized clearly that what they were doing was simply cheap politics.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

Now, Mr. Speaker, in politics I suppose it's okay if the lowest common denominator is just to get the vote and then play on people's passions or inflame them. But, as I say to this government, there is the high road and there is the low road: we can either be nation builders or nation tearers down. And by those statements that were deliberately distorted -- and when I asked the Premier who was asking for full bilingualism or official bilingualism, Mr. Speaker, there were no answers. He said somebody, somewhere, said it.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier of this province sets the tone of the level of debate that should occur not only in this Assembly but throughout the province, and it's easy to inflame passions for political gain. I know that, and most hon. members know that. And if you want to play that game, that's fine, because people that play those sorts of games -- it will eventually come back to haunt them. I'm sure of that. And what we did really in some of the debate -- people not understanding what was even being asked for by the Francophone association and others -- was get into what I call the cornflakes box syndrome, Mr. Speaker. And I say to you that the Premier played to those emotions and those passions, and I find that unconscionable for the leader of the province here in Alberta. We expect much more. If I may say so, I don't think we'd had that level of debate with the previous Premier of this province. We may have disagreed with him, but I don't think he would ever have resorted to that level.

I say to this government that there are certain rights but there are also certain responsibilities to being a Canadian, Mr. Speaker. One of those rights is to recognize what this country is. Over many years we have said that we have two founding nations in this province, or in this country, Mr. Speaker -- perhaps the wrong word. But we've recognized that there are two official languages, English and French. I thought this government had recognized that when we signed the Meech Lake Accord. Now, I'm not going to say to the Attorney General that there's anything in the sheer constitutionality of what was done here that was wrong. But I have it in front of me, Mr. Speaker

-- and this is something this government signed, the Meech Lake Accord, and remember, we support it here in this Legislature -- and it says:

2(1) The Constitution of Canada shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with

(a) the recognition that the existence of French-speaking Canadians, centred in Quebec but also present elsewhere in Canada, and English-speaking Canadians, concentrated outside Quebec but also present in Quebec, constitutes a fundamental characteristic of Canada.

The (b) has to do with the Quebec "distinct society." Then (2) says:

The role of the Parliament of Canada and the provincial legislatures to preserve the fundamental characteristic of Canada referred to in paragraph (1)(a) is affirmed.

Now, it was this Premier representing this government that signed that Meech Lake Accord. It has to mean something, Mr. Speaker. But I have to now wonder how serious this government was when they signed that. What does it mean to them? Obviously not very much, by the recent history that we've had to go through. I say: what would it have hurt the government to have moved partway in some of the things that the Francophone association, and I'll come to that -- certainly not much money; the Premier says it wasn't a matter of money. To recognize what this country is all about and to preach tolerance rather than intolerance wouldn't have taken very much at all, and it would have set a leadership style that is very different from what we have at this particular time.

So as I say, we signed the Meech Lake Accord, Mr. Speaker, and the next time we're bringing in the type of Bill we have here, Bill 60, which I think is hypocritical, because it is -- no matter how we look at it -- extinguishing French rights that have been there, really, since 1877 under section 10 of the North-West Territories Act. Now, I know we had this debate. My colleague from Athabasca-Lac La Biche brought this up, and he was told he was wrong: he was wrong, he was wrong; it wasn't the case. We went through legislative committees here, Mr. Speaker. If you recall the history, after the legislative committee we came back with the Bill last fall and said, "Well, at least wait till the Mercure decision comes through so we don't have to come back and do this again; hoist it." Oh no, they couldn't do that. They had to barge ahead, like the bullies they are, and push it through. And now again they're wrong.

AN HON. MEMBER: Let the voters decide,

MR. MARTIN: Let the voters -- there's the type of attitude we get from a back-bench member, Mr. Speaker, that is preaching the intolerance we're talking about. Let him be like that.

Mr. Speaker, the point is: even from that perspective we could have saved ourselves a fair amount of problems if they'd just listened. But they never listened. They know what's better for everybody, and they'll barge ahead.

But I want to come back and say to this government that there is the high road and the low road. Why is it this government always chooses to take the low road? Mr. Speaker, we can leave a legacy of tolerance or intolerance. Why is it this government wants to leave a legacy of intolerance? I say again: we can be nation builders or we can tear down this nation. Why is it that this particular government chooses the latter, that they want to tear down? I say it's sad to see that happen, regardless of one's particular political philosophy, and I see that even some of the federal Alberta Tories are embarrassed; even they, publicly, are embarrassed. Now, they're not doing it for votes.

They know that backbencher can play to the intolerance because we know this can be a very difficult issue and take people apart. So they're standing up on principle, and regardless of the fact that they're Conservatives or not I say: good for them.

Mr. Speaker, the point I want to make in conclusion is simply this: there's still time -- not to change this immensely. As I mentioned the other day, there are a couple of reasonable things about the Bill, something that my colleague has been fighting for. No longer in the Legislature do we have to ask the Speaker's permission to speak in one of the official languages of the country. It's too bad we couldn't have recognized that 14 months ago, but better late than never. And that's reasonable in the Bill. Also, of course -- we're forced into it -- the fact of dealing with the courts.

But the third thing -- it's an important one that the Francophone people were asking, and we were told, "Well, it's symbolism." Mr. Speaker, symbolism is rather important. It's especially important sometimes to minority groups when you have often a concern about the tyranny of the majority, and we've seen that enough times in this Legislature. All they were asking is that there be some consultation, that we look at some Bills, some regulations that affect people's lives, and that we translate them. Now, Mr. Speaker, they made it clear. Maybe there were too many there; they would have been too expensive. And I can understand that from the government's perspective. But they said -- and it's very clear -- they're willing to negotiate. They just wanted this, and somebody says it's symbolism. Well, as I said, symbolism is important.

