

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

Title: **Thursday, July 27, 1989 2:30 p.m.**  
Date: 89/07/27

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

**PRAYERS**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, grant us a daily awareness of the precious gift of life which You have given us.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly we dedicate our lives anew to the service of our province and our country.

Amen.

**head: TABLING RETURNS AND REPORTS**

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the annual report for 1987-88 of the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file with the Assembly four copies of the report I referred to yesterday, Caring for People with HIV Infection/AIDS, a report of the Department of Health.

**head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure, sir, to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly a very dear friend from the province of Ontario. This lady served with the Rt. Hon. John Diefenbaker and served as my principal secretary for the 12 years that I was in Ottawa, and I would ask if Margaret Garrett would rise so that she could receive the warm welcome of this Legislative Assembly.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly Mr. William Hassell and his wife, Sue Hassell. Mr. Hassell is a member of the Parliament of Western Australia, and in his current role as shadow minister for health and protection of human rights, he is interested in reviewing Alberta's medical and health system and our legal and prosecution structure. I had a very interesting few minutes, although not long enough, with Mr. Hassell and Sue Hassell. They are seated in the members' gallery. I would ask them to stand and receive a very warm welcome from our Assembly.

MR. BRADLEY: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly seven members of the Pincher Creek Pathfinders. They are visiting Edmonton as part of their summer camp. They are accompanied by Miss Dorothy Boras, the commissioner for the Pincher Creek district. They're seated in the public gallery. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the members of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please in the gallery. It's inappropriate to clap. Thank you.

The Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism.

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly 10 people here from the group called Sport for Understanding, including seven from the nation of Holland. Included with the group are their leader, Mr. Lance Adamson, and the Dutch coach -- try to say that fast -- Franz Jenniskens. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly 11 students of an English as a Second Language class from the Alberta Vocational Centre. They're seated in the public gallery, and their teacher with them is Mr. Yuri Drohomirecki. I would request that they stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

**head: ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****Treasury Branches Loans**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Treasurer. When it was revealed that the Treasury Branches had loaned Peter Pocklington the entire purchase price of Palm Dairies, the superintendent of Treasury Branches at the time said that ministerial approval was not needed for the loan but that he had thought that he had told Mr. Johnston. A couple of days later, to get the story straight, he says: the Treasurer can't recall me doing so, so I must not have done it. We wondered at the time how much the Treasurer was using his influence. More importantly than that, the Treasury Branches Act allows the minister to delegate his authority to the superintendent, but nowhere, absolutely nowhere, does it say that the Treasurer cannot know what the superintendent is doing. Since yesterday we hope the Treasurer is now on top of his job. My question is: can the Treasurer tell us now if there are plans by the Treasury Branch to extend a third mortgage to West Edmonton Mall?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I think that yesterday during question period I outlined the policy which the government follows, and that is that we would not be involved with those kinds of commercial decisions. In fact, I have not informed myself further, and therefore I can't add any more, because, of course, to be consistent, we have to keep at arm's length with respect to those kinds of decisions.

Let me make it very clear, though, that when a decision is made to invest or to provide money in a loan form, obviously the fundamental characteristic of the entity must be weighed. I'm not pointing to this particular one, but in most cases you would look at the value of the assets which would secure the mortgage -- first, second, or third -- and certainly that decision would be incumbent upon the cash flow: is there enough money today and in the forecast period ahead to retire the debt? Those are the two fundamental questions which are asked. I must assume, if as the member says there's going to be an advance made by Treasury Branches to the Triple Five Corporation, that the company satisfies those tests.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm just asking the minister to go back and accept his responsibility. This is not a thousand dollar loan to Mrs. Jones; this could be potentially a \$50 million third mortgage.

My question is this: is it not true that the mortgage is part of a refinancing package that will replace a \$290 million deal that the Treasury Branches joined in 1985 but that our status -- and this is a serious matter -- is going to go from a callable loan to a third mortgage? I want to know from the Treasurer: what kind of lending practice is this?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, if I had that information or if I felt I was responsible to get that information, then of course I'd provide the data to the member. What I can say, however, is that we practise the very simple principle that credit decisions are made by the Treasury Branch. We do not want to interfere with their decisions. If we did, it would be a myriad of second-guessing what the investment officers were doing, and that just isn't appropriate. I can assure the Assembly and assure all members in Alberta that in fact full recourse will be taken to protect the investment. In fact their decision has been very good with respect to many major loans in the past, and this institution now is probably the second-largest banking institution in Alberta. That in itself must be a measure of the judgment of the people who make these kinds of decisions.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, in this case ignorance is not bliss. The Treasurer is responsible under this Act.

My question is: because they are already \$142 million in debt and because of the possibility that if they make some other risky loans, the taxpayers are ultimately responsible, will the Treasurer at least today have an all-party committee that would begin to look into the lending practices of the Treasury Branches and see what the rhyme or reason is for these things?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, in terms of what I have done, I can assure the members of the Assembly that over the past year there has been a fairly extensive review as to the way in which the Treasury Branches operate. Along with the Member for Edmonton-Norwood I also am concerned about the size of the losses the Treasury Branches experienced. He references \$140 million. Those are the accumulated losses which this company has faced. Obviously, as a responsible government we're concerned about that, and we have taken some steps to ensure the following: that in fact there is a possibility we will be able to work our way out of this problem; secondly, there may be some need to restructure the Treasury Branches, because along with other financial institutions significant losses were experienced in Alberta since 1986.

