

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Monday, July 17, 1989 2:30 p.m.**
Date: 89/07/17

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

head: INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly an outstanding young man who is seated with his parents and his coach in your gallery. The family is from the constituency of Rocky Mountain House; therefore, I'm introducing them on behalf of our Member for Rocky Mountain House as well as the government. This young man is well known throughout Alberta, Canada, and the world. I'm referring to the 1989 world figure-skating champion, Kurt Browning. He's accompanied by his parents, Neva and Dewey Browning, and his coach Michael Jiranek.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when some aspects of athletics are under intense scrutiny, this young Albertan has done a great deal to inspire our young people in amateur sport. His continual drive for excellence, and also having been the first in the world to successfully complete a quadruple-spin jump in competition, has proven to all of us what one can do with hard work and determination. We are very proud of him.

I have also, Mr. Speaker, come to know him personally, because at a charity function we were teammates and were able to conspire together, team up and beat the team led by the Premier of Ontario. We enjoyed that. I must tell you that Mr. Browning's abilities are not just limited to being on skates; in baseball shoes he is something to see as well.

So I'd ask, Mr. Speaker, that Kurt, his parents, and his coach, who are sitting in your gallery, rise and receive the welcome and congratulations of this Assembly.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is a special privilege to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly two very special Albertans who are officials of the I.S. -- that's, International Steel -- Trading Corporation, an Edmonton company with offices in the Chinese cities of Harbin and Dalian. They are Mr. Tom Watson, vice-president, and Joe Watson, the project manager in the Harbin office. Also with us is Mr. Brian

Trendel, the chairman of the board of I.S. Trading, and although he's not able to be with us today, I would also like to acknowledge Mr. Andrew Lonseth, president of I.S. Trading.

After the tragic events in China of June 4 and 5, when it became necessary to have Canadians leave China, Mr. Joe Watson of the Harbin office, a young Albertan, working through his father, Tom, with Mr. Andrew Lonseth of their Edmonton office, working with officials of my department, organized a group of 26 Albertans in Harbin -- 22 University of Alberta students, two professors, and two doctors -- liaising closely with the government of Heilongjiang, and arranged the charter flight which provided the exit from the troubled country to Hong Kong on June 11.

I just want to say that to carry out these arrangements, the people mentioned worked on a virtual 24-hour-a-day basis from June 6, when the decision was made to evacuate the Albertans, until June 11, when they arrived safely in Hong Kong. I want to pay tribute to this dedication and to the crucial decision-making of the officials of my department as well as the office in Hong Kong who co-ordinated this. I regard this as being done at all times with an exemplary degree of professionalism, patience, and sensitivity. These fine Albertans are a credit to this province and to Canada, and I would like to ask the Assembly to join me in expressing our deep gratitude and appreciation to them.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Assembly to join me in welcoming to Alberta Mr. Joe Watson's bride, Mrs. Songhua Watson, who happens to be from our sister province of Heilongjiang.

Please rise and accept the welcome of our Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Members of the Assembly, it's my pleasure to welcome at this time a number of my colleagues in the role of Speaker across the country. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly. First, from the Yukon Sam Johnson, Speaker of that Assembly; also, from Prince Edward Island Speaker Eddie Clark; from Newfoundland the Speaker, Tom Lush, and the Deputy Speaker, Lloyd Snow; and from New Brunswick my first vice-president, Frank Branch. Would you please accord them the warm welcome of the House.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and honour today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the delegates and families to the 29th Canadian Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, which you have hosted so ably during the previous several days and as a result of which you will be chairman of the Canadian Speakers for the ensuing year. I would ask our special guests, who are seated in the members' and public galleries, together with the members of the Alberta delegation, to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly a group of senior citizens from the city of Wetaskiwin. These individuals are residents of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Home in Wetaskiwin and are accompanied by their activity director, Joanne Kneller. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Loans and Loan Guarantees to Peter Pocklington

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the minister of economic development. The people of Alberta, especially the Official Opposition, understand that the government does have an important role to play in diversifying and strengthening our economy. However, if we're going to throw money at corporations, there are two things Alberta taxpayers have the absolute right to demand: performance and security. Now, in the recent \$67 million package to Peter Pocklington we certainly haven't seen performance. We know that some of the money is gone and there is no construction in southern Alberta or in Edmonton. We now find from the minister that some of the money is not being used to create jobs as was promised, but it's actually to cover operating costs. But the other day the minister said that we did have some security, and that's what we want to pursue today. My question to the minister. Can the minister give his absolute commitment to the Assembly today that every single dollar of that \$67 million is covered and that there will be absolutely no loss to the taxpayers of Alberta?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party will check the record over the last number of weeks, both in question period and within the Legislative Assembly when my estimates were before the House, he will find that those questions are answered in a very forthright manner during previous proceedings.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, if this is how forthright you are, I'll ask the question of the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer give us his absolute guarantee that of that \$67 million to Mr. Pocklington there will be no loss, not one penny? [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Provincial Treasurer. The Chair is listening.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we would like to provide that assurance, but of course to predict the future with that kind of precision is certainly not given to politicians. I can only say that as my colleague the minister of economic development has pointed out, we have taken all possible precautions to ensure that we have the first claim against a variety of assets which are located here in Alberta and also across the provinces of Canada. That security is made up of fixed assets, land and machinery where possible; it's made up of a second claim against inventories and receivables; and it's made up of a variety of charges, including such nominal things as trademarks and those kinds of registrations, wherein through agreement we have the first claim against those assets.

Therefore, while I'd like to say that we would like to guarantee the future with respect to possible losses, all I can say is that when a company continues on a going-concern basis, the likelihood of repaying its debt is much greater than through liquidation, and I know that the Member for Edmonton-Norwood understands that. We think that we have a very good position, based on appraisals taken at the time the agreement was given.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I have in front of me the Gainers Properties debenture in a company, 369413 Alberta. It certainly doesn't look like \$67 million worth, because it contains 12

pages of permitted encumbrances, 12 pages worth of deductions. My question, then, to the Treasurer, flowing from his answer. Surely then, there must be some guarantees other than this; is that the case?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, there again, Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'm sure you recognize the member has erred in two cases. One is asking for my legal opinion about what is in the agreement. I'm hesitant to do that. But, again, what you see here is the Member for Edmonton-Norwood substituting his expert advice in real estate valuations for somebody else's. Very few people would agree with that, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week we raised concerns about the fact that moments before cabinet approved the loan guarantee and loan package to Mr. Peter Pocklington, they changed the rules that governed loan guarantees, making it possible for the government to issue these loan guarantees without knowing which loan is guaranteed or any of the details. As well, we learned that there was a \$67 million debenture outstanding against a numbered company controlled in the main by Mr. John Karvellas, the Softco director. Trying to get answers out of the minister of economic development, he advised us that once the order in council is passed, he's no longer interested and it's the responsibility of the Provincial Treasurer. Deficit Dick riding herd on Peter Puck is a frightening thought, Mr. Speaker. It's no wonder the Conservatives have driven this province \$10 billion in debt. I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer: did the \$55 million loan guarantee approved by cabinet on March 3, 1988, go towards a \$67 million debenture held by 369413 Alberta Ltd?

MR. SPEAKER: Sounds like the Order Paper.

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, here we have Foxy Loxy calling about the sky falling. If he wants to get into the name-calling business, I'll be glad to participate. You know what's happened, Mr. Speaker? It is unfortunate that through this process this opposition party has used conspiracy tactics, they've misled the public, and they've suggested that something is going a-foul here. But it's the common kind of fallacious arguments you see from the socialists across the way. As Bacon once said: post hoc, ergo propter hoc; after that, therefore because of that, and you can check that. How is that, eh? The point is this: just because we had to change the regulations two or three days or, for that matter, two or three moments in advance of some other transaction, they cannot be tied together. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. JOHNSTON: Now, let me make it very clear, Mr. Speaker, that those changes to regulations are not tied in any way to the Pocklington arrangement.

Now, the second area where Foxy Loxy made his mistake, of

course, is to suggest that because we put together this holding company, again something suspicious is taking place. That just isn't the case, just isn't the case. This is a traditional kind of process where in fact we put these kinds of agreements in place all the time to ensure that we can take legal comfort, legal claim against the assets held by this company in all other provinces. As opposed to having the Crown take claim, we had this numbered company put in place. There's no suspicion; there's nothing sub rosa. There's nothing illegal about this process. It's a process which is done all the time. What I object to is the way in which he's indicted this suspicion, Mr. Speaker and, in fact, has drawn into disrepute some lawyers who serve the province. That is reprehensible.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, the Treasurer said: we put the holding company together. I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer if 369413 Alberta Ltd. is merely a front for Treasury Branch money put together by this Provincial Treasurer to lend the money to Peter Pocklington which we in turn guaranteed?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd be glad to explain that. I mean, if this is what they want to find out, I'd be more than pleased to explain this to the gentleman. I know he's confused generally with respect to business dealings. I know the socialist party does not understand how the private sector operates.

What this corporation does is very simple, as I tried to explain. This is the vehicle where we take our claim against the corporation, and it's also the company that has no other purpose but to register its claim, our security, in other provinces. It's a trustee corporation. As opposed to the Crown, it's a trustee corporation. It's done all the time in terms of private-sector activity where the Crown is involved. That's what I'm making very clear. There should be no suspicion, no suggestions at all of wrongdoing, and I think the opposition should clean up their act, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

MR. FOX: This is the guy that drove us \$10 billion in debt, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like the Provincial Treasurer to be very clear about this now. Whose loan did the people of Alberta cosign through this government approving a loan guarantee on March 3 for Peter Pocklington? Whose loan did we cosign?

MR. SPEAKER: The question's been asked.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we didn't cosign any loan. Therefore, that just simply goes to the heart. The member uses wrong words, leaves the wrong impression because he doesn't understand the business sector. We did not cosign a loan. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The Member for Edmonton-Glengarry, leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. McEACHERN: Condemned by his silence.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Glengarry, not Edmonton-Kingsway.

Stumpage Rates and Levies for Forestry Projects

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, in the last year, the last few months, we've seen the Premier and his government give an incredible array of concessions to the pulp and paper industry in Alberta in getting an industry started. Recently, in fact, a study that was done in a report issued by the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association proves pretty conclusively that Albertans are not receiving full value for our forest resources. The association survey shows that stumpage fees charged in Alberta are amongst the lowest in the nation, with only Saskatchewan and Manitoba charging less for softwood pulp. Even when our extra levies are factored in, we are fourth out of five provinces that charge such extra levies. My question to the minister of forestry is this: can the minister confirm that Alberta-Pacific will sell its pulp production for upwards of \$300 million per year while Alberta will only receive \$7.5 million per year for the same lumber that creates the pulp?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I can't answer the question. I don't know where the hon. member got his facts from, because we have not completed negotiations on a forest management agreement with Alberta-Pacific. Part of the forest management agreement, of course, would encompass what the stumpage rates would be for that particular project. So since I haven't negotiated and finalized it yet, I can't comment on that.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question.

MR. DECORE: Well, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister could look at his own letter of February 1, which was sent to Mr. Mitchell. That's where we got the figures from, sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Is that the question?

MR. DECORE: Second question, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister believe it is prudent for Alberta to be giving away these resources at bargain-basement prices at the same time that we are proposing to move into the forest industry in such a big fashion? Is it prudent, sir?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, we are in no way giving away our forest resource in the province of Alberta. You can take stumpage rates as one factor that is included in the price of the wood. There are other factors that are taken into account if you're going to look at the overall charges that are charged any company. They include holding charges, protection charges, reforestation levies, road improvements, and then there's a softwood lumber tax that goes in over and above that. If you take all those factors into consideration, you'll find out that Alberta's resource here is very competitive. Of course, that has been part of the reason we've been able to attract industries here and to generate over \$2 billion in capital construction in mills using a resource that up until this point was considered a weed.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. By giving away these resources at these bargain-basement prices, is the province not forgoing millions upon millions of dollars that could otherwise be used to pay down the deficit that you, sir, have created in this province?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that the hon. member continues to take an extremely shallow look at some of these important issues. He raised his first question, received an answer from the hon. member, ignored the answer, and continued to read whatever the researcher had prepared for him.

We have to point out, Mr. Speaker, that one of the most important things for Alberta in developing our lumber resource is, as the hon. minister said, that this be a competitive resource. After all, there are \$3.5 billion of investment flowing into this province in order to diversify and strengthen our economy and provide opportunities, jobs in areas that have not had stable, long-term employment. Let's remember that billions of dollars will in fact be payrolls for Albertans. That's an example of a government doing a job it promised the people it would do.