Now, if they'd gone that small step towards nation building, and it's not a major one -- one small step, very little cost; probably most of it would be picked up by the federal government anyhow -- and said we're going to be a tolerant society rather than an intolerant society, it would be over. But the reality in this Bill, I fear, is that eventually we're going to be dragged through this for years and end up in the courts -- we've had that experience in Manitoba -- where it could cost us an arm and a leg, where we give up co-operation with groups and go the other route. It never works, Mr. Speaker. It never works. Because the Meech Lake Accord eventually may end up being interpreted differently than I think. I don't know, and neither does the Attorney General, on these issues. But I know this: it's not the end of the matter, Mr. Speaker. It's not the end of the matter. If instead of confrontation we'd had co-operation, we surely could have solved this problem.

But Mr. Speaker, hope springs eternal. Hope springs eternal that there are some tolerant people there who will take that one little extra step. And in recognition of that, at committee stage, where it would be appropriate, we are going to be bringing in an amendment or two, basically to deal with consultation, that we consult and after consultation with representatives of the Francophone communities in Alberta that we do look at designating some Acts, some regulations, and some dates by when this could be done in terms of some translation -- not the majority of tilings; the majority of the Bills and that I wouldn't want to read them over the years -- but some of the more significant ones that would just send out again, a message of co-operation, of nation building, of tolerance. We would hope when we present these amendments that the government would honestly and seriously reconsider them, Mr. Speaker, because we believe it would do a lot of good in this province.

Now, if it's sheer politics, Mr. Speaker, if that's all we're dealing with here and we want to go out and say, "Oh, well, we're standing up; we're not having full bilingualism, and

you're not going to have to read French on your cornflakes box; we're not all going to be made to speak French," and all the rest of it, which was never the intent, and I know the Attorney General means that -- if we want to do that, and you want to take that road, there's not a lot I can do about that. But I say to you: governments are judged not by playing to the lowest common denominator but by what they leave as a legacy to the people, Mr. Speaker. And I hope the government would remember that.

So we will see what happens when it's appropriate time at committee stage and these will be brought forward with good intent. We'll see if the government is willing to take a look at them. I don't think they'd find them that much more onerous, but it certainly would send a message not only to Albertans but to people across Canada. Mr. Speaker, with that we'll wait and see what happens from my perspective in committee stage.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In rising to speak on Bill 60, the Languages Act, it's hard to say anything new, because portions have been debated in the House and in question period, as alluded to, and certainly I think there has been an editorial in most of the dailies of the province and a lot of them outside the province too.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, it is wise that the hon. minister, in his statements that seemed to try to give the impression that he's conferred some royal benefit on a struggling group of Hottentots back in the wilderness, maybe take a short lesson in history in that, first of all, this Bill does not give anything; it definitely takes away. The Supreme Court of Canada only just recently confirmed what many of us suspected or knew for some time in our hearts: that the French-speaking minority in this province had a great number of rights, and certainly it is a very fundamental right.

The Supreme Court decision of the *Mercure* case involving, I believe it was, something to do with a parking ticket or something -- anyhow, Father *Mercure* was fighting for the right to be heard in French. And in the Supreme Court of Canada *Mercure* case, page 30, they make one statement, that "Language rights belong to the category of fundamental rights." Well, Mr. Speaker, language is the most fundamental right, I suppose, any of us have, when we're born or when we go out into the world, because after all, it is communication. Spoken language, written language: it is the art of communication. So when you take away a person's language rights, you're striking at -- as the Supreme Court said, it's the most fundamental right. It almost ranks in with food, light shelter, and all the basic fundamentals that mankind expects: the right to be able to communicate with his fellow man in a language that is his mother tongue and, secondly, the right to be able to get recognition through the translation of laws or whatever the Legislature is doing, if it is a democratic society, or if it isn't it's another type of society, that it be written in that language.

Some years ago there was no question that French was the language of the province, Mr. Speaker. I know now it only runs around 2.8, 2.9 percent but if we go back historically, the fur trade certainly started out mostly Francophones in a fur trade area in the province, going back. As a matter of fact Charles Boyer, for whom I believe a river is named -- I remember drilling one of the many dry holes I've drilled in Alberta up in the Fort Vermilion country and the Boyer River -- was in the coun-

try in 1787. At Fort Edmonton French was the language in use until the middle of the last century. In fact another one, Marie-Ann Gaboury, was the first white woman, and I believe we made a movie. Along with a gentleman by the name of Fil Fraser, I was involved in making a movie on her life. Of course, I believe she ultimately was a grandmother of Louis Riel. So we have a history that's steeped in French, a majority French language. You see it when you tour the names of the province. Even a town like Vegreville that has no apparent French trace was named after Father Vegreville, and of course I have to say nothing more about Father Lacombe. So going into all those areas, the French have very deep-seated roots in Alberta.

Then we come along with the Constitution. If Canada is really anything -- some people say it's an experiment; I like to say it's a little further than that Mr. Speaker, in that it is an effort to have the two founding nations or two founding linguistic groups, the English and French, which, of course, is always difficult. Having lived in both the old countries as well as the new country, I know one pet parlour gossip is always to argue which preceded which and which language is most paramount even today in business or culture, and they can argue long into the night as you probably well know.