Specifically to the member's question, Mr. Speaker, we have in fact undertaken a review of the loan process, and we find that the loans essentially, as disclosed in the financial statements, are in very good shape. So what you must conclude is that the member for some reason is suggesting that there's something wrong with the loan. That, in fact, has not been proven. Therefore, I must rely upon the judgment of those people in the Treasury Branch credit system who've come to their own conclusions without interference from the government, and that's the appropriate way in which a financial institution should be operated.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

### **Zeidler Forest Industries Ltd. Labour Dispute**

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, today a number of striking Zeidler workers attempted to meet with the Minister of Labour because for over three years their employer has refused to bargain with them in good faith. Rather than meet with these workers, the minister's staff called security, who threatened to arrest them, told them that they would be convicted, and suggested that they would spend the night in jail. We've become accustomed to jackboot activities on picket lines in our province, but quite frankly we're disgusted that this kind of action would be extended to the Legislature. My question to the minister is this: are workers to expect this kind of treatment when they come to the Legislature to address the Minister of Labour in matters involving labour disputes?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, some two months ago at our mutual request I met with the union representative for the employees that we're discussing. We explored the issues thoroughly and agreed that we would hope that both sides would come to the bargaining table as soon as possible. This morning I was out of my office on other business, as had been prearranged, and without warning, without any advance telephone call, without any warning whatsoever, five employees of Zeidler arrived at my office and proceeded to demand a meeting. When my staff pointed out to them that there was totally no expectation of this, because of course we had not asked for a meeting, and suggested that we would attempt immediately to set up a meeting with them and their union representative, the five people, I'm informed, refused to leave. They were politely requested to leave, and they were politely asked for some time to arrange a meeting as soon as my schedule would allow. Nevertheless, they refused to leave. Sitting in a person's office, having been dealt with courteously, and refusing to budge, it seems to me, is not an option, notwithstanding that my office always maintains an open-door policy. Indeed, we are, even as I speak, now setting up a meeting within a week to meet with these members of the employees of Zeidler.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The problem has been that two months have gone by, and nothing has been done to get the negotiators back to the table. Under the Act the minister has the authority to make instructions to the board to get these people back to the bargaining table. Is the minister prepared to commit today to take some kind of action and show some kind of leadership and get the negotiators from all parties back to the negotiation table?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, there is an outstanding issue between management and the union at Zeidler's, and it has to do with the fairness or lack of fairness of bargaining practices. That issue has been in front of the Labour Relations Board, and in fact the hearings have taken place. We are all now waiting for the board's decision in that matter. We've all been eagerly awaiting that. I think it would only be appropriate for the board to make its decision before we proceed any further.

MR. SPEAKER: Final.

MR. SIGURDSON: They were found guilty.

MR. SPEAKER: Final.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the previous Minister of Labour offered Bill 21 as a vehicle to reduce time lost due to industrial disputes and further facilitate bargaining in good faith, will the minister now admit that this legislation is a complete failure and in dire need of amendment?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, let me make two points. The first one is that this strike began before the new labour code was proclaimed. Therefore, the rules that are governing the collective bargaining process and all the procedures around it are, in fact, governed under the old Act and not under the new code. Secondly, I don't think we should lose sight of what is the true goal here. The true goal, of course, is for the parties to come to an agreement between themselves that is fair and reasonable to both sides. The strike has gone on an incredibly long time. I have urged both sides to come back to the table and settle it. We are now all waiting, as I said, eagerly for the board's decision. Let me say to this Assembly and through this Assembly to the two sides in this dispute that I would urge them to come together and bargain fairly and decently as soon as possible.

#### **Lubicon Land Claims**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the leadership of the Lubicon Band was democratically decided just a few months ago. The Premier has been lauded by many Albertans for the action that he's taken, for the promises that he's made with respect to assisting in the settlement of that land claims issue for the Lubicon. The federal government has engaged in some extraordinary activity, in that recently they've indicated that they're prepared to open discussions with a so-called radical group or part of the Lubicon group for a settlement of the land claims issues. Alarming, one of the ministers of our own government has engaged in that whole issue by indicating that if that happens, lands will be lesser in amount than promised by our Premier, thereby showing that people are working at cross-purposes. My question is to the Attorney General. Has the Attorney General, Mr. Speaker, received new instructions from the Premier's office so as to show that he is now siding with Ottawa with respect to this Lubicon issue?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, again we start from a misconstrued comment, from erroneous detail. We have negotiated, the Premier as our leader, the agreement known as the Grimshaw agreement. It was based on a certain membership in the Lubicon Band, and that has been put on the table with the federal government. The negotiations between the Lubicon Band and the federal government ceased back in January. Recently Chief Ominayak approached the Premier to recommence the negotiations. We as the Alberta government were more than delighted to recommence our negotiation, which relates really to a few of the details outlining the boundary of the proposed reserve, as well as a few other minor details. We also agreed to ask that the federal government come to the table. I understand that on August 15 all three parties will be at that table.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, is the Attorney General prepared to agree that the recent actions by the federal government are

really quite reprehensible, that this action shouldn't be taken by them to split and to divide?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I think that's a matter of opinion.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the Attorney General would agree that the minister, the minister's office, all ministers of the Crown should deal with no one else on this issue except the chief who was duly elected by the Lubicon Band just two months ago.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I fully concur with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry that in a negotiation with the Lubicon Band of course the chief, who was recently re-elected to that position, would be the chief spokesman. We look forward to the recommencing of the negotiations on August 15 and hopefully can accommodate them very quickly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Wainwright, followed by Edmonton-Jasper Place, then Calgary-McKnight.

#### **Legal Drinking Age**

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Solicitor General. Teenage liquor-related accidents and fatalities have been devastating in the past few years, and this problem continues to grow. It wastes many lives, and it costs our health care system a lot of money. Alberta now appears to be an island of our own in regards to the drinking age, as it is lower than that of B.C., lower than that of Montana, and lower than that of Saskatchewan. When will we move to get in line with our neighbours?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, the member raises an extremely difficult question, and there is no simple answer to this specific question. When we are speaking about a change in drinking age, we are speaking about removing rights that already have been given to a group of people, which rights start when they reach the age of majority. As I've indicated, it's a very difficult question to come to grips with.

MR. FISCHER: Supplementary then. When will he consider undertaking a study on the effects of raising the drinking age?

MR. FOWLER: Well, Mr. Speaker, the need for the study, as I indicated to the main question, is self-evident before reaching an easy answer on this. I wish to advise the hon. members of the Assembly that the main agency of Alberta, the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, is itself opposed to the raising of this particular age limit and have done a number of reports on it. Those would have to be part of any study as well.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you. Does this report, then, point out any of the heavy costs that are associated with the drinking of our young people?

MR. FOWLER: Not other, Mr. Speaker, than as it relates to impaired driving. We have never had the figures available as to the other social costs. I keep trying to acquire these figures. They are not available in this province. I have not found a jurisdiction yet where they are available, but we will continue to do so.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place, Calgary-McKnight, Calgary-McCall.