MR. SPEAKER: Banff-Cochrane, followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Code Inquiry Report

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Code inquiry into the collapse of the Principal Group of Companies has been ongoing for the past two years. Tomorrow is July 18, and therefore my question is to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Can the people of the province of Alberta expect the Code report to be presented to Justice Berger tomorrow?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that Mr. Code has made arrangements to bring his report to Mr. Justice Berger tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock, at which time I'm sure the hon. justice will consider what it is he's going to do with the report. Later on that day we'll receive word from Mr. Justice Berger as to how he will dispatch the publication.

MR. EVANS: My supplementary, Mr. Speaker, again to the hon. Provincial Treasurer. Presuming that Justice Berger makes the report public, can the people of Alberta expect an immediate response from this government?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, as all Albertans are aware, I'm sure, this process has been ongoing now for two years and about a month. During that period this province, this government, has made every opportunity available to those people involved, and to certainly the contract holders, to find out what happened. As all members know, the process took over 600 days. There were 67,000 pages of testimony, and a lot of people were involved. As is well known, of course, the province ensured that perfect information was provided wherever possible, including providing full co-operation. So I don't think anybody in Alberta or, for that matter, anyone across Canada who was affected by the outcome of the Code inquiry would expect us to handle this in a 20-minute turnaround period.

As I understand the report, it's about 800 pages long. I think, Mr. Speaker, we will recommend to our colleagues in caucus that we take whatever time is necessary to fully understand the process. Therefore, I would expect that there would be at least a week before we come to some conclusion as to its outcome. Over that period we'll certainly read carefully what is involved, have a process in place whereby our colleagues in government have a chance to look at their own departmental responsibilities under the Code inquiry, and we'll come to a proper evaluation of our position sometime next week.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place, followed by Calgary-Buffalo, and then Bow Valley.

Negotiation of Forest Management Agreements

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been a number of recent surveys with a common result. The one referred to earlier in question period is among them. The result is the same: Alberta stumpage rates are among the lowest in Canada, if not the lowest. Certainly the prices that are charged to the major forest companies under recently signed forest management agreements, I suggest a quota by any other name, are well below the world price of timber. Has the minister decided to discontinue the use of quota for forest management agreements to set price and instead introduce some free enterprise and some competitive bidding for some of the timber?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, it's about a year ago that I had the entire quota policy reviewed with the industry, and with some minor changes which we made, they were very happy with the quota policy. So, of course, it will stay. The forest management agreements themselves are -- each year the pulp prices are changed, of course, and the stumpage rates for the wood that goes into pulp mills is indexed to the price of pulp. So there is a good amount of free enterprise and some flexibility to change and to improve. As pulp prices will undoubtedly increase in the future, the stumpage rates in fact will increase.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the public doesn't share the enthusiasm of the forest companies for these low prices, I wonder if the minister will advise whether it will be the policy of the government to increase stumpage in the new forest management agreements now under negotiation or whether they are going to remain at the same low levels.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: They will be in the competitive range, of course. I've been looking at areas where it could be enhanced. Our reforestation and management practices are recognized around the world as among the best, if not the best, and I'd like to see that enhanced even further and to work on those standards. That would put some additional cost on the companies, and of course I'll look at all of those areas to make sure not only that our wood supplies remain consistent pricewise but that the quality improves and is enhanced not only for this generation but many generations thereafter.

MR. SPEAKER: Final.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, in view of the fact that these forest management agreements are critically important to the future of the northern forest resource, not just the people who live in that area but throughout the province, I wonder if the government has decided to change the current practice of withholding forest management agreements until after the pulp mills are built, until after the environmental review process is through; in other words, until the game is over. Have you decided to make that information available before the reviews are completed?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the forest management agreements are normally signed far before the construction is completed, because that's part of the package. A mill has to

have the wood supply, or who would arrange financing for a particular mill? So that, of course, is done.

You should know that the forest management agreement is an umbrella agreement and is a 20-year agreement. Each year there are certain aspects that must be negotiated, that take place each year, and part of the negotiation, of course, is the difference in stumpage rates, which are reflected in the pulp prices. At the end of 20 years, then of course there is a renegotiation of that agreement. So it isn't forever in any stretch. Each one of those companies has obligations and responsibilities to live up to in that forest management agreement. Included in those forest management agreements are also quota holders and timber permits, and there are other people also operating in those areas. That's also taken into consideration in any forest management agreement negotiation.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo, Bow Valley, Edmonton-Avonmore.

Loans and Loan Guarantees to Peter Pocklington
(continued)

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is more and more evidence that the numbered company that was referred to in the earlier question is part of the scheme of the government in hiding the involvement of the government in financing the Pocklington group of companies from the people of Alberta. There is every indication that that \$67 million loan that flowed through 369413 Alberta Ltd. on or about September 25, '87, was a loan from the provincial Treasury Branch or other government entity and that the use of the numbered company serves no purpose other than to hide the true facts. I wonder whether the Provincial Treasurer will tell this House simply and clearly, without the bafflelegab of his earlier answer, whether or not the Treasury Branch or some other provincial entity provided the \$67 million that was loaned by 369413 Alberta Ltd. to Gainers Properties Inc. and, if so, how much it provided.

MR. SPEAKER: The first question is good enough. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, there are two parts to this process. The first part is a \$55 million amount, and the second part is a \$12 million amount. I think even the Member for Calgary-Buffalo understands the \$12 million amount. That's how you come to the \$67 million amount. As my colleague has pointed out, \$6 million of the \$12 million has been advanced. But, specifically, the answer is no.

MR. CHUMIR: The minister has said that he did not provide any of the \$67 million, and earlier he said that the \$55 million guarantee approved March 3 did not relate to the \$67 million. If it didn't relate to the \$67 million, then perhaps the minister could tell this House clearly and straightforwardly, since he is responsible in law for administering that guarantee, what did that guarantee secure, that \$55 million guarantee from March 3, and what is the magnitude of the current amount of the risk for the people of Alberta in respect of the guarantee?

MR. JOHNSTON: Again, Mr. Speaker, there were about four or five questions there, and I'll do my best to provide the information possible. If you want a factual explanation of what's

happened, I'll be glad to give it, but every time you get a question which is pre-empted by the specious arguments and specious reasoning that are involved here, it's very difficult to give a reasoned approach and give the facts to the question. So I would try to provide, wherever possible, the answer.

The quick fact is, as I've indicated already, that we know that \$6 million has been advanced from the General Revenue Fund. That's a term credit loan, secured against all the assets we talked about earlier this afternoon. Of that \$12 million potential only \$6 million has been advanced, and the first interest payment will take place in October of 1989. Now, my colleague the minister of economic development has explained all that to you, so I'd put that aside.

The second part of the question is: what is the \$55 million? Well, already today we talked about the security which we have taken. I think I have clarified that we've got a good charge against the fixed assets of all the corporations. Now, again, because of this conspiracy argument, even today the socialist party is suggesting that because we split the two companies, we can't secure our claim against those companies. Well, that's just, again, nonsense, almost as bad as the nonsense we're getting right now from the Member for Calgary-Buffalo, who also talked about some disagreement among cabinet members with respect to how we handled ourselves in this particular case. Nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker.

Now, what we do have here is a guarantee to another company, another corporation, another bank, who provides money, and our guarantee is backstopped by these covenants, as we talked about, including the fixed assets. As far as we know, there's nothing we can say with respect to the valuations. We took appraisals at the time the guarantee was given. We now have security. The minister of economic development said that if the plant in southern Alberta is not started, we will not advance any more money. Every time we go to advance money, we get a signed affidavit from the company saying that they're not in default, have not breached the master agreement. All that has taken place, Mr. Speaker. So what we've seen here is like Foxy Loxy again, running to tell the king the sky is falling. Well, the Member for Calgary-Buffalo is doing the same thing.

MR. SPEAKER: Final question.

MR. CHUMIR: The minister, Mr. Speaker, is doing his usual job of evading . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The question, please. Supplementary.

MR. CHUMIR: He's evading the issue.

MR. SPEAKER: What's the supplementary?

MR. CHUMIR: I'm wondering whether he would clarify in respect of his first answer whether in respect of that \$67 million loan of September 25, 1987, loaned by 369413 Alberta Ltd., the Karvellas company, to Gainers Properties Inc. -- is he saying that no part of that money was provided by the provincial Treasury Branch?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying is that there was no loan made by that corporation, as I'll tried to explain again. I know the member has a legal mind, but he doesn't understand the legal process.

In any event, this is a very simple process whereby our security is put into the numbered company. The numbered company is the company which advances the debentures against the two operating companies, Gainers Properties Inc., Gainers Inc., and its major responsibility is to ensure the debenture is in place and to secure the asset. It's a trustee for the province of Alberta. That's its role; it does nothing else. That's essentially what it does.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The Member for Bow Valley.

Processing of Paper for Recycling

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of the Environment. The Department of the Environment has encouraged certain organizations to collect paper for recycling and have, in fact, in most cases supplied a trailer for the storing and transportation of papers. Quite a few of those are in my constituency. The value of paper for recycling varies from \$5 per tonne to \$60 per tonne, depending on the ability to process the paper at the rate it is being collected, while world prices for paper are at a record-high level.

It is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that the de-inking process is done in the northwestern United States, and that's a major problem in recycling the amount of paper that's collected. Would the minister consider promoting or encouraging the establishment of a plant in Alberta to de-ink paper for recycling?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's quite correct in that de-inking is a key component to any recycling operation. Right now my department along with the departments of economic development and Forestry, Lands and Wildlife are looking at two de-inking proposals, one right here in the city of Edmonton and one in relationship to the Alberta Newsprint Company's CTMP pulp mill project in Whitecourt. We simply hope to work with the proponents of these facilities and help to bring them along and provide whatever expertise is necessary to put these plants in place.

MR. MUSGROVE: Supplementary. If these plants fail, by the way, would the minister then consider establishing a provincially owned plant for de-inking newspapers?

MR. FOX: Socialist pinko.

MR. KLEIN: No. You're absolutely right, and that's what I would like not to be.

So it's for that reason, Mr. Speaker, the reason just cited by the opposition, that we will try to encourage the private sector to establish the de-inking facilities, as it should be. But I'll make this undertaking: we will provide the resources and the expertise of the department to make sure that it comes about in an economically viable fashion.

MR. MUSGROVE: Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In quite a few cases organizations have a backlog of newspapers that they have collected that they are not able to dispose of. Would the minister consider putting a base price or a minimum price on newspapers so that these people could be guaranteed something for collecting them?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, recycled paper, like any other commodity, is market driven. I don't think that we want to get into the business of establishing prices. I think that we would want to let the market prevail. I think that where the department can play a role is to provide assistance in establishing long-term and stable markets.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Edmonton-Avonmore, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar, Redwater-Andrew.

Maintenance Enforcement Program

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Attorney General. Research done in the late '70s prior to the maintenance enforcement program indicated that approximately one-third of the debtors paid maintenance regularly and were paid up to date, 50 to 60 percent paid sporadically and were in arrears, and in in excess of 10 percent of cases there was no reported payment at all. The report tabled in the House on Friday as to the success rate of the maintenance enforcement program shows remarkably similar statistics as of June 1989. My question to the minister: has the minister evaluated this much needed program to see why it has failed so miserably?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, as with the other questions that have come from that side of the House today, this is fraught with erroneous ideas that something is not right. This is a great program, and I think the majority of the people have filed willingly, voluntarily, or through the recent amendment; all maintenance enforcement agreements are originally filed. There's been a significant recapture of money for the individual members that are involved in a marital dispute as well as recouping a great deal of money for the province where money has been used to stabilize these people's lives while one of the former members to a marriage wasn't able to pay.

But the number that the member is using, bandying about, is erroneous. The statistics that were tabled in answer to a question of last year indicated that there was approximately 32 percent that had full and complete payment, and there are actually more people that get full and complete payment on that. There's a number of people that don't register because they are getting full payment, and there's a number of people who withdraw because they're getting full payment. So statistics can be made, as the hon. member is doing, to make whatever case they want, but that is erroneous.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, 66 percent of the creditors registered to this program are dissatisfied, and I've heard from a great number of them.

MR. SPEAKER: Question, please.

MS M. LAING: Given that much of the problem with this program is the discretionary power of the director to enforce collection of child support orders, including arrears in excess of three years, will the minister amend the Act to require collection of all child support orders in arrears?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the arrears are pursued and pursued vigorously where there is an indication that the person has any ability to pay. There are a number of cases, obviously,

where a person doesn't have any means, and in those instances, unfortunately, there's very little that can be done.