But the point is that we had a noble experiment working in Canada, if Canada can be called a noble experiment. I think it was something much of the world looked at. And although I didn't approve Meech Lake, I thought that at least when the Premier went down to Meech Lake, the Conservative party, which I have so often argued with through the past had finally been dragged, kicking and squealing, into the 20th century. I thought finally the day had come when he signed Meech Lake, because one of the points about signing Meech Lake was that we brought Quebec into Confederation. That was used over and over again, as if that was the sole *raison d'être*, Mr. Speaker, if you'll pardon me slipping that one in. But the fact of the matter was that it looked as if Meech Lake was a recognition finally by all these provincial leaders and provincial Premiers that indeed, Confederation was a fulfilling experiment an experiment that was being fulfilled, and that linguistic minorities wherever they existed in Canada between the English and French would have rights. In fact, I think Meech Lake even has a term in there -- Meech Lake article 2; that's about as important as you can get

2(1) The Constitution of Canada shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with

(a) the recognition that the existence of French-speaking Canadians, centred in Quebec but also present elsewhere in Canada, and English-speaking Canadians, concentrated outside Quebec but also present in Quebec, constitutes a fundamental characteristic of Canada.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what kind of government do we have here? If you can't trust them after signing something like this -- then to come back and introduce Bill 60 into this House which takes away, as the Supreme Court says, a most fundamental right of our linguistic minority.

I am disappointed, Mr. Speaker, I can usually get worked up and angry. But in this case, I feel more sick than I do angry, because I wonder how my fellow Albertans could come out -- a majority government although admittedly only a little over 50 percent last time around; next time probably 22 percent or so -- and interpret the Meech Lake signing that way. We go on, by the way, as was pointed out by my hon. colleague from Edmonton-Gold Bar, to section (b):

the recognition that Quebec constitutes within Canada a distinct society.

Nowhere does it say there's recognition that Alberta constitutes

within Canada "a distinct society." Yet we have our Premier coming out with -- if you'll pardon the use of the French word -- a *l'escalier*, after all this work: an afterthought, if you want to interpret it. They're coming out . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Just for a moment, hon. member. I hesitate to interrupt, but please, in purposes of the debate, if one wishes to use the French language, that's perfectly fine in the Chamber. So let's not apologize by throwing in these words now and again. But just continue. Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I didn't apologize for the word "*l'escalier*." I just interpreted it. It means, actually, in French, "staircase." It comes from the old French where the only actual discussion that took place before TV arrived was up in the drawing room on the second floor. "*L'escalier*" was always the thought, the riposte, the smart one-liner you were going to make that occurred to you as you were leaving at the bottom of the staircase, and it's now come, actually transmitted over, into the English language too.

But what I'm getting at, Mr. Speaker, is that the Premier has a *l'escalier* and announces that Alberta is also a distinct society, something that -- it's absolutely out. It's not in the Meech Lake Accord. It's nowhere. Where this new type of thinking that the Premier and the hon. minister are coming up with is beyond me. When we get down to it, when we go over the issues, as we look at it, here we have a very small linguistic minority in Alberta, and no way threatening. Even the most prejudiced redneck can hardly conjure up a battle of the cradle or some takeover of the linguistic rights of his English majority. I know hon. members from Red Deer may well argue that God speaks English because, after all, he wrote the Bible in English. Everyone knows that. Nevertheless, the fact of the matter is that to think there's any threat from a Franco-linguistic minority isn't there.

One of the things we could be doing, Mr. Speaker, and I think we're missing this chance, is by going ahead and amending this Bill -- it's gone a certain way in realizing that Francophones have full rights and in allowing the interpretation of Bills can be translated -- we'd be doing a number of things. First of all, we would be recognizing a right that has been here for some years, not taking it away as the hon. minister would do. We're not to blame, Mr. Speaker, in all humbleness. I hope our own Anglo minorities in Quebec and New Brunswick -- some people might argue, well, they're not going that well. Well, personally I don't want to get into an argument of whether they can do their signs or whether they get the laws in English or not, I know they do get the laws in English, but this shouldn't be a type of tit for tat type of Confederation we're talking about. Surely we're larger in spirit in Alberta than that, that we have to sit there and watch Quebec and decide what goes back and forth.

One wonders, at some respect, too, when we see the hon. minister and the hon. Premier coming out with remarks as they have about Francophone minorities, whether they, indeed, are doing their best to supply ammunition to any future or present Francophone Premier that may want to take away rights from the Anglos. Somehow or another you get the impression that they would love to create more friction, that they would love to see retaliatory types of regulations come in in the Francophone areas that would strike against the English-speaking as much as they are trying to do here.

No, Mr. Speaker, there's no argument for it at all in logic or in keeping your agreement to Meech Lake or even economics.

The federal government has agreed to pay the cost of translating the laws. No, Mr. Speaker, this tears at the very fabric of Confederation. If there's anything that will bring on separatism, it's the attitude of the Premier and the minister in promoting this type of legislation and in tearing apart by one stroke of the pen what over a hundred years of people working together have built. By their very narrow, myopic tunnel vision of what the world is, they could set Canada back, because I'm afraid it's a contagious type of thing. If, after all, Alberta is a distinct society, why isn't Saskatchewan? Why isn't B.C.? We could go on and on and get 10 little linguistic empires sitting there shouting shrilly that, boy, they're sure going to teach that 2.9 percent minority a lesson or two; they're not going to let 'em have laws in French,

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's beyond comprehension why a government would have gone out of their way marching to a tune that I do not think is there. I was born and raised in southern Alberta, where rednecks are supposed to prosper and where they're supposed to be around. Some people point at voting patterns and say so, I don't, I've never discovered, except maybe in the most inebriated conversation -- as we go about the closure of the largest source of tax money for this government, in the liquor stores, as our beer parlours close down -- have I run into the type of argument, "Well, we've got to get the French before they get us." Somehow or another there's a paranoia; there's a fear here in saying that the most basic right, which is being able to read your law in your own language . . .

Some might argue: what's important about having a law in your own language? Well, it is that the very law, the very entrails, the very mainstay of our modern society is in our laws. There's something debilitating, something demeaning about having to go ask somebody else to read it for you in their language when you can't read it in your own language. I think it is the clearest slap that you can make to any minority, to tell them they have to read it in another language; in other words, speak white. This is tantamount to the old saying of, "If you want to get service, speak white," and I accuse this Premier and this minister of going that far.