### Paper Recycling

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. Daishowa and Alberta-Pacific have received major concessions in the way of loan guarantees, debentures, grants, et cetera, et cetera. The companies have both promised to install paper machines further down in their operations and later phases of the development. Meanwhile, the Department of the Environment is holding discussions with companies in Edmonton and, I believe, in Whitecourt regarding the installation of a deinking machine for use in the recycling industry. Doubtless those companies will be asking for concessions too. My question is simply: has the minister held discussions with the holders of forest management agreements and would-be FMA holders directed towards having these companies establish a recycled paper plant, perhaps in the city of Edmonton, as a trade-off for some of the other concessions that they've received to date?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I've had discussions with each one of the companies with respect to a paper machine attached to their particular projects, and in most cases that is the case. On the recycle option, however, that is one area where we're looking at working not only with forest companies but with others.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, how does the minister feel about the fact that Albertans ship out waste paper to be processed elsewhere and will be shipping out raw pulp to be processed elsewhere? Doesn't he agree that the pulp companies should do processing and recycling of paper right here in Alberta?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, part of our strategy is not to ship all the raw pulp out of Alberta, and I ask for support so that we can move with all haste with some of these projects because attached to them in a timely fashion is a paper machine, particularly the Alberta-Pacific project.

Each one of those mills is competitive on the world market because of the high-quality pulp and paper that they would produce, and of course in each instance recycling is an option that they may consider but won't in all cases fit. We are at present working with companies to assess clearly what volume of material is available for recycling, newsprint being one product that can be made into tissues. We have companies now looking at the option of doing that. Along with that comes the very expensive deinking, which is necessary to make sure that's viable. Magazines and other kinds of papers are more difficult, and we're assessing that to make sure there is an economic viability there for recycling. We must remember, too, that we want to make sure we have the volume here to make a project economically viable. That is something we're not sure of at this point because of the population and the use of newsprint and other paper products. This minister and this government are very, very strongly favourable to recycling anything, because frankly we've become a throwaway society, and we must move to recycle and reuse rather than throw away.

MR. McINNIS: The problem with the economics is that the trees are so cheap in Alberta, it's cheaper to make virgin fibre.

To the Minister of the Environment. Has the minister held discussions with his colleague in forestry to point out that cheap trees are the enemy of the recycling industry so that we don't end up subsidizing recycling industries to compete against his subsidized virgin fibre industries?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, as to whether discussions have been held, I haven't held discussions personally in this regard, but perhaps some officials in my department have. With respect to the whole issue of recycling I indicated in the House not so long ago that the department is looking at a proposed comprehensive recycling program for Alberta which would include, I presume, negotiations with people in the pulp and paper industry to establish deinking plants, to create value-added to pulp through recycling. In due course, and hopefully this year, a report will be submitted outlining that proposal.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to supplement the answer in that to make the comment that we have cheap trees in Alberta is totally inaccurate. The economics of our forest resource in Alberta vis-à-vis the rest of the country and the rest of the world is certainly favourable to them locating here, but they're certainly not cheap. The one area that we have to recognize fully is that to make recycling of newspapers and other products viable, we need to have the volume. There hasn't been an accurate assessment of whether or not that volume is here to make the economics work, and we're doing that now, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight, followed by Calgary-McCall.

### Cheating on High School Examinations

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tuesday night during consideration of the Education estimates, the Minister of Education suggested that a procedure already was in place under the student evaluation regulation to deal in an intelligent and forceful manner with students caught cheating. I'd like to quote for you a section of this regulation, which says in part that

the Director may

- (a) make any reasonable decision regarding the student's or applicant's result

when dealing with cheaters. My question is to the Minister of Education. How can the minister claim that such a vague and open-ended statement will prevent a recurrence of his department's disgraceful handling of the recent situation in Edmonton?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has just given partial information. I would refer her, as I did, to Alberta regulation 40/89, the student evaluation regulation, under the School Act, 1988. The regulation is very lengthy, Mr. Speaker, but if I may just quote from it in part, it says:

If a student . . . interferes with the security of the evaluation materials, falsifies the evaluation results or commits any other act that may result in a student's . . . performance being inaccurately represented, the Director may

- (a) make any reasonable decision regarding the student's . . . result,
- (b) bar the student . . . for a period of not exceeding 1 year,
- (c) withhold the student's . . . official transcript of

achievement for a period [of time] not exceeding 1 year.

It's a lengthy number of measures that may be taken, Mr. Speaker. We have chosen, following a careful evaluation and investigation of the incidents surrounding the June 1988 mathematics 30 diploma exam security breach -- under these circumstances, we believe we have taken the most appropriate and reasonable action in light of what the investigators found.

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, I have the regulations in front of me as well, and it looks to me as though only one portion, 7(2)(a), was used by the minister's department.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. Between the questioner and the response -- quoting back sections of the Act is really inappropriate for question period. Let's just get on with the question that relates to general issues rather than the legal aspects of it.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me that the regulation is clearly not strong enough to prevent future cheaters from escaping punishment. Will the minister now consider the creation of a special short-term task force to study this problem and make recommendations for a sensible approach to dealing with cheaters?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, is the hon. member saying, and I believe she is, that the powers outlined in the regulation, which are, for instance, to bar the student from an examination for a further year, to withhold the student's transcript, to record the decision on the official transcript, and to take any further action -- is she saying that there is not a reasonable array of actions that the director and, in the event that the minister must, the minister may take in the face of certain facts after a thorough investigation? I'd suggest that the regulation lays out a comprehensive array of penalties that a student may face in the event that they undertake that kind of unacceptable behaviour.

I don't hear the hon. member, nor have I heard her party, talk about how reprehensible it is that any students would cheat on an examination. I feel very strongly that any student that is caught cheating on an examination should suffer the consequences.

MRS. GAGNON: My third question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Advanced Education. Has the minister undertaken any study of postsecondary institutions to determine whether any otherwise deserving Alberta student was denied access to a university education because one of these cheaters got in ahead of them on the basis of false marks?

MR. GOGO: No, I haven't, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McCall, followed by Edmonton-Beverly.