The member I think understands the program and should well understand the program. It is there to collect a maintenance order of the court. If the maintenance order is not satisfactory to either member of that dispute, they have to go back to the court to get that amended, and it is not part of the duty of the people in the program or the minister in charge to do that. They have to do that of their own volition.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, my concern, as is that of the Advisory Council on Women's Issues, is the discretionary power of the director. The advisory council has made seven recommendations, and I would ask the minister what action he is going to take immediately to implement the recommendations made by the Advisory Council on Women's Issues.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the recommendations that have been brought forward are being perused. In fact, some of them have been implemented. We've increased the manpower under the program. That enhanced collection ability or the time spent, because the file load was decreased. But, again, the member fails to realize that in many instances you cannot obtain blood or water from a stone. If there are no resources, you could spend hours and hours, days and days, weeks on weeks, trying to extract some money. It would be far better and is far better to utilize those resources on files where there is some hope of getting some of the money, and that's in fact what is happening.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by Redwater-Andrew.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions, too, are to the Attorney General on the same program but take a different approach, sir.

Mr. Speaker, for the past three and a half years and again today the government has insisted that its maintenance enforcement program is successfully achieving its objectives. Obviously the government is not listening to the thousands of Alberta women who have their own personal horror story in their dealings. In spite of the Attorney General's confidence in the program expressed here, this is not borne out in the numbers that we see. In fact, based on the report from the Institute of Law Research and Reform, 38 percent of maintenance cases were paid in full in 1980. We have now decreased that number, by 5.5 percent, that are being successfully collected. My question, Mr. Speaker, to the Attorney General is: has the minister himself bothered to review and test registrants to determine what their ideas are for change and their comments about how the program could be improved? These are the people who really know what needs to be done.

MR. SPEAKER: The question has been asked.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, one of the problems when a member reads the question is that they pay no attention to what has been stated just previously. I explained, I thought quite clearly, that the statistic showed 32.5, but that was of orders that were right there. There are a number of orders that are withdrawn because they're getting complete payment; there's a number that didn't register because they're getting complete payment. The statistic is not accurate in that respect.

MRS. HEWES: But the question wasn't answered, with respect.

MR. SPEAKER: That's an improper comment.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, we're all aware that there has been a modest increase in funding. Will the minister now undertake to report back to the Legislature within six months to keep the House informed about what the track record is of this program, which is obviously failing?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, this very excellent and very successful program -- the information is available for the hon. member at any time. She just has to contact my office. I'm in contact by phone and by letter with numerous participants or claimants under this program, and I have many of them that show that it's a very, very successful program.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, will the minister then amend the legislation to require ex-spouses to submit only certified cheques to lessen the hardship when mothers are forced to wait for cheques to clear?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, there are many payments that aren't made directly from the spouse or the ex-spouse. They come in various forms, whether it happens to be UIC or income tax or payments. On many occasions, if there's found to be an ex-spouse that regularly gives cheques that are not valid, steps like that are taken.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Redwater-Andrew, followed by Edmonton-Strathcona.

Ukraine Trade and Cultural Exhibition

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. I understand that a very important delegation from the Ukraine has arrived in Alberta. Could the minister explain the purpose of their visit?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it was with delight that I had the opportunity this morning to participate in the opening of the Ukraine trade show, which is taking place here in the city of Edmonton, in conjunction with Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor and the Premier of our province, whereby we had the opportunity to salute the outstanding contribution that the Ukrainian community has made to the province of Alberta. The Premier took the occasion at the trade show to pay tribute to their outstanding contribution plus to indicate the close ties that do exist between Ukraine and the province of Alberta. Northlands and Dr. Horst Schmid have been very instrumental in putting together this trade show, which has a cultural and economic component.

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

MR. TAYLOR: Ask him how many are coming.

MR. ZARUSKY: Mr. Speaker, I think this could be funny maybe to the opposition, but to my constituents it isn't.

Could the minister clarify whether this is strictly a trade mis-

sion or is there a cultural component to this as well?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's natural that we highlight the trade component in view of the fact that the Soviet bloc itself is our fifth or sixth largest trading partner with the province of Alberta. The emphasis is on trade, but as I indicated, too, there is a cultural component plus the opportunity to stress the close relationship that does exist.

I'm sure that the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism would like to supplement the cultural component.

MR. MAIN: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, indeed I would appreciate the opportunity to add my comments to those of my colleague's with regard to the cultural component here. I think most members of the Assembly will be aware that the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers are an internationally known component of Edmonton, Alberta, culture but are based on Ukrainian culture. It's this sort of exchange involving trade and culture and education that gives us a great deal of pride. Albertans, of course, owe a debt of gratitude to the Ukrainian people, who played an important role in the settling of this end of the country and continue to play an important role in our economy in an ongoing contribution.

So this type of an event we encourage. Last year there was one involving Australia, this year Ukraine, and on into the future there will be similar trade and cultural exchanges. It's an opportunity to learn more about other lands, other peoples, other cultures, and to broaden ourselves, so we certainly fully endorse it.

MR. ZARUSKY: Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I think the constituents of Edmonton-Whitemud would also like to know some of this. To the minister. What type of follow-up will the minister be doing on behalf of the Alberta government?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is aware and has an appreciation for, trade is a very important component of our way of life within the province in that we do rely so heavily on the exports of the goods that we do produce within this province. In 1987 to the Soviet bloc we exported in excess of \$200 million. We want to continue with that strong trade component, recognizing that it does create jobs. Our ministry will be following up with those individuals and the exhibits that are shown here so that we can continue that two-way trade which is essential to both our province and our country.

Selection of Queen's Counsel

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Attorney General. I'm sorry; it's pick on Attorney General day today. This year is a year in which Queen's Counsel are appointed at the end of the year for the new year. I'd like the Attorney General to tell us if there is any principle that he can discern in the selection of these people.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the QC designation comes from a tradition that relates back in our British history for in excess of 300 years. It is now more honorary or traditional. I have been working closely with the Law Society and the benchers to ensure that they have a great deal of input into the selections that are coming up, if we have any this year. I look forward to that day.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary. I hope it's not a representation for a QC.

MR. WRIGHT: I wonder if the Attorney General can tell us what it is about membership in the Conservative Party of the province that so specially qualifies lawyers for this honour.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I'm not so sure that all of the people who have been honoured with the designation belong to this party. I've never asked, any time that I've had, as to membership of what they are.

MR. WRIGHT: I wonder if the Attorney General would consider recommending to the Legislature a change of the designation to something rather more current and self-explanatory, such as "successful older barrister."

AN HON. MEMBER: Gordon Wright, SOB. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon. Don't be shy.

Payment for Slaughter Cattle

MR. TAYLOR: That's a hard act to follow. I notice they've just spelled out the initials, Mr. Speaker.

This is to the Premier. In view of the question of the \$300,000 to \$400,000 of cattle slaughtered each day at the Gainers plant, there is, of course, a great deal of concern because half of this is on credit, as you might say. It's rail grade; it's three to four days down the road before they get paid. So the farmers may be at considerable risk in the fact that if something happens to the packing plant and the guarantees don't work out, the farmers could get stuck with the cost of the beef. Could the Premier assure this House, in view of the fact that this government has a well-known reputation of stomping in with their number 12 shoes, as they did in the Principal case, and hurting a lot of innocent people, that if something goes wrong here, no farmer will suffer because of beef delivery?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. What's the question, without bringing in more than one issue here? Let's go.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member in his circuitous way finally arrived at what is a totally hypothetical question. It is a matter, though, that he has engaged the Minister of Agriculture in discussion over the period of this session, so I'd be pleased to make sure that the Minister of Agriculture is aware of his question and may wish to respond to him either personally or through the Legislature.

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?
Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Agriculture is in charge of marketing, but guarantees of the Treasurer are between the Premier and the Treasurer. Could the

Treasurer tell whether he has any process in the works that will guarantee beef producers payment for their beef if something happens to the packing company?

MR. GETTY: Again, Mr. Speaker, we have the case of the hon. member drawing a hypothetical question. Still, I gather he wants to pursue this with the Minister of Agriculture with regard to income to the farm population, and I'll draw it to the minister's attention.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, the happening is hypothetical, but the fact of whether you have insurance or not is a fact.

What I'd like the Premier then -- could he give the House the assurance that he will pressure the Minister of Agriculture to contact the Cattle Commission to put an insurance scheme in that will protect beef producers against untoward happening from any packing company going under?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I certainly will ask the hon. Minister of Agriculture to consider the member's request and to see if there is any area in which the Minister of Agriculture feels we should proceed.

MR. SPEAKER: Point of order, Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I refer to *Beauchesne* 408(1), which very clearly directs that question period is to be used for a specific purpose, and that it is to be used to deal with questions which are

asked only in respect of matters of sufficient urgency and importance as to require an immediate answer.

Now, I point out that in the parliamentary process, in parliamentary tradition, the 45 minutes that is allocated for this particular period of time is extremely essential, and it should not be abused. It is there for a reason.

I refer specifically to the question asked by the hon. Member for Redwater-Andrew. Now, I relate that to the question Friday about the flip-flopping pancakes. At that particular time, in *Hansard*, page 763, Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Speaker replies:

Well, hon. members, I feel that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has a point, and I am sorry for not interrupting earlier.

And he goes on to state:

But I do accept the hon. member's comments about the sense of urgency and the importance of question period.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would request of you: can you give a written set of guidelines? Can you give a statement so that the members on that side of the House and at that end closest to you are aware of what type of questions, and not puffball questions but questions of urgency that require an immediate answer, are asked in this House?

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the point of order and citing *Beauchesne* 409(4), we have a very clear, written set of guidelines on question period; 409(4) says: "It ought to be on an important matter."

The question we are looking at here had to do with the Ukraine exhibit and the other things that have come to this

province. Mr. Speaker, this is historic in this century in the western world to see such a release of exhibits and different materials from behind the Iron Curtain. Because the member opposite probably doesn't have any Ukraine ancestry, he considers this not to be important. This is a significant, historic event, and all members of our party are very proud of this event. It is important, and it is urgent, and it meets the guidelines laid out in 409(4).

MR. SPEAKER: Well, first off, the Chair did indeed review the *Hansard* of Friday and noticed the exchange that did take place between the Chair and the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. The ruling was made on that occasion with respect to that particular issue, and therefore that is past history in terms of this Legislature.

The purported point of order as raised today fails in the estimation of the Chair because if the hon. member, along with other members of the House, will read the *Hansard* as of today's exchange, they will find that there was quite considerable detail given in terms of the responses by the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, in particular with respect to some statistics regarding trade, and then also the matter of the cultural component as well. Therefore, the Chair does not regard this as a point of order but just a complaint on behalf of a member.

One also would point out the concern and frustration that members do have on all sides of the House, and some members within each political party, as to whether or not the questions being raised are of sufficient import or not. The Chair was also interested to note that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud did not call a point of order with respect to the last supplementary question as raised by the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, which indeed was also lacking in terms of that particular reference in *Beauchesne*.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (Second Reading)

Bill 11 Senatorial Selection Act

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, before us and hon. members is an historic Bill, Bill 11, the Senatorial Selection Act. In considering and debating the Bill, we have the privilege of taking a bold step towards improving our country's Constitution and, indeed, the very nature of Confederation.

Before I begin my remarks on second reading, however, I would like to acknowledge some of those whose work has made this Bill possible.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, in the House.

MR. HORSMAN: First, I would like to thank my colleague the Hon. Dennis Anderson and the members of the select special committee who developed the Triple E Senate reform model. I would also like to thank my former and present colleagues in this Legislature, who twice unanimously approved the Triple E model in principle and in so doing provided us with a mandate to pursue it. I would like to thank the Canadian Committee for a Triple E Senate and the Canada West Foundation for their ef-

forts in advocating the cause of Senate reform. I would like to recognize the efforts of my staff in Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs and the staff of the Attorney General in developing Bill 1 of the previous session and now Bill 11, the Bill before us. I would like to thank the Senate Reform Task Force members, who accompanied me on a recent cross-Canada mission, for their work and dedication to this cause. Finally, I would like to pay tribute to our Premier, Don Getty, who has for the past three years provided leadership and strong support for our efforts towards making comprehensive reform of the Senate a reality.

Now, Canadians often view the Constitution and Confederation as a remote, esoteric document in the case of the Constitution or a concept of concern only to governments or lawyers and academics with respect to Confederation. Yet as recent issues indicate, our Constitution, our Confederation, hold very real implications for all Canadians. Certainly the Bill before us, which when passed will for the first time, the very first time in the history of Canada, allow Albertans to democratically choose a Senator, is of great importance to every Albertan and Canadian. So before we begin our deliberations in the second reading of this Bill, before we discuss the role that Alberta wishes to play in building a better Canada, I think this Assembly is well served to reflect on the events leading up to the introduction of this Bill.