In effect, I'm not even going to sit down and ask that they vote against it. I'm going to sit down with the final statement of saying that I'm ashamed. I'm ashamed of my government.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Le prochain, M. le député d'Athabasca-Lac La Biche, s'il vous plaît.

MR. PIQUETTE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Almost two years to the day I rose in this House and enunciated my first inaugural speech as an MLA. I pointed out to the government that I would be standing as an elected MLA, as a proud Franco-Albertan respecting the laws of this country and the traditions of this province.

In citing the language provision contained in the North-West Territories Act of 1886, I'd like to repeat section 110. I indicated to the government and to all members of this House on that which I feel was a very historical day in our provincial Legislature because it put in practice what a lot of people thought had been extinguished over the years, and that is section 110, which indicates that any person may use French and English in the debates of the Legislative Assembly; all ordinances, legislation shall be in both French and English; records and *Journals* of the Legislative Assembly shall be printed in both languages; and either French or English may be used in court proceedings.

Now, two years later, as an individual who was first of all applauded by all members in the House when I made my inaugural speech in June of 1986, I recall receiving from members from the Liberals, from the Tories, from the New Democrats, congratulations about the significance of my inaugural speech, and actually, in looking back, I guess forecasting the future. I even received a couple of notes from members from the government indicating that I would be providing in my role as an MLA much debate or much positiveness in the future of our province.

However, I look back at April 7, 1987, when I attempted to ask a question in French to the Minister of Education relating to Francophone educational language rights, and I was prevented from doing so because we were not recognizing section 110 of the North-West Territories Act, which is the bone of contention in the whole sad story which developed, in my personal perspective. Because at no time when that question was asked on April 7 did I intend to elicit debate on the whole aspect of Confederation and the role of the Francophones in western Canada and Alberta. Basically, I was attempting to respond to a constituent of mine and to the Francophone association of Alberta, who had been fighting for years to have their educational rights respected in the province of Alberta, as Alberta had not amended the School Act to make sure that parents who did wish to have the alternative to choose either the English language or the French language as the language of instruction would have that choice for their children.

When the debate erupted throughout Alberta and throughout Canada, I developed a very, I guess, almost sick feeling about the whole process because of the fact that I was subjected, not only by the government but by many individuals who do not believe that Francophones have any rights in this country, to a lot of intolerant types of reaction. I can recall receiving a number of phone calls threatening my very life for having even raised the issue in the Alberta Legislature, reflecting the kind of intolerant attitudes that are prevalent in Alberta, which I have to say, though, is not the majority of Albertans. But we do have a significant minority who are still fighting the battles of the Plains of Abraham even in 1988, who attempt to debate that the Francophones and the Anglophones were not partners in the building of this great country of ours.

I was amazed and shocked that we did not have a government here who did stand up for the Francophone minority -- I feel that I'm a threatened member of that minority -- who appeared to be basically playing political expediency over what I feel is a very fundamental issue not only for Alberta but for Canada. Because I feel very strongly that if we're going to be existing in the future as a strong Canada, we have to put aside our battles over language and culture. I believe that we as Canadians over the last 20, 25 years in the debate about the future of Canada have made some basic fundamental decisions that, number one, we are a bilingual, bicultural country, and secondly, that we are a multicultural nation as well. We have come to accept the fact, with most political parties supporting this, that the future of our country is not the melting pot theory, where we subjugate minorities and prevent them from having the alternative choice to communicate in one or both official languages, but that we build onto the richness and diversity that we have as Canadians, not only as Anglophone and Francophone Canadians but as minorities of many ethnic groups who have come to build this country after the two partners of Confederation in 1867 set out the terms of this country.

When we go back to 1886 and 1867, there's no doubt there

was a great intent by this country to build a model country, to build a country based on tolerance and understanding between two founding people. And over the years, because of the fact that we have had the diversity of those two founding people, we have welcomed with open arms the many millions from other ethnic groups who have come to our country. Because I think we have probably, as you travel throughout the world, developed a greater tolerance for the differences that exist among people. Instead of creating intolerance based on the difference of colours and races and religions and cultures, we have come to appreciate these kinds of differences.

So two years later, after much debate throughout Canada and even internationally, this question has been brought about. We find that a government who said that I was totally wrong about section 110 was proven in February to be wrong about that basic decision of April 7 and has come to turn, at least in some significant steps, in the right direction. I would like to at least congratulate the government on two things: the right of any individual in this Legislature, which represents the people of Alberta, to communicate in both official languages in this House; and another basic fundamental minority linguistic right is the right to be heard before the courts in your mother tongue. Those, I believe, are steps in the right direction.

I don't think a year ago, or 14 months ago, we could even have predicted that the government was prepared to accept that fact here in Alberta, so I believe that at least we have come to recognize that in this present legislation. However, why could we not -- if we have learned our lessons in history through this whole debate, why did the government choose to not allow the translation of existing laws as proposed by the Francophone association of Alberta? They were very reasonable about the numbers that they felt needed to be translated. Because I must point out to you that the laws we make today -- just like I think, prophetically, I indicated in December, when the government enacted the resolution which said English only in this House -- one day you will regret this. I believe this government will also regret their decision to not allow the translation of everyday laws into both official languages.

I must point out, for example, that as of May 1988, using the government's own figures, there were 2,100 children in minority language French instruction. And that, I will guarantee you, will be jumping and doubling and quadrupling in the next few years: students who will be in the French minority language instruction. Twenty-four thousand children in the French immersion program, 148,000 children in the core French program, out of a total student population of 424,000 people: that represents a very significant decision by Albertans that they do believe in the two official languages in this province.