#### **Samples at Liquor Outlets**

MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Solicitor General. Through a number of comments and discussions with constituents, both mine and others in the province, I've become somewhat concerned. The Alberta Liquor Control Board has certain outlets that use sampling as a sales tool for the purchase of wine, beer, coolers, tequila drinks, et cetera. We all

know that the alcohol content in wine is lower than that of spirits but certainly higher than that of beer. Most people arriving at the liquor outlet do so in a vehicle. We know that a person can spend considerable time tasting a promotional product or test tasting various other products. We also know that the government has taken steps to remove drinking drivers from our streets. The offering of samples would seem a backward step. Would the Solicitor General indicate what policy the ALCB has in supporting the drinking and then the driving of a vehicle by people, as outlined in my preamble?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Liquor Control Board for the last five years has operated a tasting and sampling operation in what is now 50 stores throughout the province. It's difficult for me to imagine that anybody would be trundling down to the local liquor store to try a few drinks. The maximum they can have is a quarter ounce of spirits, one ounce of wine, and two ounces of beer, and it is tightly controlled by any store manager. There is only one person allowed to be giving samples at any given time in any of the 50 stores, and there can only be two types of liquor served, one of the three: spirits, wine, or beer, cooler, or cider. So it is just not a problem.

MR. NELSON: According to some it is a problem, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister be taking some action insofar as the continuance of the sampling of alcoholic beverages at the government-operated ALCB or private outlets?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, I think possibly the hon. member is referring to, as well as the Liquor Control Board -- I now gather he's referring to the private tastings, most often by the representatives of wine companies. I will not be doing anything in respect to the ALCB operations, but I will make inquiries in respect to the private tastings.

MR. NELSON: Just to follow through with the point the minister has just made, Mr. Speaker, might we expect a review of the current policy? Will there be a review, and will it be made available to the House or the public?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, as indicated previously, there will be no review. I see no need for a review into the Alberta Liquor Control Board tasting program. However, I will make inquiries in respect to the private tastings and advise the member accordingly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly, followed by Edmonton-Whitemud, then Innisfail.

#### **Education Funding**

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Reductions in the province's share of education funding have taken place every year since 1975 and have eroded the ability of the Edmonton public school board to build new schools. The result of this reduction of support for the school boards has in my constituency over 900 junior high school students transported out of the Clareview-Hermitage area on a daily basis. My question is to the Minister of Education. When will this government provide sufficient funding to the Edmonton public school board so the board can meet its obligation of providing schools for the junior

high school people in Clareview-Hermitage?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, we fund school construction and modernization and building quality restoration on the basis of a well-known provincewide formula that, first of all, addresses health and safety matters and then, second of all, meets the needs of the schools and the students and the school jurisdictions. All school boards know the process, and it's up to individual school boards to make sure that their requests, their priorities are placed high on the list so that we may fund those projects. The member knows full well that given some reasonable limitations in our fiscal capacity, this year we have some \$85 million to contribute to a total list of \$330 million worth of requests. So on the advice of the School Buildings Board the minister will be making some decisions in the weeks ahead as to which projects are funded, and those announcements will be made, I expect, sometime in the middle of September.

MR. EWASIUK: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Edmonton school board has actually been underfunded now for some time.

While the parents are waiting for the schools to be built -- and I'm sure they will be before too long -- will the minister at least provide some temporary funding for transportation so that these students can in fact travel in safety and manage to learn in safety and can use the yellow buses instead of the public transport they have to use now?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I find it unusual that the hon. member would say that the Edmonton public or Catholic school boards would be underfunded. This year the funding for the school year beginning September 1, 1989, will see an increase in the province's total contribution from \$179.3 million in 1988-89 to \$188.2 million in this year. Part of that grant is the transportation and boarding grant, which was some \$4.4 million last year and some \$4.65 million in 1989-90. For all students who must be transported by bus within the city of Edmonton that funding is provided partially, according to a formula, but they get full, maximum funding for the transportation of those students out of neighbourhoods where schools do not now exist.

But I go back to the hon. member's question, his first question. It is up to the local school board to set the priorities as to where new schools ought to be constructed. If I can recollect, Mr. Speaker, the school that the hon. member is referring to was placed number five or six on this year's list submitted by the Edmonton public board.

MR. EWASIUK: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Edmonton public school board only receives 9.2 percent of the funding but has 16 percent of the students, and that's not fair.

Will the minister restore provincial funding for education to its previous levels -- that is, to 1975 -- to allow the Edmonton public school board and the other school boards in this province to meet their school construction commitments without further delay?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and his colleagues in both the NDP and Liberal Party raised this issue in our discussion of the estimates of the Department of Education on Tuesday night. If I can just explain what the hon. member's position means: it means that he wants to have a fixed, set formula for funding education throughout the province, perhaps on a 80/20 or an 85/15 basis. What does that mean? It means that

he's asking, he's demanding that this government control the decisions and the expenditures, the important decisions that are made by locally elected school boards. We have faith, we have trust in what those locally elected school boards do and the decisions they make. The hon. members across the way, that is their position, patently clear: they do not support or believe in the locally elected school boards.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Whitemud.

#### **Notification to Suspended Drivers**

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the present time the Motor Vehicle Administration Act clearly states that the mailing out of a notice of suspension or cancellation of an operator's licence by registered mail to his last recorded address is sufficiently served on that person. A recent court decision established a major flaw in this process. It appears that drivers can simply avoid suspension by changing addresses. Possibly thousands of motorists could be in this situation in the province, avoiding the penalty of suspension and at the same time posing a serious threat to public safety in regards to victims of uninsured drivers. My question to the minister of transportation. Can the minister inform this House just how often the initial attempt to serve notification is unsuccessful, thus allowing the suspended drivers to continue driving?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, the Motor Vehicle Administration Act comes under the Department of the Solicitor General. This is making a specific reference to a specific case this week. I have ordered a copy of that transcript in order that I can review it to see whether any legislation change is necessary or not.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, what steps are being taken at the present time to ensure that people who are under suspension are held accountable when initial efforts to serve notice have been unsuccessful? What steps prior to that review?

MR. FOWLER: Prior to yesterday or the day before -- whenever this case was heard dial's being referred to -- the steps that were being taken were notification to the RCMP or city police or municipal force, as the case may be, to pick up the driver's licence if and when we had difficulty in advising through registered mail.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, would the Solicitor General state if he is prepared after the review to consider those necessary changes to the Motor Vehicle Administration Act, or is the minister prepared to recommend to his colleague the Attorney General that an appeal of Judge Murray's decision be undertaken?