It was not without a great deal of thought and deliberation that the composition and powers of the Senate were constituted in the 1867 British North America Act. Indeed, six days of the 14 spent debating and drafting the British North America Act were devoted to the subject of the Senate. Equal representation by region in the Senate was to offset the regional imbalances that could develop in the popularly elected House of Commons, which is based on representation by population. The desirable nature of the second Chamber was described by Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, in the debates preceding Confederation, when he stated, and I quote:

In order to protect local interests and to prevent sectional jealousies, it was found requisite that the three great divisions into which British North America is separated should be represented in the upper House on the principle of equality . . . To the upper House is to be confided the protection of sectional interests; therefore it is that the three great divisions are there equally represented for the purpose of defending such interests against the combinations of majorities in the Assembly.

With the admission of additional provinces, federalism in Canada has, however, evolved past the concept of regions to one where the provinces are recognized as having separate and unique interests which ought to be represented equally in the federal decision-making process. Now the evolution of federalism has also made the method used to select Senators outdated. Under section 24 of the Constitution Act of 1867, Senators are summoned -- summoned -- by the Governor General on the recommendation of the Queen's Privy Council, the federal cabinet. Now, this method of selection owes much to the mistrust of democracy that existed in 1867. It was believed that an appointed Senate would serve as a check on the popularly elected House of Commons. Clearly, however, the rationale and qualifications for the appointment of Senators do not today reflect the values and democratic nature of Canada.

It was not long after Confederation that the Senate's shortcomings became apparent. In fact, it was over 100 years ago that the first calls for Senate reform were heard. Indeed, by 1908 the Prime Minister of the day, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, called

for fundamental changes to the Senate. He said, and I quote again:

What I would insist on is that each province should be represented by an equal number of Senators, that each province should stand on the same footing, and that each province whether it be big or small should have a voice in the legislation, not according to the numerical strength of its population but according to its provincial entity.

Well, every now and then the issue surfaced again. But it is just in the past several years that we have seen some profound constitutional changes that facilitate comprehensive Senate reform.

The Constitution Act of 1982 repatriated Canada's Constitution and contained other provisions entrenching an amending formula, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, aboriginal rights, an equalization clause, and a key provision relating to natural resources. Now, these amendments were significant; they were significant improvements to the operation of Canada's federal system. With repatriation, Canada became fully sovereign. With the amending formula, which was originally proposed by this government, we ensured that our Constitutional right to own, manage and control our natural resources could not be taken away from us.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

But despite these improvements the 1982 Act did not go far enough. Sadly, Quebec, although subject to the Constitution, did not feel fully part of it. As I had indicated this past Thursday in this Legislative Assembly -- and I quote my words of that day:

It is not a satisfactory situation to have any of the partners in Confederation left out in the sense that they do not feel fully part and parcel of the Constitution.

Moreover, the Act did not adequately address the Constitutional deficiencies impeding the operation of Canada's federal institutions, particularly, from Alberta's point of view and perspective, the role of the Senate in the federal system.

Now, the answers to these two issues are found in the historic June 3, 1987, Constitutional Accord, or as it is more commonly called, the Meech Lake accord. Alberta supported that accord for two fundamental reasons. First, proclamation of the accord will end the constitutional isolation of Quebec, and as I indicated in the House this past Thursday, there will not be constitutional reform of any kind without Quebec at the table as a full and active participant. Secondly, the accord guarantees a process that will lead to meaningful Senate reform. And this is the first time -- the first time -- a national commitment to reform the Senate has been achieved.

Now, a major accomplishment of the Meech Lake accord is that it provides for the constitutional equality of the provinces. Those words are taken from the words that I have cited to you earlier, that we must have that: constitutional equality of the provinces. In fact, the preamble -- and some people who debate it obviously have never read the preamble. It says this, and I quote:

Whereas first ministers, assembled in Ottawa, have arrived at a unanimous accord on constitutional amendments that would bring about the full and active participation of Quebec in Canada's constitutional evolution

Point one. And

would recognize the principle of equality of all the provinces, would provide new arrangements to foster greater harmony

and co-operation between the Government of Canada and the governments of the provinces . . .

And so it continues. I emphasize again that that is entrenched in the Constitutional Accord, the principle of equality of the provinces. Therefore, the Meech Lake accord will provide that there will be no second-class provinces when the first ministers gather to discuss our Constitution. Our Premier, Don Getty, was instrumental in obtaining the agreement of all first ministers to recognize the principle of equality, and our government is firmly committed to that principle.

The Meech Lake accord also reflects the principle of equality in the provinces in changes to federal institutions. As you know, the accord provides that future constitutional amendments relating to powers of the Senate or the method of selecting Senators will require the approval of all provinces and the federal government, rather than the current requirement of Parliament and seven provinces with at least 50 percent of the population of Canada.

Second, section 13 of the accord requires the Prime Minister to convene a constitutional conference at least once a year to discuss Senate reform until agreement is reached.

Third, and this is fundamental to the Bill before us, the Meech Lake accord provides an interim process by which the provinces will have a say in the selection of Senators. As you are aware, under the accord and until meaningful Senate reform is achieved, when a vacancy occurs the Prime Minister must select a Senator from a list advanced by the province from which the vacancy occurs. Well, under this interim arrangement we had three options. First, we could provide a list of names to the Prime Minister, as other provinces have done. Or, secondly, we could refuse simply to provide a list, as Ontario has done. Or we could take the bold step we are contemplating now and have all Albertans decide who our next Senator should be. Well, on February 17 of this year Premier Getty introduced Bill 1 to the 21st Legislature. On June 26 I introduced a slightly amended version of this Bill, the Bill before us, to this the 22nd Legislature.

The Bill we will soon deliberate provides for three options with respect to the timing of a senatorial election. Normally, the election would take place at the time of provincial general elections. There is, however, a provision for an election at the time of municipal elections as well as for stand-alone elections. Well, until we are able to amend the Constitution with respect to qualifications of Senators, prospective candidates must fulfill the requirements outlined in section 23 of the Constitution Act. In addition, they would have to provide 1,500 signatures who support their candidacy and a \$4,000 deposit. Further, candidates may run under provincial political parties or as independents and will run in a provincewide constituency. Our Senate nominee will be elected on a first-past-the-post basis.

Hon. members, I do not think you can overestimate the effect the first elected Senator will have on this country. What a voice that person will have as that Albertan, that Canadian, stands in the Senate Chamber, the only Senator truly representing Canada as we are in the 1990s, a democratic voice in that antiquated, undemocratic House.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, to describe what I think of the current Senate, but I think I would prefer to be more positive in my remarks today. It came to me at lunch today, the fact that the Senators are asking for more. They want more money; they want better offices; they want more research staff. I can't believe it. It reminds me of the saying, Mr. Speaker, that those

whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad. Well, of all the notions, that the current Senators should be asking for more surely must be an indication of a deterioration in the sanity of the members of that House. If they think Canadians are prepared to put up more for them, really, it is appalling. But I don't want to be carried away. I wish they were carried away.

Now, what we are proposing in this Bill is nation building. I know that it has caught the imagination of Canadians. As our Senate Reform Task Force traveled across Canada discussing our model for reform, the Triple E model, and informing governments, the public, and the media of our plans to elect a Senate nominee, they were intrigued and some were very excited by what somebody called "a stroke of genius" in advancing Senate reform. The most fundamental element of our Triple E proposal is "elected," and we are confident that our sending an elected Senator to Ottawa will be a major thrust towards achieving the two other elements of the Triple E Senate, "equal" and "effective." But we recognize, Mr. Speaker, the risks inherent in what we are proposing. We recognize the risks as well. For if all the provinces began to follow Alberta's lead, there is the risk that the current inequalities and the current powers could be forever entrenched in this newly elected body. But we are prepared to take this risk as a government. We are prepared to take this bold step to bring about the changes demanded by today's Canadian Confederation.

As I look across the House at the opposition parties, I reflect back to the two occasions when unanimity was possible to achieve in our efforts to reform the Senate. Well, the government -- and I've mentioned that earlier -- on two occasions in this House considered the report of the select committee. Both before and after the 1986 general election unanimous approval in principle was given. The government has obviously left both opposition parties far behind, for already they have voiced their unwillingness to join us in building a better nation through this process. Just two weeks ago the New Democrats decided they would not participate in the senatorial election, that they would not help Albertans in this great experiment in democracy. By their timidity they are simply denying Albertans another choice. That, I'm afraid, is the benchmark of that party: limit the ability to choose, centralized state control, do away with the Senate completely, and thereby deny Canadians the opportunity of reforming it in the true manner. Well, I am truly disappointed, but I've been disappointed in that party for so long that it should come as no surprise to members of the Assembly.

Now, the Liberal Party also wants to take away Albertans' ability to choose. Just last Thursday in this House the hon. leader of the Liberal Party introduced a resolution urging us to rescind our support for the Meech Lake accord, knowing that we will not have any kind of constitutional reform without Quebec at the table, knowing the accord provides for the constitutional equality of the provinces, a provision so important to Alberta, because without that principle of equality we would be a second-class province. The leader of the Liberal Party didn't like it when I said in this Assembly that he was prepared to make Albertans second-class citizens, but that is precisely what would happen if we followed his advice. Knowing that the accord itself provides a process by which Senate reform must be achieved, and knowing, as the Liberals do and every member does, that the accord does nothing to provide a special status to Quebec but simply recognizes its distinctiveness, and finally, knowing that a senatorial election is only possible because of the Meech Lake accord and the interim measures it provides, the

Liberals want to rescind the Meech Lake accord and put us into a constitutional stalemate forever.

They don't want to do anything to advance Senate reform. That's a fact, or they would never have brought that motion forward, or they don't know or don't understand, either of which does not do credit to them, to the Liberal Party, or to their leader who brought that motion forward, because really what he wants to do or would do is prevent the evolution of our Constitution. And I repeat: he would make us into a second-class province at the constitutional table. He wants to remove Senate reform as a constitutional priority of Canada, because that's what's in the Meech Lake accord. Finally, he wants to take this incredible opportunity, the opportunity to elect the first Senator in our nation's history, away from us by removing the Meech Lake accord. Now, maybe he didn't think it through, but that would be, in fact, the effect of the motion he brought forward. Indeed, I'm doubly disappointed, as must be the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon, who's expressed some interest in seeking this office. He must be terribly disappointed that his leader was proposing to wipe away any opportunity whatsoever to bring about Senate reform through the senatorial selection process. He should have a word with him in his caucus, and I urge him to do so.

But our government is not timid. We will not be regressive, and we will move forward through the debates in this Assembly to pass the Bill to provide for the opportunity to hold a senatorial election this October 16. What a proud day it will be for Alberta when our Senator stands in that red Chamber. It will forever change the face of the Canadian Senate. But, hon. members, this is only a first step; it's only a beginning. We have to continue our efforts towards achieving full Senate reform and then to organize new efforts to achieve other types of reform of our Constitution. But I repeat it again, Mr. Speaker, that we will not agree as a government and as a province to any form of amendment or change or alteration or whatever of the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord which would have the effect of removing Senate reform from its place that it has there today.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Well, I've used this quotation often when discussing our Constitution, but I do not think there is a more fitting time to share it once again with this Assembly. The words are Lord Tweedsmuir's, a former Governor General of Canada, who said in the 1930s to the Law Society of Upper Canada, and I quote:

Law, I think, should be regarded as an elastic tissue which clothes the growing body. That tissue, that garment, must fit exactly. If it is too tight it will split, and you will have revolution and lawlessness, as we have seen at various times in our history when the law was allowed to become a straitwaistcoat. If it is too loose it will trip us up and impede our movements. Law, therefore, should not be too far behind or too far ahead of the growth of society, but should coincide as nearly as possible with that growth.

So it is with our Constitution. It must not become fixed or final. As society evolves, its constitutional structure must also adapt to the changing political community. We must be prepared to make adjustments that better fit our Confederation and our Constitution. Through our deliberations on this Bill we have the opportunity to do just that, to prepare to adjust our Constitution to better fit Confederation. What an honour it is for this Assembly to have the chance to alter the course of the history of our country, to better it for future generations, to make it more democratic, to make it more representative of the

ideals we hold so dear. So when deliberating this Bill, I am confident we will find the strength and the wisdom to pass it into law and, in so doing, provide leadership. Hon. members, Albertans are prepared to provide that leadership to the rest of Canada.