Now, how can we be setting examples for our children of Francophone extraction, of Anglophone extraction, of many other backgrounds who have accepted the fact that we do have two official languages, not only here in the province of Alberta but in Canada, when one of the most fundamental issues of government is the law-making ability and we will not even accept the fact that an existing Supreme Court decision indicates that existing and future laws need to be in both official languages, when it's denied by this province? I cannot understand that. I mean, that was just simply one little extra step by this government that they had to do. If they could accept the fact that the Supreme Court was correct in its decision in February, then why this 50 percent respect of section 110? Why not go all the way, so that we can provide for the future generations of this province, who are not going to be intolerant to the same level

that many of the backbenchers appear to believe exists in Alberta?

We have to look at the fact, for example, from a provincial poll taken in this province, that there's been a significant change in public opinion even in the past year, 14 months. Looking at public opinion polls of May of 1987 to 1988: a significant change in people's opinion about the value of our two official languages in this province, where we find now that 46 percent of Albertans are prepared to accept the fact that we have two official languages, and 33 percent may be not in favour. But I don't believe that we would have created chaos in the province of Alberta if the translation of new laws would have been in French and English. The government could have been the bridge to build this whole generation, perhaps, of people who have unfounded fears about French, of jamming French down people's throats; we hear that all the time. Unfortunately, it is a fear based on misconception, and it is the duty of the government, if we're going to be building a tolerant society, to finally overcome those fears. But we have basically played up to these fears in the way the government introduced Bill 60, and that is very unfortunate, very unfortunate. Just like people were prepared to threaten my life over the issue, this government is not prepared to stand up to those who have misconceptions about the bilingual, multicultural nature of our country.

In the Committee of the Whole our party will be proposing two amendments to Bill 60, attempting to make sure that this government has time to reflect on a very important fundamental Alberta and Canadian issue. This decision made by the Alberta Legislature is not an isolated decision that can be made only in the isolation of Alberta borders alone. For the Premier of Alberta to say, "Well, we represent what is the reality of Alberta," I think they're dreaming about what was in the past. We are not developing the kind of future Canada that the majority of Canadians now want. We are basically attempting to play politics with what are fundamental rights.

The amendments we'll be introducing are going to ask the government to, first of all, consult with the Francophone community in order to translate existing laws. They are not that many in nature. We have proposed to the government that it would not be expensive, and the costs should never be an issue over fundamental rights. I do not hear from any of the government side saying, for example, "We will eliminate courts or the justice system because only a few percent in our population ever break the law, so we don't need to have lawyers and pay for lawyers and judges and so on and so forth." However, we have made a decision of democracy that fundamental rights, that there is a cost to be attached to that, and it's an important cost, of making sure that people's freedoms and fundamental rights are protected. So the issue of cost is not an issue, even though the government has admitted that their decision was not based on cost. But the translation of the existing laws which were proposed by the Francophone association is very minimal. That will be one amendment.

The second amendment is that we believe all future laws from now on should be in both official languages. The New Democrats, I believe, have proposed a very logical, very sensible plan. We are not talking about the *Journals* being in both official languages; we are talking about the final statutes that are accepted by this Legislature. These statutes would be available for unilingual Francophones who choose to come to Alberta to do business here or to live here, and they are significant numbers, increasing in terms of their coming to Alberta, in terms of deciding to make Alberta their home. And that would be a great

thing to be able to tell the young businessmen of Quebec who are coming to Alberta as a place of investment, that yes, their rights are respected right across western Canada, that they are not ghettoized in Quebec, which is what created the whole separatism issue in Quebec approximately 20 years ago, when they saw that Canada was only built on window dressing, when in actuality Quebec was isolated at its own borders, and the respect for Francophones outside those borders was really window dressing created by federal politicians, but in reality they were not available there.

I looked, in fact, at an example last week. I had a Quebec company who came to my constituency to help create approximately 70 jobs. The first questions they asked: "How tolerant are you in this community for the Francophone minority? Do you provide French language instruction in the communities surrounding Athabasca-Lac La Biche?" We were able to say yes. "How tolerant are you about unilingual Francophones who will be coming here to this community? Do you provide services for them?" Unfortunately, we had to say no.

Maintenant, M. le Président, je veux parler en français pour indiquer à tous les citoyens de l'Alberta et du Canada ma réaction au Projet de loi 60. En introduisant le Projet de loi 60, le gouvernement albertain propose que la législature albertaine enlève à une minorité, qui constitue une des communautés de langue officielle de ce pays, des droits fondamentaux des gens en existence. Il n'y a aucun doute quant à la nature des droits linguistiques. Les droits linguistiques relèvent de la catégorie des droits fondamentaux. La décision de la Cour suprême, cause *Mercure*. En abolissant ces droits fondamentaux, le gouvernement albertain, surpris, a eu un concept antidémocratique et inacceptable selon lequel on peut faire disparaître les droits fondamentaux des minorités si, premièrement, ces droits sont ignorés suffisamment longtemps pour réduire la population du groupe minoritaire et, deuxièmement, après un laps de temps suffisant, en passant une loi abolissant ces droits. Est-ce la définition que donne le gouvernement de l'Alberta de justice et de fair-play, des tolérances et des compréhensions, le test des nombres pour les droits des francophones et les services qui leur sont offerts, est-ce juste et équitable, suite à la réduction des nombres des francophones?

Comme l'a déclaré la Cour suprême du Canada dans la décision *Mercure*, je ne crois pas qu'il soit particulièrement intéressant de plaider devant une cour de justice qu'une majorité peut détruire les droits de la minorité simplement en agissant à l'encontre de ces droits. La mesure prise par notre gouvernement présente tous les Albertains comme des anti-français, ce qu'ils ne sont pas, et encourage les sentiments anti-anglophones au Québec. A cette époque, notre gouvernement devrait travailler à unifier le Canada plutôt que de le morceler. L'objectif de la Confédération en 1867 était, comme il l'est toujours aujourd'hui, d'unifier les éléments français et anglais au Canada afin de permettre aux Canadiens d'expression française et anglaise de demeurer au Canada et de vivre harmonieusement en tant qu'égaux et de se construire ensemble un meilleur pays.