MR. SPEAKER: Two separate questions.

MR. FOWLER: I can make no comment in respect to the appeal of the case that was heard this week, but depending upon the transcript that we receive and the reading of that transcript -- our action will depend upon that reading, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Pine Lake Landfill Site**

MR. SEVERTSON: Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday afternoon we

discussed Motion 208 in regards to landfill operations. The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark suggested that there was no assurance whatever that the site for a landfill at Pine Lake had been properly assessed. My question to the Minister of the Environment. Can the minister outline his department's role in assisting the Central Alberta Regional Waste Authority in locating and in developing a regional landfill site?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, this is a very difficult situation. It brings to the forefront that age-old phenomena of NIMBY, not in my backyard. Basically, the department provides technical and monetary assistance to regional landfill authorities, and it is up to that authority to work with the appropriate municipal jurisdiction to determine where the site will actually go. Our department will go in and make sure that a site is environmentally safe. Once that has been determined, we'll pass that information on to the municipal jurisdiction. Because they are the people who will be using the site, they are the people who will be living with the site, it is entirely up to the municipal jurisdiction to make the final decision.

MR. SEVERTSON: How extensive was the soil testing for viewing the potential site at this landfill site?

MR. KLEIN: Well, the soil testing is extensive to the point of ensuring that the site is safe from a hydrological point of view, from a geological point of view, and that there won't be leaching. Basically, the examination of the site in itself is an environmental impact assessment document, because we have to make absolutely sure that the site is safe before we recommend it for selection.

MR. SEVERTSON: Does the Department of the Environment monitor groundwater conditions around regional landfills?

MR. KLEIN: Of course, Mr. Speaker, this is one of the most serious issues relative to landfill sites, and monitoring stations are indeed set up around the site. If leaching is found to be the case, then the department will order the appropriate action to be taken to bring a halt to that process.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn.

### **Hazardous Materials Management**

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week two Calgary firemen were hospitalized while attempting to clean up a large volume of hazardous waste chemicals which had been illegally dumped into a roadside ditch in southeast Calgary. Thus far little progress seems to have been made in finding the culprits responsible for this extremely dangerous incident. My question is to the Minister of the Environment. What is the status of the investigation into this situation, and when can we expect those responsible to be found and charged?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, you know, I would love to be a crystal ball gazer, and I would love to be a detective, and I would love to be all things to all people, but I can't be. I don't know when these people are going to be caught. I have no idea when they're going to be caught. But I'll tell you that when they are caught, they will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

MR. PASHAK: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Well, given that these dumped hazardous substances were found in their original labeled containers, will the minister change hazardous chemical regulations to require registration so that these substances can be traced back to where they were purchased and by whom?

MR. KLEIN: I would be very, very happy to work with my hon. colleague the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services and perhaps defer to him for further elaboration on this matter.

MR. KOWALSKI: Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, in this case these materials were illegally dumped. Now, the hon. member has suggested that a criminal should take a parcel of materials and make sure they're properly labeled before he criminally puts them in a ditch, and that just simply is silly. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Final supplementary.

MR. PASHAK: Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Given that officials in the minister's own department fear more illegal dumping because breaking the law by polluting is cheaper than following regulations for safe disposal, why did the government not anticipate this and require companies to pay an additional deposit when buying chemical containers, which would only be refunded when those containers are returned for safe disposal or for reuse?

MR. KLEIN: That's an extremely interesting question, Mr. Speaker, and in fact we are doing precisely that, especially with chemical containers. There is a deposit fee, and the people are encouraged to bring those plastic containers and other containers carrying toxic materials to transfer sites throughout the province. From time to time shredding machines go in and rip it up, and these products are recycled. So in fact it is being done.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Might we continue this complete set of questions?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed?  
Edmonton-Meadowlark.

### **Environmental Standards for Pulp Mills**

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the members of the government caucus for being so forthcoming in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, there are evident inconsistencies in the Minister of the Environment's application of standards and environmental assessment processes for pulp mills in this province. What's good for one mill is not, it seems, necessary for others. Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of the Procter & Gamble proposed expansion. To the Minister of the Environment. Will the minister make a commitment now, today, to stop the Procter & Gamble expansion until such time as that company is prepared to meet the higher standards imposed for new pulp mills in this province?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's not a question of just saying stop the mill. The mill, in fact, is stopped. The mill won't

go ahead until it meets all environmental standards, very, very high standards. I find it extremely interesting in the newspaper that the Grande Prairie pulp mill balks at new antipollution standards. This is a company that says our standards are so tough, so stringent that we're going to have a hard time meeting those standards. Certainly those standards will be assessed through the environmental impact assessment process, and they will, like Daishowa, be required to meet them. It's as simple as that.

MR. MITCHELL: We're drawing the distinction here, Mr. Speaker, between old and new mills. Will the minister establish a deadline by which old mills like Procter & Gamble and other existing pulp mills will have to meet the standards he is now requiring for new mills, as is the case in Sweden, where a deadline of the year 2000 has been established to meet new standards?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, in the case of both the Procter & Gamble mill and the mill at Hinton, there are now commitments to refit those mills when the other operations come on line, refit those mills to conform with the new standards.

MR. MITCHELL: Why has the minister deemed it necessary to establish a public review board in the Athabasca case, albeit that this board is extremely weak, when he has refused consistently to establish such a public review board in the case of AEC, the Alberta Energy Company, in Slave Lake, in the case of Daishowa, in the case of the Procter & Gamble expansion?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. One's enough. How many questions? Let's not try the patience perhaps.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, this very, very strong, well-represented review board relative to the Al-Pac proposal may set a model and establish a model for other pulp mill projects.

MR. MITCHELL: May?

MR. KLEIN: May. The principle will certainly be used, and if we find any deficiencies in that process, it will be strengthened, much to the satisfaction of the hon. member.

With respect to the Alberta Energy Company proposal at Slave Lake, this was a program that wasn't designated by my predecessor as one of those that would undergo the public review process which involves the citizens' panel. The only one that was designated at that time was the Alberta-Pacific project. To fulfill that commitment, the review panel has been set up and is about to begin its work.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### head: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that the written questions appearing on the Order Paper stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

### head: MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that the following motions for returns stand and retain their places on the Order Paper: motions 181, 182, 191, 192, 201, 202, 204, and 205.