I have the honour to move second reading of this historic Bill. I call on all hon. members to support it, because it is an historic Bill and all members can be part of changing forever this country, this land, this Canada.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The laudable words of the minister are not quite enough to convince me that this Bill 11, the Senatorial Selection Act, will make any contribution to the future of Senate reform in Canada. If it were a Bill that were sanctioned by the government of Canada to initiate even that modest step forward known as the Triple E Senate, it may be a different matter. But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that the Prime Minister has said, "Bunk." He's not going to accept a list of candidates for appointment. In fact, this Bill can do no more than allow a name or several names to go forward to be appointed to a body which is historically the patronage home for long-serving members of Liberals and Conservatives, a plum for the party faithful who thereafter enjoy a substantial salary, almost no work whatsoever, and incredible perks. I think it would be dishonest of me to endorse that type of continuation of an ancient body whose time has been and long gone, Mr. Speaker, somewhere, I think, appropriately consigned to the 19th century.

The Bill itself, I would like to add, is I think fraught with difficulties. I believe, if I heard the minister correctly, that he has now said that October 16 will be the day upon which this election for a nomination for an appointment will occur. If that's the case, Mr. Speaker, I think he has walked into a trap of his own making. The issue here is that municipalities do not want an election of a nominee for an appointment to an outdated body to occur at the same time that a municipal election will occur, and I concur in that view, as do members of the caucus for whom I now speak. The reasons are manifold, but I would start with an observation that because there are no limits on the spending as set out in this Bill, what you have is a tax creditable system for one series of candidates and a non tax creditable system for the rest of the candidates. Now, what that means is that the senatorial nominees seeking appointment will be able to acquire a lot more money and turn the campaign into a very large money item, where other candidates at the local level will be competing against those dollars and in an unfair sense, insofar as they can't offer a tax credit for those contributions.

The other thing is a basic economic argument with respect to driving up the costs of an election, the municipal elections in particular. If you have a campaign that can amass millions of dollars per candidate, you will force the municipal campaigns to compete with that advertising, with the road shows, with the et cetera, et ceteras. Ultimately, that means that they're going to have to raise a lot more money than would otherwise be the case, and secondly, in an environment which will not be conducive to them raising that additional money. So I think the Bill in that technical sense is flawed, insofar as it's going to make municipal elections a mess. It will also, I think, come to overshadow the grass-root concerns that tend to be the issues that govern municipal elections. If the minister believes that in fact the senatorial selection approach to nomination for appointment

by the Prime Minister process is going to get more people out to the polls, he may well be right. But he may well also find that people are not there to vote increasingly for municipal councillors, school board trustees, and so forth, that they are there for just this one purpose.

Now, I also question the seriousness of this Bill, inasmuch as it has a sunset clause at the very end of it. Section 60 says: "This Act expires December 31, 1994." Well, if this government was so serious about long-term reform for the Senate, one wouldn't have the sunset clause in there. But I must say that that begs the question, because if this government was so serious about real Senate reform, it would have been able to convince the Prime Minister, first of all, to accept this process, which he has not; secondly, it would have been able to have convinced the Senators in Alberta to all step down to make the process valid.

There are some other problems I can see. They always say that they're going to put up their dukes when they go to Ottawa to talk about issues, and they come home with their tails between their legs. Again this has happened with respect to constitutional reform and Senate reform, in that they have not been successful in having certain criteria deleted from potential candidacy for sitting in the Senate. One of the criteria that has not been overturned is the age discrimination that is built into this very ancient, dinosauric law that governs the Senate; that is, the minimum age of 30. No such law applies at any other electoral division in Canada, nor should it. Secondly, they have not been able to convince their federal counterparts to remove the \$4,000 deposit of the individual seeking nomination to the appointment, nor have they been able to convince the government to drop the requirement that an eligible candidate must own \$4,000 worth of real property.

So I think overall what we see is a Bill that is an attempt to revive an issue that was meant to be a pre-election balloon for the Conservatives that turned into an albatross, as did many other of their pre-election strategies, and really what this whole thing amounts to is a charade. I wish I could say that we would love to support this Bill, but when it amounts to little more than a charade, when we're being asked to support a Bill that would allow a bunch of very wealthy people who can attract very wealthy contributions to run, to place their name on a sheet of paper that the Prime Minister has every right to ignore, it's a bad sign. Not only that, but it is not an election itself, and I'm glad that the language was tidied up at least in that degree, because the election is to run as a nominee to be appointed.

The other thing that I think is against this Bill is that there are no spending limits provided in the Bill, and I don't suspect that there will be in any regulations either, although there are certainly no end of Acts that are going to be amended by this legislation. What this really means is that, *carte blanche*, the richer you are, the more likely you are to run; the richer you are, the more likely you are to attract top dollar to a campaign. In other words, it is another example of this government standing up for the rich and powerful in society. This, of course, does not surprise anybody in this building, nor should it, and it does not surprise anybody in the province.

So in the short of it, Mr. Speaker, this is not even an attempt to get that modest improvement towards a Triple E Senate. It constitutes no more than the continuation of an institution which is little better than a legal rip-off in our society, little better than allowing yet another wealthy and powerful participant to that system in the absence of a fight against an aging institution

which the two old-line political parties remain reluctant to change in any meaningful way. As far as I can see, the provincial Conservatives have fallen into their trap, and they should rethink this Bill before proceeding.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased and honoured today to rise in support of Bill 11, and in doing so echo the words of the hon. Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs on introduction, when he said that it's an historic Bill and an historic day and one that will change the nation, change the country in which we live, I believe, like few changes we've experienced in our relatively short time together as a family of provinces, as a nation that we love and call Canada.

Mr. Speaker, in discussing Bill 11, I would like to deal with the two questions that are involved here. The first is: why Senate reform? The second is: what does Bill 11 do to move in the direction of the kind of government, the kind of institution that we require?

With regard to the first question, I believe that if only from an historic perspective, if only from the view of what was promised to the provinces at the beginning of this Confederation, the move towards a Triple E Senate, an elected Senate, is a birthright that we have not yet received, a birthright that we of the smaller provinces, the less populated provinces, the provinces at distance from the central part of Canada, really were promised at the beginning of Confederation.

Now, I recognize, Mr. Speaker, as we all do, that in those initial stages in the debates and discussions that started in Charlottetown that evolved our country, there was not established an elected Senate, and so one might question why I say there's a birthright yet to be fulfilled. And while there was not an elected Senate, after considerable debate of that particular option there was in almost every statement of every father of our country during those discussions a promise that the Senate would be of roughly equal power to the House of Commons and that its primary purpose would be to represent our provinces in the federal decision-making process. That promise was thought to have been kept by giving the Senate powers which would make it effective in dealing with the population control of that lower House. But as we know now from the experience we've had with the history of our country, what happened was that the appointment process and the patronage that ensued had us establish a Senate that did not represent the provinces, did not fulfill that need for balance in our federal system, and consequently was unable to, as it should have been unable to, put forth and make judgments with the powers that it was given legislatively.

So we stand here today, for the first time in history, the first time in a Canadian province, the first time in our nation, to propose a move that I believe will allow us to see take place in Canada an upper House that will finally give us our birthright, finally bring to us that which was promised at the beginning of our great nation. Mr. Speaker, if only from that historic perspective, I think this Bill is a move in the direction required.

But there is perhaps a much more important reason that we have today to move towards this Senate selection Act, and that is that in this nation that has evolved so much since that 1867 day when we were established as a country, we have evolved

provinces in the largest free nation in the world, from one end to the other, with . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, in the House. Perhaps we could have negotiations and discussions elsewhere. Thank you.

Mr. Minister.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was mentioning, we have established a basis in which there is on one side of our country the maritime Atlantic provinces with differences, with desires, with goals and aspirations which the citizens of that province have and which they want to meet within our country. And on this side of our country, in terms of distance, we too have those desires and those differences and those unique aspects of Canada which make us a major benefit to this nation as a whole.

We are, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, the only free nation of this size in the world and, therefore, the only free nation of this size in the world without an upper House to give us that equal say in the family that we have brought together for the future of the nation. We are therefore, at this time in our country, spread from coast to coast with evolved provinces who are able, capable, and willing to deal with the responsibilities constitutionally given them, in a position where we require more than at any time in history, in my opinion, more than even during those beginnings at Confederation when provinces asked for and received a guarantee that we should have that upper House to balance the control of the lower House -- we have that need today.

Mr. Speaker, you were part of the committee, as was the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs and the hon. Member for Lacombe, that with myself and other members who are not here today, not in this Assembly at this time, had an opportunity to visit every province, every caucus in every province, every territory; to talk with Canadians from one end of this country to the other; to talk with Prime Ministers, the current and former Prime Minister, with ambassadors from other nations about the structures of their government and how they might be applicable to us, with Senators and Members of Parliament; and then from one end of Alberta to the other to talk to Albertans, to ask how they believed this nation could be made even greater and how we could fulfill our responsibilities to the nation and our responsibilities to each other in this province. As you know, Mr. Speaker, from your experience on that committee, there was no question about the direction Albertans wanted us to take, and that was towards an elected, effective, and equal Senate, elected being the primary goal, because the citizens said to us, even where there were differences on the other E's, that election is required for us to have faith that the opinions we have will be taken to Ottawa and will be part of that federal decision-making process.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that while many of my colleagues may find it difficult to find merit in opposition arguments from time to time, I think there often are some. But I cannot say that about the Member for Edmonton-Highlands' speech today. I believe that those remarks that were made were a very feeble attempt to underline an historic NDP position, which is central control of the nation, a belief that we need to be run on a population basis. And while that hasn't been stated today, I would suspect that the support that doesn't seem to be there for this historic Bill that was speciously dealt with by any suggestion that this is for the rich or the powerful or the influential is, in

fact, nothing but that: a specious attempt to underline the historic position of that party nationally. Mr. Speaker, I don't know how any objective Albertan, any objective Canadian, can say when looking at this Bill that we do anything to underline what I would agree has been an historic, patronage-ridden Senate Chamber, but rather this province and this government, and at one time this Assembly, have taken an historic move to move in a completely different direction.

I would say in answering the second question I posed at the beginning of my remarks -- how does this Bill move in that direction? -- that we should take a look to our neighbours to the south. In the evolution of the American states there was a Senate established in the early stages. But it was a Senate that was not elected; it was a senate that was appointed by state Legislatures for a time, and in different ways in different states. It took one state to stand up and say: we will elect our Senator. It took one state to do that in order to push Senate reform through that nation very quickly and to establish an elected Senate that was democratic and that, in fact, was equal and effective in that nation. This province today, in a very different system but in the same way, is doing that today with this Bill 11, this Bill which will allow our children, will allow those citizens of our country to know that in this family that we have we are represented in that national decision-making process by the will of the people, not by the whim or by the choice or, in many cases, by the good objective choice of the Prime Minister of the day. That's not good enough. The people want this right to vote, and we are establishing that.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Premier who has led this battle in Canada, who for the first time in this nation has established a priority with Senate reform which will move us in this direction. We have put in place here something that I believe other provinces will look to and where the citizens of the other provinces will say to their elected people, "Can we not, too, have an elected person that represents us in that federal decision-making process?" I think we've established a Bill that we're speaking to here today which will say to our national government: "If you want to have an influence in the direction of Senate reform, look how the people of Alberta are moving and look how quickly this change is taking place. Should we not establish those discussions immediately?" That's been realized by Meech Lake; it's been pushed effectively by our Premier and our intergovernmental affairs minister, but this Bill will make it a reality that has to be dealt with tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday many of us watched, I think, on television the replays of 20 years ago when Neil Armstrong stepped out of the module that landed on the moon. He then said those historic words which I'm sure we're all aware of, "That's one small step for a man, one giant [step] for mankind." I don't know about other members of this Assembly, but there was still that feeling of excitement 20 years after the day when I saw that yesterday. I believe today we should have that kind of excited feeling here in this Assembly with respect to Bill 11, and that we should proudly -- members on all sides of the House -- see this as the day we helped to change our nation for the better.

There have been many Albertans who have participated in the evolution of this. There is a great feeling out there among those Albertans that they are doing just that. I quote just briefly, Mr. Speaker, from a book called *A Passion for Canada*, by Alexander Rose. He wrote a poem -- it's very short; a couple of words -- where he said:

Triple "E" Senate
 Honour, integrity, wisdom, courage.
 Soul, spirit, vision.
 Balance-wheel;
 Pilot.
 House of peers.

Some of those words, I think, define the feelings that we should have with respect to this.

We now have a chance to dream about what our nation should be. This Bill gives us this chance. This minister has given us the opportunity. I ask all members to support the Bill and to be proud on this historic day.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In addressing the Bill today, at first I'd like to congratulate the minister of intergovernmental affairs for bringing forward the Bill -- it's been a long time coming, and I don't mean that as far as just the government; I just mean as far as western Canada is concerned, there's been a lot of thinking about it -- and also the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, who chaired the committee that did such good work in bringing the issue to the floor politically here in Alberta. Certainly, as the hon. minister from Medicine Hat pointed out, Senate reform has been with us a very, very long time.