Pourquoi le gouvernement de l'Alberta désire-t-il enlever à la minorité francophone ses droits fondamentaux? Est-ce en raison du coût? Non. La proposition que l'ACFA a présentée pour assurer en principe nos droits ne serait pas très dispendieuse. En fait, sur une base annuelle moins d'un centième de ce que le gouvernement a dépensé pour uniquement le terrain de golf à Kananaskis. Cette lettre vient de l'ACFA provinciale, et je la lis en Chambre aujourd'hui pour montrer la position de la francophonie de l'Alberta, puisque le gouvernement fédéral

défrayait la plupart, sinon la totalité, de ces coûts comme le confirme la récente entente cadre entre Ottawa et la Saskatchewan.

Je veux indiquer à la Chambre aujourd'hui qu'on doit adopter une nouvelle politique ici en Alberta. C'est le temps, dans tout le Canada, après l'accord du Lac Meech d'adopter une nouvelle politique. Cette nouvelle politique doit être que nos deux peuples fondateurs et leurs droits fondamentaux doivent être respectés au Québec et en dehors du Québec.

An issue which is very, very important in my heart is this: that with the signing of Meech Lake, there has to be new politics here in the province of Alberta and across Canada. No longer is it acceptable that we will try to divide the two linguistic minorities in Canada, both the Anglophones in Quebec and the Francophone minorities existing outside Quebec. That, I believe, was the intent of the Meech Lake accord, which all the parties in this House supported. We must recognize the fact that if we do not extend to the Francophone minorities outside Quebec the fundamental rights that are inscribed in our Constitution, in the Alberta Act or the Saskatchewan Act or the Manitoba Act, or whether it would be the Confederation Act or the Constitution Act of 1982, we will be giving examples to other governments of how they are to treat their linguistic minorities.

It's very, very important that the decision made by the Alberta Legislature here on Bill 60 does not give signals to the government of Quebec, for example, that when the Supreme Court judges the validity of Bill 101, they do not take as a signal the fact that Alberta did not respect the intent of the Supreme Court decision to give them licence to attack the Anglophone minority in Quebec. Because I believe very strongly that both linguistic minorities in Canada are threatened by provincial governments who do not respect the kind of partnership agreements that they themselves have signed over the years. As soon as we try to divide and conquer, we will continue to put strain on our Confederation. We will continue to put the kind of debate which should have a long time ago been resolved, because politicians have attempted to make political hay out of fundamental linguistic rights that have existed in this country since Confederation.

The fears that a small Francophone minority existing in Alberta or Saskatchewan is going to be attempting to do a takeover of this province by having a few laws translated into the French language and to turn it into a fully bilingual province is totally out to lunch, an issue that should have never been raised by the Premier of Alberta because it has nothing to do with that. What we are speaking about here is an alternative choice. Just like in the education Act, Bill 27, we are providing alternatives for Albertans. Language rights is the same thing; it is providing alternatives for individuals to freely express themselves or to be served in both official languages.

At the same time, we should be extending those kinds of services to the other ethnic minorities in our province. I look at the Ukrainian community, for example, and the Italian community and many others who are very significant in numbers, who over years have lost their culture and their language. And now in our native population, for example, we have seen the wrong of trying to subjugate a people, to basically destroy their self-esteem and their pride in themselves. We build strong people by building on the strengths of people -- of their families, of their culture and language -- people that integrate in a society based on not a sense of fear but a sense of wanting to belong. This government should not be afraid to enact legislation which is seen to be fair to linguistic minorities, both French and

English, and other minorities who do also aspire to retain their sense of roots, a commitment to their history and their culture and language. Because with that kind of commitment from our government we will be building a much richer and diversified province, able to compete. Just like we're talking about the diversification of our economy, we need to have diversification of our people's strength, our people's ability to do business internationally in a global economy using different languages. Because I can tell you that anyone who is bilingual or trilingual, I have never seen that individual apologize for being bilingual or trilingual, in any other language. It is only the ones who have a unilingual facility that very often do not understand the richness of that educational experience that our young people are in increasing numbers able to get.

So in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I'm urging, when we enter Committee of the Whole, the government members to please reflect very carefully about Bill 60. Because I believe, again, that this government is making a very serious mistake, just like they made a very serious mistake last April 7 in their kangaroo court called the Committee on Privileges and Elections that attempted to whitewash a very important fundamental issue that was being debated in the Alberta Legislature, that has to now admit they were wrong. Unfortunately, they had to attempt to save face hereby by not complying with the Supreme Court. That is not, in my mind, nation building. If we have learned through this experience a very important lesson in our history, then we must make this Bill right for future generations of young Albertans and young Canadians.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Merci, M. le Président. Je dois parler contre ce Projet de loi parce que je vais trouver que ce Projet de loi n'aborde pas une question très centrale et très importante pour notre pays et pour notre province.

Mr. Speaker, I must speak against this Bill. I find that this Bill has been conceived in a political cynicism which debases this government and which may cause to debase us as Albertans. This is not a Bill which addresses the question of bilingualism. The issue of bilingualism never need have been raised by this government. The fact that it would choose to put this Bill and what the Francophone association of Alberta was asking for, and reasonably asking for, within the context of bilingualism establishes only one point about this government, that this government will stoop to almost no limited depths to make political points.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

It is the mark of a seriously tired government, a mark of a government without a concept and a vision of this country and without a concept and a vision of what Quebec and Francophones outside of Quebec offer, the tremendous value that they offer to this country and to this province. The manner in which this government has presented this Bill doesn't serve to enhance tolerance; it serves to enhance intolerance. It plays to people's fears, it plays to their lack of understanding, and it places this very, very important issue, an issue that is important to the very nature and strength of character and quality of this country, it places that in jeopardy.