[Motion carried]

174. Ms Barrett moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing all contracts, offers to purchase, and memoranda of agreement between the government of Alberta, Grant MacEwan Community College, and Canadian National Railway relating to the acquisition of the downtown Edmonton CN lands for the purpose of constructing a Grant MacEwan Community College campus on that site, including all prices asked and counteroffers which may have been made.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, Motion for a Return 174 is an interesting one. Unfortunately, the government will be unable to comply with the request. In looking at the question and undertaking some research with respect to the question, it's been brought to my attention that Canadian National, in the negotiations that were under way, requested that copies of the purchase agreement not be released. There are some valid reasons for it, and I think the Assembly should be aware of them.

Canadian National is still negotiating various aspects of the agreement, including zoning for the remaining CN yard site and servicing agreements and dedications resulting from the subdivisions within the city of Edmonton. As well, CN is also involved in the removal of a railroad exchange with the Canadian Pacific railway, and that necessitates negotiations under way. As well, the removal of the tracks from the CN yard site that the National Transportation Agency -- that is still a matter under way as well.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I should point out that the purchase price was announced publicly in the fall of 1988. I should as well indicate that our negotiations -- that is, the negotiations of the province of Alberta and in terms of the documentation that we use with respect to the agreements that were reached -- all information that was used was based on independent appraisals that we had followed in doing it.

So regrettably, Mr. Speaker, there are still a number of negotiations under way with respect to this matter, and because of the past history associated with this and the continuing future with it, it would be most inappropriate, in my view, that this information be made public.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, that sounds fine except contracts are asked for, offers which have been negotiated and arrived at. So that's not an answer to that part of the motion at all. The hon. minister does have a habit of picking on part of a motion and stating the objections to that part as if it governs the whole. It doesn't. It's illogical and is just unworthy of any minister to cover up contracts that involve the payment of money for reasons that have nothing to do with those contracts.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Highlands, summation.

MS BARRETT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I too object to the rejection of this motion. I couldn't care less who feels sensitive about CP versus CN when it comes to the taxpayers' dollars having been spent. I think the real is-



sue here is: did the government even bother to negotiate or pretend that they were living in a marketplace environment when they agreed to spend the money that they did to set up the campus for the Grant MacEwan Community College? My suspicion -- and I believe this will come out in the wash whether or not the minister will table the information today -- is that CN walked away with a good deal because the Alberta government said "How much do you want?" and didn't negotiate. I suspect that is what's going to come out in the wash. So the minister can have his secrecy, but in the long run I believe that the truth will come out about this matter.

[Motion lost]

177. On behalf of Mr. Fox, Mr. McEachern moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a detailed account showing
- (1) the total administrative fees and other costs paid to lending institutions from the Farm Credit Stability Fund during the 1988-89 fiscal year;
  - (2) the total payments from the General Revenue Fund to lending institutions resulting from loan guarantees in each of the 1987-88 and 1988-89 fiscal years;
  - (3) a breakdown by lending institution of any payments referred to in sections (1) and (2) in each of the 1987-88 and 1988-89 fiscal years;
  - (4) the total of salaries, accommodation, and other overhead costs borne by the General Revenue Fund to administer the Farm Credit Stability Fund in each of the 1987-88 and 1988-89 fiscal years; and
  - (5) a breakdown by category of all administrative fees and other costs paid to lending institutions from the Farm Credit Stability Fund in each of the 1987-88 and 1988-89 fiscal years.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I would move an amendment to Motion for a Return 177, and I have copies for distribution to hon. members. I should note that this amendment has been discussed with the hon. Member for Vegreville, and to my understanding it's acceptable.

Very quickly I would read the amendment. First of all, it would delete subsection (1). Subsection (2) would insert the words "under the Alberta farm credit stability program" after the words in the motion "loan guarantees" in subsection (2). It would delete subsection (3). In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, insert the word "estimated" before the words "total of salaries," which I think is only reasonable, in subsection (4).

I would add again that this has been discussed with the hon. Member for Vegreville, and I believe has been accepted by him.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway, just a moment. Do all members now have a copy of the amendment?

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I want to make a few comments about this motion even though the government has indicated that they're going to give the amended motion information to us. First, I do object very much to the deletion of (1). My colleague from Vegreville may have agreed to it, but I'm sure he did so under the idea that at least it was better to get something than nothing. I do not understand why that information shouldn't be forthcoming. The farm credit stability program has a provision in it for a 2.375 percent payment to lend-

ing institutions who get involved in the program, as an administrative fee. It seems to me we should know what that is, not just in its total, as we will find out eventually in the public accounts, but which institutions got how much of it. That is what that would tell us, and I don't understand the reasons for the secrecy. What it would tell us is which institutions have taken up that program, on what scale. I don't see that that is information that should be kept secret for any reason whatsoever. So I do object to that amendment, although as my colleague has accepted it, one will then of course accept what information the government offers in the motion in total.

There is another aspect of this that bothers me a bit, and that is the fact that we had to put this kind of a motion on the Order Paper in the first place. This kind of information should be forthcoming from most government programs as a matter of course in the public accounts in a form that would be somewhat similar to what is here. In other words, the farm credit stability program information in public accounts should be such that we would know all of these things and not have to make a special motion for a return to ask for them. Not only the farm credit stability program but the Alberta stock savings plan, the SBECs, the export program of the government under Economic Development and Trade -- Mr. Speaker, there's an incredible number of individual programs that this government sets up. Research and technology has programs for giving money to institutions to develop high tech and that sort of thing.

We find out later what happens in public accounts if we're lucky and if we can piece it together. It becomes almost impossible to piece together how much, for instance, the export program money -- we can find out how much the export program gives, but we can't find out to whom. There is no way that you can go through the list in public accounts of all the people who receive money through contracts from public works and make any sense out of which programs they got that money under. And there is no way that you can go through the alphabetical list under Treasury of people and companies that got grants and make any sense out of under what programs did they get those moneys.