Actually, the Triple E is what our forefathers looked at, and they did, I think, accomplish two of these: effective and the equal; equal as, of course, in their opinion at that time. If you look at Canada as it existed at that date, the Senate was split four ways with equal numbers from each of the four quarters: Upper Canada, Lower Canada, maritime Canada, and western Canada. And it served its purpose. It was a counterbalance then to the heavily populated centre, as the population is today. But of course after 100 years and a rather more stable population growth pattern, it's obvious that the four regions are not what we or many people would call equal. Although there are still a number of Triple E supporters I have found that think the regions are still a better way rather than having the provinces equally represented, for fear that the provinces might be just a little too chauvinistic, I think I'll go along with the provinces who have an equal representation rather than the regions.

It's always rather interesting to know which political party, if you study Canadian history, champions a reformed Senate. It always seems to follow by the party that won the election with a huge majority a few years earlier. What happens is that the Liberal of the day, if you want to call it, back in the late '60s suddenly saw Mr. Trudeau take over and after three years realized that no matter what you did out in the provinces, you were sort of getting towed along by your nose. In fact, the first Triple E group I was ever associated with was Mr. Gordon Gibson, the political Liberal leader from British Columbia, and Mr. Izzy Asper, the Liberal leader of Manitoba, in 1971, just three years after the '68 Trudeau landslide. It was rather interesting; it was about two or three years after the Mulroney landslide that suddenly all the western Conservatives decided we should have an elected Senate. So I think it's just human nature, Mr. Speaker, to realize that although you may sit year after year thinking, "Oh, if I could only change Ottawa, things would change," but when you do change Ottawa, they don't change. As the French say, the more they change, the less they change.

The fact is that we have to get down to an elected Senate,

and we have to try to go for equal representation. However, I don't quite share with the hon. Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs minister the idea that it's hooked that tightly to Meech Lake. In fact, I have read one rather learned treatise that says that the lines of an agreement and its stipulation for Senate appointments will go on after Meech Lake could be killed. In other words, the right for the provinces to nominate Senators to be appointed exists beyond the deadline of the Meech Lake accord. But maybe we're getting into splitting hairs, Mr. Speaker, because what we're after here is a good, effective election that will somehow or another have tremendous force in getting the Prime Minister to appoint the winner of the election. And as to whether or not it is, as Deborah Grey, that other great right-winger, said -- as the Member for Medicine Hat I'm sure knows -- that actually Meech Lake has destroyed Senate reform, or whether we would take my argument that Meech Lake is almost irrelevant to Senate reform, I don't think it matters for the discussion of the Bill at hand. What we want to do with this Bill is craft something so perfect politically and legally that the Prime Minister cannot weasel out or get out in any way, shape, or form. What we have to do today in this House, or the next few days, is craft a net no shark can get out of. We have to put it together.

To that end, I want to say that I support the idea of a second reading, but I think it would be wise to look at a few things that I think give the Prime Minister every chance to weasel or back out. Regardless of the political faith -- right now it happens to be one who calls himself PC, but it could be a Liberal and, heaven forbid, it could even be NDP -- the point is that we want something so tight that he cannot get out of it. When I look over this Bill, we have a few things in it that I think allow the Prime Minister a chance to say: "It's a joke. What are you trying to do? What's going on here?" I won't put them necessarily in order of importance, but one of the first is that we have argued for some time -- and there is, of course, a political side and a legal side that you have to craft to make it impossible for the hon. Mr. Mulroney to get out of. Let's take about three areas I wanted to touch on. One was section 8, the deciding who can run for the Senate. The other is section 15 on how Senate elections are financed, and the other, of course, is the timing of the election. I won't go into the clauses, but those are three areas that may cause us trouble if the Prime Minister wants to, say, ignore the result of the election.

The first, section 8, says -- and although I know the NDP mentioned the \$4,000 deposit really is not fair, and I'd like to criticize the people across there as much as anybody for the \$4,000 deposit, the \$4,000 deposit is nothing more than the amount of property the person has to have before the Prime Minister will appoint him or her. So we might as well have it in the form of a deposit as any other way, otherwise a Senator cannot be appointed. So let's quit worrying about that. Has to be 30 years of age: that's something you can't criticize anybody for either, because that's already in the election. But what is interesting in that crafting is that it says that no MLA or no MP can run for the Senate. Now, Mr. Speaker...

AN HON. MEMBER: That hurt, Nick? Come on; get Alex Kindy up there.

MR. TAYLOR: Yeah, that could hurt a lot. That could've hurt a lot. As you know, Mr. Speaker, I've had the enjoyment of losing more elections than anybody else, and it'd be rather a

feather in my hat to lose a Senate election. Who knows?

The fact is, though, that means that nobody in this House or no MP can be allowed to be a Senator unless they resign. And that seems ridiculous, because if you study the appointment of Senators back for the last 100 years, the largest pool they pull out of are the MLAs or the MPs that are currently in progress. It doesn't seem right to me -- it seems silly to me « to say that the Member for Medicine Hat [interjection] or the Member f o r . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: . . . Westlock-Sturgeon or the Member for Edmonton-Norwood or a federal member cannot be a member. Seems to me the first thing the Prime Minister will say -- I know I would say, if I was in his boots: "What? You removed 121 people of the political life of the province that I could very well want to appoint, and said they couldn't be. What kind of an election are you running? Who are you kidding?" So in other words, we have to plug that hole now.

Somebody will say, "Well, you have to resign as an MLA or an MP to run for MP or MLA of the opposite House." But the point is: we're not running for Senate; we're running to be nominated for Senate. If that day should come -- and I would cheer just as loud as anybody in here if the day comes when the winner is an automatic appointment to the Senate -- of course, well and good. Then we can say that person should not be an MP or an MLA to get their nomination. But to do it right now is to open the door for the Prime Minister to say: "What are you trying to tell me? You restricted by 120 names my choice, so it's a phony election."

Let's go on that for a bit further. We can go on a bit further on that particular line. Is it legal? Will it stand up under a challenge under the Charter of Rights? Who would have egg on their face? We'd all have egg on our face if we passed a resolution to have a Senate election and some smart lawyer -- and there are some around, in all parties; they don't all make their living off the public purse -- might take it to court and say that by saying you could not run because you're an MLA or an MP to get nominated is against the law, the Charter of Rights. So why take that chance? What are we worried about? What? Are we worried that some MLA or some MP could win the election? Then on top of that, winning the election is no guarantee they're going to get anywhere. So what are you asking? In other words, I think both politically and legally we are jeopardizing the possibility of one of the most significant things this Legislature's been able to do in the last 25 years; that is, put together the first elected Senate candidates. So why take the risk? What's the idea? Is there some manipulating, unseen hand behind that they're worried about an MP or MLA winning this election?

Let's go on a step further. As the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands already pointed out, it's something for the rich. Section 15 says if you're nominated by a party, you can collect 20 times as much per person than if you're nominated...

MRS. OSTERMAN: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but I'm afraid we'll be hearing the same speech twice. I would draw our attention to *Beauchesne* 659, which really says, "It is not regular on this occasion, however, to discuss in detail the clauses of the bill."

MR. TAYLOR: I won't do it then, Mr. Speaker. It's a good point because, as a matter of fact, if I were Prime Minister, the hon. member might be one: of the first nominees I would consider should be in this election.

The point is well taken though. I won't use the number. I'll just talk about the idea. This election allows the party candidate, the nominee of the party, to collect 20 times as much, \$1,500 versus \$30,000, if they are the official member of a party. Now, one of the things I think any of us who have been associated with the elected Senate movement for some years -- and I think in the hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs' recommendation was that caucuses for Senators should be regional; they should not be political. If they're political -- and bless their little pointed heads, if a Tory or a Liberal is nominated and wins and then owes it to the party, there are all sorts of little strings and things that can be pulled. I'd like to think of my Senator as being independent of any party. He might have come from a party, but they're not gangin' for a judgeship. They're not working for an ambassadorship. They're not working for something at the United Nations. In other words, when they caucus, they hopefully caucus by province and not by party. This is one of the worst things when we look at the Bill. We are trying to give an inborn advantage to the ones that are nominated by parties over the ones that are not by, as I say, allowing them to collect 20 times as much per person, aside from the ordinary suspicion that maybe this is a way for Esso to buy a Senator.

Lastly -- and this is one I touch on a bit, because I'm not so sure that it goes on and on -- is that having the election at the same time as the civic elections I think takes away a bit. I know you say you're saving some money, but democracy was never cheap. If we wanted to save money, we could put in a province manager that reports to Mr. Mulroney once a year and don't even bother with ours. It's a sort of sitting manager type of thing. I think the Senate warrants having its own election basis, but I must admit that that point of the other two I'm talking about does not have the political and legal implications the first two points have in destroying the election. This is what I'm worried about. I've worked long and hard, as you know, and I take no real particular pride in being the first elected one to bring it up in this House, but I'd hate to see the results blown apart because the Prime Minister wiggled out the back door and said, "Under the Charter of Rights it's wrong, because you restricted some people from running and you've given preferential rates for others as far as money is collected." This is what is so important. We want all the people of Alberta -- what kind of egg will we have on our face if the normal 40 percent turns out for civic elections and, as has been suggested by some columnists, 20 or 30 percent of them, say, spoil their ballots? Mr. Mulroney's going to roll over and laugh and laugh and laugh if we get about a 20 to 30 percent effective vote out. So we need an effective vote, and we need something all parties support.

I would like to make this proposal to the hon. proposer of the Bill before I sit down: that he be willing to strike a committee with all members of the House to see if we could make this a Bill that would get unanimous support. Let's take three days or so to try. It'll only take a few days. We've got an amendment period coming up in committee stage, and I think with a few amendments this could be a unanimous Bill. Then we'd have something the Prime Minister couldn't move away. We'd have something everyone out there in the province would take an interest in, and we truly would be marching forward, as the Minis-

ter of Consumer and Corporate Affairs said, in being true pioneers. Let's not lose this advantage to write history by petty little turns and twists in the thing to try to manoeuvre or rule from the background as to who is going to be the nominee for Senate.

Thank you.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is with a sense of history -- I think the same sense of history I had when I arrived at the Legislature first in 1979 -- that I rise today to speak in support of Bill 11. It is with this sense of history that I acknowledge the efforts of our Premier and our Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, our now Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and all those who worked so diligently to finally bring to fruition today a Bill that sets in motion an election in the province of Alberta for the person or persons who would be designated as our nominees to the Senate of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I rise as the MLA for Three Hills particularly to speak about my constituency's role, that I'm very proud of. But I want to just quote something that I think really speaks to how our constituency views things. It's a quote from Will Rogers.

There is nothing as easy as denouncing. It don't take much to see that something is wrong, but it takes some eyesight to see what will put it right again.

I think that eyesight has certainly been evident in the Three Hills constituency, and I would note today that the chairman for The Canadian Committee for a Triple E Senate, Mr. Bert Brown, is in the members' gallery, along with his wife Alice, who I know has to go a long way to put up with the kind of time and effort Bert has put into it. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure it's the appropriate time -- I know we usually have to go to the Introduction of Special Guests -- but all members will acknowledge their presence. I thank you for that indulgence, Mr. Speaker.

Today is the kind of day, I think, that we should look at the difference one, two, three, four, five people can make in the history of a country. I know that hon. members have spoken about the amount of time and the number of times Senate reform has been discussed, and yes, we will all acknowledge that since probably the day Canada came into being and our parliamentary system was struck, Senate reform has been discussed, because after all, after we've invented something, we immediately seek to make it better. But, Mr. Speaker, at no time in our history do I recall an effort of a small group of individuals to actually make it happen. I recall back in, I guess, about 1982 -- and the Browns will forgive me if I don't have my dates exactly right -- when the discussion went on, and I recall their involvement in trying to better circumstances in agriculture. Then, of course, you come to the conclusion that in order to change things in this country, one of the things we have to have is a better balance in decision-making and representation. That leads to the the type of, I guess, recommendations that eventually became the Triple E and Bert Brown's involvement.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

It was with some anguish, I think, that it was sought after until discussions with, yes, a political entity. Our Progressive Conservative Association in Three Hills said, "By gosh, we do believe in the Triple E, and we believe in your efforts." The very first Alberta committee for a Triple E was formed by the members of our constituency association, and there was indeed a society formed. Well, it didn't take long for Mr. Brown to make

us all realize that as this thing caught fire, obviously we needed a Canadian identity. Certainly those of us who were first involved with the Canadian identity are very proud to take our places in history as a part of that.