The Francophone association of Alberta has not asked for bilingualism. They have merely asked in a reasonable fashion for the recognition of Francophone rights in Alberta, rights

which are already established in the Meech Lake accord, which this government is rushing headlong to become a signatory to. They have asked for the right for MLAs to speak French in the Legislature; we've acknowledged that. This government should of course be congratulated for that particular thing. They have asked for the right to have certain trials in French; that's been acknowledged. They have asked for recognition of the right to Francophone education; that's been acknowledged.

Why is it that this government would not acknowledge the request to have laws, some in the past -- and only some -- and all in the future, translated into French? Pure political cynicism. What do we lose by doing that? What does each and every Albertan lose by having a government that would do that and that would stoop to erode that right, that would stoop to erode the rights of people in labour unions, that would stoop to erode the rights of nurses, that time and time again progressively stoops to erode the rights of Albertans? What do we lose? We lose that in and of itself, which is extremely serious. Where does it stop? When's it your turn? When's it your turn? When's it your turn? When it becomes your turn, there will be nobody here to defend your rights. That's when it will finally stop.

What do we lose, though, at a broader level than even that? We lose a concept and a vision of this country. Quebec makes this country special. It assists in making this country special. Francophones outside of Alberta assist in making this country special. It makes us different than the United States. It makes us appreciate culture, and it makes us appreciate multicultural. Yes, that all gives us a tremendous richness and a tremendous value in our society. If it weren't for Quebec and if it weren't for Francophones outside of Quebec and the way in which this country has established their rights, we would not be a multicultural country. We would not be a country that is pursuing the value of multiculturalism. We'd be like the United States. Great; we'd be a melting pot. We wouldn't have the value that that offers each of us and our kids, and the richness that that offers us as well.

Quebec makes us special. The Francophones make us special. That is the fact that we should be establishing with Albertans: not a negative, "They're taking something away from us," but rather, "What is it that we can do for the protection of other people's rights?" Because that is an elevated thing to do, one; and two, there's some self-interest in that, because in protecting other peoples' rights, we also protect our own rights.

But it goes beyond that, because if this government had a vision for this country and a sense of Alberta's place in a national consensus and within that national vision, then they could see a much broader implication for the manner in which they have mishandled this particular piece of legislation. But then it comes as no surprise that this government cannot structure an effective negotiating position, an effective process of negotiation in relations with the rest of this country that identifies the need for a national vision, that establishes the need for a national consensus and says, "This is what Alberta's place in that national vision, in that national consensus, must be."

What is that? Well, I think there are a couple of elements that are very, very important to that national vision. One is that we are a bicultural and a binational country. That's in our Constitution. That isn't to be debated at this level; that is not an issue. We are; and Quebec is an important feature of that. And two, we are a country that has to address the issue of regional imbalance. Time and time again we have thrown away any kind of leverage, positive leverage, to achieve those two features of a national vision. Yep, here's the government that says, "We're

not going to be bilingual." Walks down to Quebec and says: "We'll give you anything you want. And oh, by the way, once you've got that, then we'll talk about Senate reform." You know what we did? We threw away important political leverage. The minister responsible for Federal and Inter-governmental Affairs shouldn't be sitting there smugly; he should be saying, "Oh, my gosh; I made a horrible error, an historical error."

Bourassa needed to have Quebec in the Constitution, because he campaigned on it. Mulroney needs to have Quebec in the Constitution, because he wants to campaign on it. We walked down there and said: "Great; we'll give you what you want, and then you talk to us later." You know what we should have said? We should have said, positively: "Quebec makes this country special. Francophones outside of Quebec make this country special. We want you into this country, Quebec, but we're not going to give it to you until we get Senate reform. We're not going to give it to you, Mr. Bourassa, and we're not going to give it to you, Mr. Mulroney, until we appreciate that you understand that this country has two elements, at least, of importance in its national consensus and its national vision, and the other one is redressing regional imbalance."

So we've lost that initiative. Our grandchildren will be standing in this Legislature 120 years from now talking about the same thing, and we won't have Senate reform.

Now, similarly, we've lost perspective -- this government -- on what this French law could have been, on what this particular Bill could have been. What it could have been was a gesture to the rest of this country, an acknowledgment of what this country can be, an acknowledgment of what this country should be, an acknowledgment of how it already in fact exists at the constitutional level, saying, "Quebec, here is legislation that indicates to you that you can trust our appreciation of your culture and our appreciation of Francophone culture outside of Quebec." In doing that, we would have put a very, very important plank into our strategy, if you will, into our approach to building this nation. Because then we could argue more strongly for those provinces, for Quebec, to be supporting our initiatives in redressing the other constitutional issue, the equally important constitutional issue that confronts this country and this province, and that is regional imbalance.

So I look at a piece of legislation that is the height of cynical politics; that not only hurts us as individuals because it erodes rights that are constitutional rights; that not only hurts us as individuals in this province because it breeds -- yes, breeds -- intolerance rather than supporting and supplementing tolerance; that not only doesn't enrich our society but in fact diminishes our society; and then goes on to limit our ability to contribute to the national debate, to establish a national consensus and a national vision which says, "Yes, we want Quebec in this Constitution and in this country, and we also want to redress the question of regional imbalance so we can have equality of opportunity across the regions of this country."