So the people of Alberta and the opposition are left asking questions of this sort on the Order Paper. Sometimes the ministers give us the information and then sometimes they don't, like they didn't on Motion 174. Most often they don't. "Oh, that's private information." They seem to think if a private company gets some of the information, they have no obligation to make that public. That is nonsense. Any time a private firm does business with the government, that information should be public information, and it should be done in such a way that you know under what program they got that money. That is what's lacking in the public accounts, and it's absolutely incredible and shameful that last year I moved a motion in Public Accounts asking them to rewrite the public accounts from here on in a way that would break down those grants and those contracts by department, by program. The people on the Public Accounts Committee, the 15 back-bench Conservatives that dominate the committee, said they didn't want that information -- because they don't want to know, I guess. They want to be able to give money to their friends and not have to own up or something. What is it? Why would anybody want to handicap themselves or blindfold themselves, to not know what's going on?

So I'm insulted that we have to put forward a resolution of this sort. I'm insulted that the minister would amend it, and he shouldn't expect us to say thank you for the little bit of informa-

tion that we're finally going to get.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, regarding the debate on the amendment, I'm somewhat . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: It is indeed true. Thank you. The Chair apologizes for being . . . It was trying to deal with another issue that had come up.

[Motion as amended carried]

190. Mr. Wickman moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the lease agreement pertaining to Crown land leased to Mayer Metals, located at 109th Street and 9th Avenue in Edmonton, and all documents related to that lease.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, in reviewing Motion for a Return 190, I had to come to a conclusion that the issuance of such information would breach the time-honoured concept of commercial confidentiality. This is an arrangement, a marketplace arrangement between the government as the landlord and a lessee. There are hundreds and hundreds of these agreements, of course, which a government in a province the size of Alberta would have to undertake in numerous places throughout the province. They are constantly in the business of undertaking negotiations to lease land, buy land, purchase land, and of course there's marketplace information that, in essence, would be important to and I guess of concern to competitors in the field. On the basis of that argument of commercial confidentiality, I must regretfully say that we would be unable to accept this motion for a return.

I would like to point out as well, Mr. Speaker, that it was not too long ago that the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services also indicated that there was a review under way with respect to certain claims that might be undertaken with respect to this particular firm as a result of rehabilitation costs to recover the land in question.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support my colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud in his effort to have this motion passed and to confront the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services on his denial of this very, very reasonable request. We hear time and time again this argument that market considerations inhibit us from releasing information. That is a fundamentally weak argument for many reasons, some of which I would like to list here today in the hopes of persuading this minister and his back bench to support this motion.

I believe there is a logical problem with that argument to begin with. If it is that the concern with releasing lease documents is a market concern, then clearly the minister would be indicating that he has given some special benefit to this company. If he hasn't given some special benefit to this company, why would it be a concern to anybody else in the market or why would it be a concern to the company itself that anybody else in the market know? The fact is that it could only be a concern, the minister could only desire to hide this information, if in fact he's giving a special benefit to this particular company. That raises, of course, the question of the relationship of this minister and this government to that particular company, which is all that much greater reason why we should have that information. It is not a sufficient reason to say that the market dictates. If a com-

pany wants to deal with the public through the government, if the company wants to take advantage of or benefit from public lands or public initiatives of any kind, then agreements on that basis should be premised upon the notion that those agreements will be public. This is perhaps a small example of a case where the government doesn't want to release a "commercial document."

There are many other examples with perhaps consequences of broader magnitude. I'm thinking, for example, of the Olympia & York lease which we have never been able to see, which we have reason to believe, for example, offers square-footage rates for government offices at between \$18 and \$20 a square foot when in fact government offices can be housed in this government area for as little as \$1 per square foot plus operating costs. It is essential, if a government is to be held accountable, particularly in a time when fiscal responsibility is important and of consequence, that these kinds of "commercial documents" be made available to the public, to the opposition, so they can be assessed and so a minister can know that in entering into these kinds of relationships, he or she will be subject to review, making the decisions: made under those circumstances better decisions -- a fundamental principle of management.

The second point, though, the second consequence of this particular lease is that it relates to a very important environmental matter. The first question that came to my mind when I became aware of this issue was: how could it possibly be that responsibility for dumping, for polluting with toxic wastes a given area, could be absolved by the terms of a lease? There's no question, for example, that if a truck spills a toxic waste on a road to which they do not have a lease, which they do not in any way own -- which that trucker or that truck company does not in any way own -- that truck is responsible, that trucking company is responsible for cleaning up that particular spill. In this case, this could have been any kind of land anywhere that these people were consciously -- perhaps I shouldn't jump to that conclusion -- but were at least not secure in their methods sufficiently to ensure that waste didn't leak into this land.

Somehow this lease that we're not able to see must have absolved them of a responsibility. It seems very, very difficult to fathom, and the consequences are consequences that the public of Alberta should not have to bear. If I'm not mistaken, the minister said very clearly in this House that owing to that leasehold arrangement, it was his department's responsibility to put up a million dollars to clean up that particular spill or whatever it would be called that this company did to that land with toxic wastes, among them PCBs.

It is essential, Mr. Speaker, that we see this lease so that we can explore both the fiscal arrangement implications, the fiscal responsibility implications, and the environmental policy implications of this particular what I would call a test case for those kinds of issues which this government is obviously trying to avoid by not allowing us to see this information. This is one more instance of many, many instances of us -- the public and opposition members; back-bench members, probably, of the government caucus itself -- being simply unable to get information that should be, by any reasonable standard, public information. I should say that while I know that we will not get this -- and perhaps the minister will feel a success in resisting our efforts to get it -- in the long run, it is exactly this kind of paranoid harbouring, hunkering down that is a measure of a government. It's the measure of a government that is very, very tired, that is very, very concerned about being held accountable, and that is