Mr. Speaker, I don't raise it today to just brag about the constituency, though obviously I am doing that. What I want to raise with all members: when at times we get discouraged in terms of bringing things to the Legislature, I think we should use this occasion to remember that a few people can make a difference. And when we look at this historic occasion in the Alberta Legislature, I know the things that will come to pass as a result of the passage of this Bill, and the eyes of all Canada will be on us when we in fact carry out that election and have our nominee or nominees for the Senate of this country. We will be reminded that a few people in fact began the effort, put it into a more formal application, and that when our constituents, whoever they are across the province of Alberta, come forward with an idea that seems so huge as not to be possible, so enormous in its implications as not to be possible -- I mean, how can just a handful of people make it happen? -- as MLAs we have a responsibility to carry those ideas forward; we have a responsibility to support our citizens. And one day, as we see is happening today, there will be other enormously positive ideas that eventually come forward to the Alberta Legislature. Other MLAs will stand in their place and say, "I am part of a historic occasion today." If they're as fortunate as me, they might well be able to say that the first society was formed in the Three Hills constituency.

Mr. Speaker, we need to get on with the job. As with all things that happen in Alberta, we're usually pretty understated because we're busy getting the job done. I for one look forward to the passage of this Bill and getting the bloody job done.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to participate in the debate today. I've very much enjoyed the comments of the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, the comments of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and, indeed, the comments of the Minister of Career Development and Employment. But try as I might, Mr. Speaker, I just can't seem to get as excited as ministers that have spoken.

MR. PAYNE: Try again.

MR. SIGURDSON: I've tried and tried again, hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek. I have tried on many occasions.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

You know, in fact during the course of the last election . . . I recall coming in here just before the election was called, and the Premier stood up and introduced Bill 1. That was going to be the Senatorial Selection Act. A whole bunch of folk in this Assembly were very excited by that. I thought, well, that's the Premier's choice for Bill 1, and I went out during the campaign and spoke to my constituents, talked on doorsteps, walked around my constituency. I said, "Well, how excited are you about a senatorial election?" You know, I tried. I tried to show

them that the Premier was concerned about a senatorial election and the Conservatives were concerned about a senatorial election. But you know, those weren't the issues that were of concern to my constituents. [interjection] It sort of assisted me, hon. Member for Cardston, because it showed my constituents how out of touch the Premier was with the needs and the goals and the aspirations of average Albertans.

I even sent out a questionnaire in my MLA report to all my constituents, asking them to list in order of importance which topic -- and I gave them 10 topics -- had the highest priority for them. Senate reform was included in that list. Where did it end up? Well, it ended up after honesty in government. It ended up after unemployment. It was after medical funding. It followed environmental concerns. It followed the deficit, something you guys get excited about. It followed education funding. It followed hunger in schools. It followed the national sales tax. It finished in ninth place. That's how important it was to my constituents. That's how important it is to my constituents. They rated it not me. If I were allowed the opportunity to rate it it would be 10 out of 10. But the number 10 spot was reserved -- and I regret this one, quite frankly -- for rural depopulation. I think that's more important than Senate reform. But there you have it. The constituents of Edmonton-Belmont have responded back through a questionnaire that went out and said that this one ranks number nine.

But regardless of what the constituents of Edmonton-Belmont feel, regardless of the level of priority all Albertans give Senate reform, this government is going ahead, pushing ahead with Senate reform. It sort of reminds me of the Don Quixote de la Mancha kind of mentality. Here's the government thinking there are all kinds of dragons out in the forest and they've got to go out and tilt and slay a dragon, but the fact is that it's just another windmill. We're even going out to this joust with a faulty lance. You see, Bill 11 is the lance we're going to attack this windmill with. Bill 11, quite frankly, I think is faulty. The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon pointed out some of the problems that he saw with the Bill -- problems we can't do very much about but nonetheless they're still problems that are there. We can't elect anybody under the age of 30. We can't elect anybody over the age of 75. We can't nominate anybody with less than \$4,000 of real property. These are requirements of, I believe, the 1867 Constitution Act something the Alberta Legislature hasn't the power to amend. So while we have something that may be constitutionally correct all members in this Assembly have to ask themselves if we're going to support something that is seemingly inconsistent, then, with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, signed in 1982, that guarantees equitable rights for all Canadians, because this Bill doesn't guarantee that at all.

So we're going ahead. We're going ahead with a Bill that the government believes is a little bit better than nothing at all. A little bit of change is better than no change at all. It's sort of tantamount I think, to trying to bake a cake. You put it in the oven 30 seconds at a time hoping that you're going to eventually get cake, but no matter how often you pull it out Mr. Speaker, it's not going to be cake. You're still going to have batter. And that's part of the problem. We're not going to have anything guaranteed. The Prime Minister of Canada has said: "I don't accept the appointment process. I don't accept your nominee if it's only one individual. I want the right to refuse the winner of this election." He reserves unto himself the right to refuse the election of the winner. That's just in case the Member for

Westlock-Sturgeon decides to resign as the member of the Legislature for that great constituency and chooses to run. Should he happen to be elected, so that he has some security as a Senator of Canada, then the Prime Minister can turn around and say: "No. No, I'm sorry. I'm not going to appoint to a lifelong position another Liberal. There are enough Liberals in the Senate."

AN HON. MEMBER: Too many.

MR. SIGURDSON: Hon. member, not only are there too many Liberals; there are too many Conservatives. You see, the House is outdated. It's outlived its purpose.

MR. SPEAKER: Through the Chair, hon. member.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your intervention, because these people are really loud today.

Anyhow, you know, we've got a Bill before us that's going to create an elected position, an elected position for one election. So if you're a young individual Albertan running for this and you should happen to be successful, you're going to have the lifelong position until you're age 75, unless we have magically at some time in the future perhaps some Senate reform. One election. As politicians we go out and ask people to give us something they can only give every once in a while, and that's their vote. Yet we're asking Albertans to go out and vote once and only once for this one individual to sit in a Chamber that has limited usefulness, or a lot of uselessness, for a long period of time. No recall, no re-election, no accountability, no accessibility: that's what we've got. So we're going to have an election; that's the one "E" in the Triple E Senate.

Effective? This Bill doesn't make the Senate any more effective than what we've got right now. It doesn't mean there are going to be great changes to the role the Senate plays inside our bicameral House. There's; nothing there that's going to make this body any more effective than it is today.

Equal? Well, that's a quantitative measurement; it's certainly not a qualitative measurement. In fact, if I were a Conservative Member of Parliament I think I might be a little upset. A Conservative Member of Parliament from Alberta might be a little upset that we're suggesting they've been unequal or ineffective in their representation. Because inside the House of Commons, Mr. Speaker, we've got 24 members of the Progressive Conservative Party who represent Alberta constituencies. Now, what happens is that of the Progressive Conservative federal caucus, there are 169 members. To take a percentage of that you get 14 percent of the Tory caucus that comes from Alberta. That's far more than 10 percent. If we want to have something that's equal inside the federal upper House, inside the Senate, we're only asking for 10 percent but currently inside the House of Commons the Conservative Party has 14 percent of the total membership of the House of Commons. And it seems according to this government, through this piece of legislation, Bill 11, that that 14 percent of membership can't affect sufficient change. Westerners feel left out. Why? Because 14 percent of the federal Conservative caucus is made up of Albertans? Mr. Speaker, if I were a federal Tory MP, I'd be very upset with this Bill, because what it says is that we're unable to make Albertans feel part of the process, we with our significant minority of membership inside the federal Conservative caucus.

MR. SPEAKER: It's the Senate, not the House of Commons.

MR. SIGURDSON: I know. Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. What I'm trying to address is that the "equal" portion of this Bill, the so-called "equal" portion, is not going to make any significant change in terms of our representation. I tried to draw the analogy of the representation inside the House of Commons, which has 14 percent, to the proposed Senate equal portion, which is going to have but 10 percent.

So, Mr. Speaker, this Bill isn't going to be all that terribly equitable. I'm not sure this Bill is going to do anything in terms of effectiveness. But we are going to have an election. We're going to have an election, according to the minister, on October 16, an election that quite frankly, I think, is going to take away from the issues that are at hand to municipal candidates for office. I think that's regrettable. There are very important issues that have to be considered on October 16 and prior to that that municipal politicians are going to have to address, and it's going to be confusing. It's going to be, I think, a bit problematic in that we're going to have too many issues to be concerned about on that day. Mr. Speaker, I'm one of the people that still believes in the Triple A Senate, one of the people in my caucus that believes the Senate is a body that's no longer required. We have opposition members that can ring bells for long periods of time inside the House of Commons. Indeed, the Conservative caucus, when it was the Official Opposition going back a few years, rang the bells for days and days trying to draw attention to certain problems of Liberal legislation that were there. It was effective. The Senate didn't do a blessed thing. It was the opposition that took a sober first look -- not a sober second look; a sober first look -- at the legislation, and that was the role of the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's about time we got on with things that my constituents and, I think, all Albertans feel are far more important than the Senatorial Selection Act. Things such as unemployment and education funding and medical funding are what's important and not this attempt for electoral reform at the Senate.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, it certainly gives me pleasure to speak on second reading of the Senatorial Selection Act. I want to say this first of all with regards to this Act and this whole concept of the Senate. My first confrontation with the concept of the Senate was back in 1959 when I returned to the University of Alberta. A number of my colleagues at that time were very active in political affairs on campus, and each week we had a debate and tried to resolve many issues that we thought were significant. One of them was a resolution with regards to the Senate, to reform the Senate. I remember the frustration of researching that particular topic and discussing it openly in a debate, thinking about it since that period of time and often feeling there was no way the Senate could be reformed by asking the House of Commons to bring about that accomplishment. It just seemed like an impossible task within that political forum.

The question was: was there a different avenue or a different approach we could use? I think before us today is that approach. Where we are able to elect a Senator, that will be the seed from which we can elect many more Senators across this nation so we have a Senate in Canada that's elected, that's effective, and I hope at some point in time we're able as Canadians to look on that broader view and make it possible so we have equal representation from each of the regions of this nation called Canada. I would like to see in the future that the

Northwest Territories and Yukon are also involved in that type of representation in our Canadian parliamentary system.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

The question was raised by my hon. colleague that just spoke before me with regards to accountability. Will this person be accountable? He will be. He or she will be accountable when we elect someone that will air some of the concerns with regard to western Canada. Concerns that are deep seated not only in Alberta but in our four western provinces in themselves will hold the person accountable, because he or she will be speaking to some issues that have been latent and not dealt with for many, many years. Finally we will have someone who will be able to speak with an elected authority. Appointed persons over these years have never been able to accomplish any kind of accountability or impact on that federal system. But an elected person carries with him or her some threat when they not only stand up in the Senate but speak to the many audiences which will be readily available to that person throughout Canada, from its east to the west, because people in Canada will want to know what this new person wishes to contribute to improving the representative fabric of our nation. That in turn -- and that's the second point about making the Senate more effective -- will make the Senate certainly a more effective body in terms of representing the views of Canadians. But we're going to plant the seed with this Act, a seed that will have long-term ramifications and will change the history of Canada, as I see it.

Besides saying that, the other reason I wanted to stand in my place today as the Minister of Municipal Affairs was to look at that possibility of the election for a Senator being held with the municipal elections in October 1989. We as a department are preparing ourselves, and are preparing ourselves to work with the municipalities of this province so that we can carry out that election if necessary. We're doing two major things which will help them move through the process so that the senatorial selection process can move with their election process with the greatest amount of ease and facility.

The first thing is that we have in place at present an educational program and an information package for the returning officers across the province. We're working with the municipalities to train the personnel, and we've committed ourselves to doing that. Some of that process is already in place and is being implemented and is being received very, very well by the municipalities. The second thing we're doing is committing ourselves to paying 50 percent of the cost of the election where there is an active election being held. In those regions where there is acclamation or other reasons -- such as on a reserve -- where the municipalities will be confronted with costs, we will be picking up 100 percent of the costs in those respective areas. Now, those are the two major things we're committing ourselves to as a government in terms of assisting the municipalities. We will do everything in our power to make sure that our obligation is well taken and that we do not interfere with the municipal election process which will elect people to local governments across the province.

I as the minister have had very few complaints with regard to the possibility of holding the senatorial election with the municipal elections. When those people called and information was provided to them that we would carry out the two steps I have just mentioned, the process was more acceptable. One of the reasons I wanted to stand in my place here today was to give

assurance to the municipalities that we will try with all our power to assist them and enhance the process as well as we can to remove any difficulties they may face.