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. WRIGHT: Merci, M. le Président. Ce Projet de loi est mieux que rien, je crois, mais ce n'est pas assez. Le niveau minimum, je suggérerais, en addition aux exigences de la loi, est la capacité des Français, des francophones, de comprendre les lois fondamentales de cette province, au jour le jour, dans leur propre existence et dans les cours. M. le Président, le nombre

des lois fondamentales de cette province n'est pas grand, environ 62. Le prix de la traduction de ce nombre de statuts est moins que 50 000\$. Ce n'est pas grand. Pour le futur, le prix de la traduction, d'année en année, des amendements de ces lois fondamentales et la traduction des nouvelles lois est, au total, moins que 150 000\$ chaque année. Ce n'est pas une grande somme et défrayée par le gouvernement fédéral -- c'est l'argent des taxes, c'est vrai -- mais ce n'est pas un grand prix pour reconnaître les aspirations raisonnables des francophones de cette province. C'est le niveau minimum des exigences raisonnables de ces gens. Le prix importe peu à ce niveau. Ainsi, nous disons que ce projet de loi n'est pas raisonnable. C'est symbolique seulement, c'est légèrement symbolique. Le prix pour accomplir la tâche nécessaire est acceptable, mais ce gouvernement n'est pas prêt à le faire. Je dis que nous votons "non" à cette motion, à cette étape et aux autres étapes, à moins qu'en comité des amendements soient faits qui l'améliorent.

M. le Président, je dis que ce gouvernement manque de courage pour faire le nécessaire. Je pense qu'il n'échappe pas aux soupçons des "cous rouges."

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. minister.

MR. HORSMAN: In concluding the debate on second reading, Mr. Speaker. I'm grateful that I was able to understand each of the speakers who spoke in French, especially the last member from Edmonton-Strathcona. His French and mine would be about equal, I would think.

I do want to say that the Bill which is before the Assembly does indeed reflect the reality of Alberta and, I believe, will have the support of Albertans of all backgrounds, both those of English, French, and all those others Albertans who are equally Albertan and who are equally Canadian with those of English or French origin. We have tried to strike that balance with respect to the language within the Assembly and within the courts. Within terms of providing for legislation in both languages, either past or in the future, as has been proposed by some members today, we feel that it is impractical and unreasonable and unnecessary for the continuation of Alberta as it is today, as it has been since 1905, and as it will be in the future.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

We have referred to not Alberta as a distinct society, but we have indeed referred to the distinct nature of Alberta society, and there is a difference between that and that as set out in the Meech Lake accord with respect to Quebec. We believe, as I said in the ministerial statement, that all the elements that are combined within the language policy, both with respect to section 110 of the North-West Territories Act, with respect to educational opportunities for language instructions not only in French but in other languages, to reflect the multicultural diversity of Alberta . . . We are moving forward in a significant way, and we believe, therefore, that this, taken into context with the School Act, which will be the subject of debate in committee subsequently, hopefully today . . . We are indeed reflecting the views of the vast majority of Alberta citizens, and anyone who suggests that they are ashamed of Alberta as a result of this legislation is misreading the nature of this province.

I regret that some of the terms that were used today are really inflammatory against some Albertans who do not share the views of the speakers, who have referred to them in disparaging terms. I regret that because it does not reflect the tolerance that

really exists in this province from one end of it and one side of it to the other.

This is indeed a different province from other provinces. That I make no hesitation in claiming here and in other provinces in this country. I've had the opportunity to go from sea to sea, from the American border to the Beaufort Sea, to all provinces, to all territories, and I know, Mr. Speaker, that this country of ours is a very distinct and unique and wonderful experiment in nationhood, but it is only so because we can accommodate the differences that exist between the partners in Confederation. And I agree with those who say that Canada without Quebec is inconceivable because of the very important role that Quebec has played in keeping this country distinct and unique as a nation. That's why we supported the Meech Lake accord. That's why we support in many ways the aspirations of the people of Quebec to decide for themselves, within their own province, how they should conduct their affairs. We respect the fact, and we acknowledge the fact that they respect that right for us as well, in terms of deciding how our laws should be formed with respect to language and legislation in the courts and in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I ask hon. members to seriously reflect on this matter and for their support in second reading of this Bill.

MR. SPEAKER: Sur la motion de l'hon. Procureur général pour que le Projet de loi 60, la Loi linguistique, reçoive une deuxième lecture. On the motion of the Attorney General that Bill 60, the Languages Act, be read a second time. En faveur de la motion, dites oui. For the motion, say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Contre la motion, dites non. Against the motion, say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried. La motion est adoptée. Division.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung. Plusieurs députés se sont levés et ont demandé la mise aux voix. La sonnerie annonçant la mise aux voix a retenti]

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided. Huit minutes s'étant écoulées, la Chambre a procédé au vote]

For the motion:

En faveur de la motion:

Ady	Getty	Pengelly
Anderson	Horsman	Reid
Bogle	Hyland	Rostad
Bradley	Johnston	Russell
Brassard	Jonson	Shaben
Cassin	Kowalski	Shrake
Cherry	McClellan	Speaker, R.
Clegg	Moore, R.	Stevens
Cripps	Musgreave	Stewart
Day	Musgrove	Weiss
Downey	Nelson	West
Drobot	Oldring	Young
Elzinga	Osterman	Zarusky
Fischer		

Against the motion:			Totaux:	Oui - 40	Non - 13
Contre la motion:					
Barrett	Martin	Roberts	MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried. La motion est adoptée.		
Ewasiuk	McEachern	Sigurdson			
Fox	Mjolsness	Taylor	CLERK: Deuxième lecture du Projet de loi 60, Loi linguistique.		
Hawkesworth	Piquette	Wright	Bill 60, Languages Act, is now read a second time.		
Laing			[The House recessed at 5:35 p.m.]		
Totals:	Ayes - 40	Noes - 13			