If the hon. members in this Legislature or in the opposition have some concerns which they feel need to be alleviated, I think it is only right and proper that they bring it to the attention of the minister. I have had some municipalities raise questions with me, and as I said, we have responded to them and have alleviated those particular fears. I feel there are some very positive things that can happen by the senatorial election being held with the municipal election. I think it will be a motivating force for more people to come out and vote and participate in that election process. That, to me, is certainly a benefit in itself.

To the municipalities where we are assisting them with the costs -- that will certainly assist them financially and take away somewhat the burden of costs of their own election as well as meeting our commitment to pay our costs in the election.

So, Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to speak in favour of second reading and, as the Minister of Municipal Affairs, assure this House that as a government we will accept our responsibilities and will alleviate any difficulties the municipalities may have when and if they're asked to take on the obligation of carrying out the senatorial selection process.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to be very brief on this matter in light of a number of other . . . [some applause] I'll sit down if I can get that kind of applause. [more applause]

AN HON. MEMBER: Well, Sheldon, what are you going to do now?

MR. FOX: Don't be buffaloed, Sheldon. Don't be buffaloed.

MR. CHUMIR: I changed by mind.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Typical Liberal.

MR. CHUMIR: I'm not going to deprive you of these pearls of wisdom.

Mr. Speaker, let it be clear that the government has let the cause of Senate reform down very badly by agreeing to the Meech Lake accord, with its requirement for unanimity. Nevertheless, Bill 11 is better than nothing, and I plan to support it in second reading, although I and my colleagues disagree with some of the provisions and see no magic benefits from the election of a Senate nominee. As a means, however, of serving as a catalyst for Senate reform, the election of a nominee, in my view, stands at a level of about two or three on a scale of 10.

The main advantage I see to electing a nominee, assuming the nominee is accepted, is that it destabilizes the current situation with respect to the Senate. In particular it will create a focus, particularly a focus of the media, on an elected nominee if he or she becomes a Senator. Such a Senator will have more credibility, and pressure will be put on the whole system. Nobody knows where this will lead. Perhaps it will lead to emulation in other appointments and ultimately reform. Perhaps it will lead, in fact, to nothing. But the reality is that we have nothing to lose to use every means, every piece of ammunition

available to us, in order to point out the defects of the Senate situation at the present time and the need for change.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Now, I mentioned my estimation of two or three on a scale of 10 insofar as this mechanism is concerned. I would like to compare it with what the government should have done, and that is to use the Meech Lake accord, the desires of other parts of the country, as a bargaining chip in order to accomplish Senate reform. That would have been the wise thing to agree to rather than giving up all our negotiating position and then saying that we're going to talk later. I find it hard to believe that anyone who would have entered into an agreement like that can have a solid commitment to Senate reform, quite frankly. The reality is that the negotiation of the Meech Lake accord has sold the farm on Senate reform. We've given up all our leverage, and in particular the requirement of unanimity has moved us from a situation in which the accomplishment of Senate reform has gone from the mere difficult to the almost impossible.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that this government, if it were interested in giving Senate reform the biggest boost possible, would withdraw from the Meech Lake accord and use the aspirations of other provinces as leverage in the negotiation to accomplish what our goals are. This type of hardheaded negotiation would, I believe, rank as a 10 out of 10 on the scale of possibility of success. There are no guarantees, but in terms of the tools that are available to us in a democratic confederation, that would serve as the greatest avenue of potential success.

Now, I'd like very briefly just to reiterate a few of the problems that have been alluded to by other speakers simply to emphasize my view that this is, in fact, an extremely flawed Bill. There is much, much room for improvement, particularly in terms of the eligibility aspects. The rendering of MLAs and MPs ineligible to serve as a candidate for nomination is at odds with the Constitution and with the Charter of Rights. There is nothing to prevent an MP or an MLA running as a nominee for election and then, if appointed, resigning their seat. I find this provision to be totally unacceptable. Similarly, the enhanced role of parties, which is given by the very favourable financial benefit accorded to donations to parties, is at odds with what we conceive of as a need for a less party-oriented senatorial body. A party-oriented senatorial body is more likely to make decisions on the basis of party loyalties, on the same basis as in the House of Commons. It may be unavoidable, given the nature of people in democracies, but it's certainly not desirable, and this Bill adds fuel to the fire of that likelihood.

Finally in terms of problems, and not exhaustively, I would comment that intention to hold this legislation along with the municipal elections is, I believe, unfair to municipal politicians, who deserve the full attention of the electorate at that time. I think there are other options. I think the expense in relation to the importance of this particular issue is relatively nominal, and I say "relatively nominal" in relation to the importance, and I would opt in favour of that.

Now, we will deal with these and other concerns in committee, Mr. Speaker, and I would just close by stating that notwithstanding the flaws this Bill is better than nothing, and I support the concept, although it can be approved.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Cardston, followed by Calgary-

Forest Lawn.

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to stand and speak in support of Bill 11 today, a Bill that is historic and one that will be the beginning of a process which will overcome many of the inequalities we have had in Canada in a very major way. As I listened to some of the opposition members speak today, I was concerned and disturbed by some of the observations they made, specifically the so-called survey that was done by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont and the fact that Senate reform would come in ninth place in a count of 10 in importance in his constituency. I'm concerned that the hon. member would not have been informing his constituents of the benefit of Senate reform. Although all of us are concerned about the social issues that his constituents listed in a priority above Senate reform, I think it's important to note that if we had had Senate reform for the last 122 years in this country, those social issues would not be of such prime importance today because Alberta would be in a better position fiscally, financially, socially, and in every respect, if we had had an even shot in Confederation, with an equal Senate. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order in the House.

MR. ADY: Well, I'd like to go on to say that I keep listening for what initiative it is that the ND Party has for Senate reform or for any type of parliamentary reform that would give us a more equal position in Confederation. I keep listening and I don't hear it. I guess there just isn't one. They don't have a position. They talk about abolishing the Senate and letting the opposition serve to do that. Well, I'm not sure that that would work very well. We could be distorted so badly in a region with opposition members that they would be very ineffective. I don't think we would have a system in place that would be effective with just the opposition members serving, not nearly so much as we would have with an equal and elected Senate.

Well, prior to becoming involved in this great political process, I spent many of my business years involved in a business that took me into eastern Canada, specifically to Montreal and to Toronto. During that time I often got into conversations with my colleagues there that I worked with about the inequities that went on between central Canada and the so-called regions. During these years I have kept those acquaintances open, and from time to time we still meet and discuss those same issues. It's interesting that recently a very respected gentleman from eastern Canada made the observation to me that "The bicameral system we have in Canada has served us so well for the last 122 years. Why would we need a change? After all, it has served us extremely well." He went on to say that it's fine for Alberta to draw out the old chestnut once in a while, but Albertans really can't be serious about this Senate reform.

Well, I suppose we shouldn't find that too surprising. I guess it would be something I could accept too, supposing that Alberta and Saskatchewan together had 60 percent of the seats in the House of Commons and they held almost 50 percent of the seats in the Senate. Then I think that I, too, might be prepared to sit back and say that I think all is well and let's not make an issue out of this whole thing.

But that's not really the way it has to be. We have a country that has grown, and our Constitution has to grow with it. No law is eternal. The law must change with society. We don't ride with horses and buggies anymore, and we don't use in-

kwells for our pens. We don't expect women to stay at home anymore and be subservient to men. This element of our Constitution is in a bygone era, and it needs to be changed. I would go so far as to argue that the Fathers of Confederation who signed the BNA Act in 1867 didn't really intend that we should have such a constrained and ineffectual Senate as we have in Canada today. They created a bicameral federal system. A federal system by its nature strives to recognize the diversity of its regions while drawing under one common government. Every federal nation then and now has a system to recognize and balance the regional interests against the interests expressed by the population centres.

But we don't have that in Canada. We missed out somewhere in that process. It's not logical, then, to assume that they intended to make Canada's federal institutions do less to represent the regions than any other federal country. That's what a 1989 Canada West Foundation study showed. Canada's population is more unevenly distributed among the regions than any other federal country, yet we have the poorest representation regionally. Mr. Speaker, we have the least. We need it changed. That's not what the Fathers of Confederation intended. So in 1908 when former Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier told the Canadian people -- and I'd like to quote from something he said.

What I would insist on is . . . that each province should stand in the Senate on the same footing, and that each province whether it be big or small should have a voice in the legislation, not according to the numerical strength of its population but according to its provincial entity.

Well, obviously we've got something that's needed fixing for a long time, and this Bill that's in the House today is the beginning of that process. Of course, I stand to support this beginning, a new beginning for Canada.

Other criticisms date back even further than that and all the years since, but nothing ever has really been done about it. We continue to labour under this inequality. So it's up to this Assembly to end the waiting. We are starting a beginning of ending that process that's been around far too long. This Bill will bring about an election that will send political shock waves throughout Canada. It'll wake those Senators out of their velvet-lined chairs and force this issue to a head once and for all.

I have reason to believe that the Alberta strategy will work. After all, it worked before. It's a proven battle plan tried by the state of Oregon. We often point to the United States as a prime example of an equal, elected, and effective Senate, but as recently as World War I the U.S. Senators were appointed by state Legislatures, much as we do here in Canada. They were not elected by the people. Oregon faced a situation much like we face today. The idea of electing Senators was favoured by some Americans, discouraged by others, and ignored by many. I wonder if we can see the parallel of what's happening today. Oregon's strategy was decried by other states as impossible, unworkable. I wonder if we've heard something like that in our Assembly here today. That very year the first elected Senators took their seats in the Senate representing Oregon. State after state followed their example, bringing in various forms of legislation to allow them, too, to elect their Senators. Nine years later, in 1913, the 17th amendment to the American Constitution was ratified, and American Senators have been elected ever since.

Mr. Speaker, in 1989 in a Gallup poll, contrary to what my

eastern friend told me and contrary to what we hear from our opposition members here in the House today, 62 percent of Albertans said that the system is not just fine the way it is. They wanted an elected Senate. I'm not sure where some of the polls come from over in the opposition rows, but that's what Albertans said. Albertans remember the frustration in the 1980 federal election when they voted overwhelmingly Conservative and went home to their television sets. Before the Alberta polls had closed, a majority Liberal government had been declared and Albertans knew they didn't have a single other forum where they could make their views heard. So they watched what happened. That loss of voice hurt Albertans, Mr. Speaker. It hurt us when the Liberals drained \$65 billion, our once-in-a-lifetime history advantage, from the province through the national energy program.

I asked my eastern friend how that happened if, as he says, the system works fine. I also asked him how he thinks that under the present system Manitoba could have hoped to save the CF-18 and become Canada's aerospace centre instead of Montreal and what Alberta can do to fight a national monetary policy that raises interest rates to stop inflation in Toronto at the expense of the vulnerable, recovering Alberta economy. How then can Albertans voice their resounding opposition to a national sales tax in a province that has never had to levy such a tax before? I didn't get a straight answer. I've never gotten a straight answer to that. But I always delight in arguing about the Triple E Senate, Mr. Speaker, because I always win. The facts are on my side.

So, Mr. Speaker, Albertans are dead serious about Senate reform. Very soon others who are not so serious are going to know just how serious we are. As our Minister of Municipal Affairs spoke earlier, he indicated that a seed had been planted. I want to go on to say that Albertans are busy watering the garden. We're going to see some things change in Canada: we're going to see an elected Senator from Alberta, and we're going to see Senate reform in Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to say at the outset that I respect the government's intention in bringing this Bill forward. I think we all in this House agree there has to be a better way of recognizing regional interests in the decision-making that goes on in this country. Albertans aren't alone.

People in the maritimes feel exactly the same way. People in the Territories, Yukon, and in all the western provinces share a similar concern. I think this Bill is brought forward with the intent of addressing that very real issue.

I also think the Bill is brought forward as a recognition of support for the Triple E Senate, and I think the government side sees this as a small step in the direction of bringing to the country an effective, equal, and . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Elected.

MR. PASHAK: . . . elected Senate. I know we've got these slogans here, right? I just wanted to catch your attention and make sure you were with me.

I've had a number of conversations with Bert Brown on the concept of a Triple E Senate, and to a certain extent I agree with what he's trying to do. In fact, I even agreed at one point to be a director of his association, although I qualified that by saying t h a t . . . [interjection]

In light of the hour, Mr. Speaker, may I adjourn debate?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member has requested leave to adjourn the debate. Those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I advise the Assembly that this evening it's proposed to deal in Committee of Supply with the estimates of the Department of the Solicitor General. I would therefore move that the Assembly stand adjourned until such time as the Committee of Supply rises and reports and that when the members assemble this evening, they do so in Committee of Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion, those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

[The House recessed at 5:28 p.m.]