therefore encouraging in itself a weakness and, I believe, a decay which will see that these problems will be solved in the not too distant future. They will be solved because the people of Alberta will vote to change this government.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I'd not intended initially to get in on this debate, but when the minister stood up and said that he was going to follow the time-honoured procedure of not releasing this contract, I just had to. Time honoured? Talk about a ridiculous policy that's been carried on far too long, that should have been discarded long ago . . . And he calls it a time-honoured policy. It is such an insult to the people of Alberta and such an insult to this Assembly, that I could not resist standing up and saying: what nonsense, really. There is no reason in the world that this document should not be released. Once the contract is made and once the lease is made -- and it's a government lease, it's government money involved in it, it's revenue for the government -- then it should be made public, the same as any other contracts and leases that all should be released. There is certainly nothing time honoured about it. I suppose you could say that time is ticking, as the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark said, and time will tick out on these guys for these kind of policies.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, how can there be commercial confidentiality in a lease? A lease contains the terms upon which the premises are let. There can be no question of copyright. There can be no question of *modus operandi*. There can only be question of inappropriate deals, inappropriate because not economical; or unduly favourable to some party; or poorly drawn so that the wrong business can be carried on there; or poorly drawn in that the covenants against nuisance aren't there, the penalties aren't there; all that sort of thing. It's not commercial confidentiality that is being sought here or relied on. It's because they don't want to be exposed, Mr. Speaker, to scrutiny because of some defect in the lease.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to add my voice to the expressions of concern about what is no longer a surprising denial of access to this kind of information. Time honoured indeed -- a time-disgraced principle and policy of the government. I'd like to point out that we are one of the few jurisdictions in this country that I've been able to determine where this type of information is denied. Indeed, many provinces in the country and certainly the federal government have freedom-of-information legislation which provides for access to this type of documentation. Of course, one isn't entitled to get into the middle of a lease negotiation and interfere with that negotiation at a delicate point of time. But when we're dealing with a commercial document, and a lease is a commercial document, surely the people of this province are entitled to see the terms of those documents.

We've seen for years now, indeed since I entered this Legislature and certainly long before that, that the provincial government continues to deal with these types of transactions as if they were purely private matters of concern to the government, as if they were dealing with money and assets which belong to the Progressive Conservative Party and not to the people of the province of Alberta. The fact is that through documents of this nature, through these contracts, we're making commitments

with respect to the spending of public money. And it's becoming an increasing way of operating in this province that the provincial government is involved right up to the top of the hip waders in providing financial assistance to all kinds of business enterprises. It's involved in a myriad of commercial transactions to the tune of billions and billions of dollars. And this particular lease, small as it may seem, is merely symbolic of the position of the government, the untenable position of the government, with respect to documentation relating to these billions of dollars.

When we're dealing with public money, it's public business; it's not private business. This has got to end, and it will soon end, because the people of this province are beginning to catch on quite rapidly.

MR. SPEAKER: Summation, Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we talk in terms of secrecy, secrecy is normally only prevailed upon us when there is a desire to not disclose something or to keep something hidden from the public, from the people that may have an interest in that particular item, an interest normally for the common good.

Mr. Speaker, it's my belief that the public is becoming more and more concerned about the government's paranoia to keep available information from the public, to keep it hidden. When I say government, I refer not only to this government but some other governments as well. But, in particular, it appears this provincial government has a paranoia about the release of information which would simply contribute to good government, which would contribute to the public being informed on matters which they should be informed of.

Now, when we look specifically at this particular lease -- and there is a history to this motion; it wasn't brought forward for no purpose, at all. This, of course, is that site that was very, very troublesome to us in the riding of Edmonton-Whitemud, a site that had been previously owned by the people that were leasing it. It was then sold by that particular company, or it was acquired by the Crown, by the provincial government, as part of the restricted development area and then leased back. Now, as to what the selling price was and that type of documentation, I have no idea, and that is not the purpose of my motion, to obtain that information. The purpose of my motion, Mr. Speaker, is to obtain the information that is pertinent to that particular lease arrangement, and the reason for that is to try and get some indication as to what steps were taken to ensure that there would be suitable soil testing taken, as to who would be responsible if there was a need for a cleanup.

I find it extremely difficult to comprehend how anybody would go into a particular arrangement and simply buy land without those types of conditions in there. I'm sure if it was the private marketplace, they would have done some soil testing; they would have taken soil samples. It's common knowledge what was on that site before the government purchased it. How could the government have sat back and bought that particular piece of property and not placed those conditions in there? And I assume that there are no conditions in there that would make it a requirement for the previous owner to pay that up to \$1 million cleanup cost, possibly more; we're not sure of the exact figure. I have to assume it's not in there. And it's to my benefit -- I think it's to the benefit of all Members of this Legislative Assembly -- to have a copy of that lease agreement so that we

can look at that lease agreement and we can use that as a gauge to improve upon future lease agreements.

Mr. Speaker, this particular one, if I recall correctly, was owned by Mayer Metals for a lengthy period of time before they actually leased it back from the provincial government. My understanding, my background information is such that the provincial government was fully aware at the time that the intended continuing use would be for the storage of industrial equipment, industrial supplies, industrial waste that could in fact lead one to speculate there was the possibility of contributing factors such as the low-level PCBs that were on site.

Mr. Speaker, obviously there is some reason other than simply not wanting to turn the lease over for fear of the implications it may have to other persons that are into leasing agreements with the province. Even those other particular ones that may be referred to -- I don't have any problem in even seeing those released. It is common practice that they are released. But it would lead me to believe that, for some particular reason, the province is hesitant on releasing this. And I have to assume from that that it's because the taxpayers of the province of Alberta are going to be eventually stuck for the \$1 million tab to clean it up.

Mr. Speaker, I would certainly hope that other members in this House will concur with the motion that is here so we can do what is in the common interest of the people of Alberta, not simply what may be in the common interest of the members of the House that are on that particular side.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude.

[Motion lost]

194. Mr. Mitchell moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing all documents outlining terms of reference and guidelines for the environmental impact assessments associated with the forestry management agreements for the following:

- (1) the Athabasca pulp mill, Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc.;
- (2) the Peace River pulp mill, Daishowa Canada Co. Ltd.; and
- (3) Slave Lake pulp mill, Alberta Energy Company.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I reviewed this motion very carefully, and I have to inform the House that I can't accept it for the following reasons.

There is not an environmental impact assessment done on the forest management area of a pulp mill; it is site specific. The projects that are listed on here -- the Athabasca pulp mill has the environmental impact assessment under way, being site specific. That will of course be available, as well as the Peace River mill -- the Daishowa mill -- and the Slave Lake mill.

The whole area of environmental impact assessments doesn't fit all situations. It certainly is essential and useful in assessing the short- and long-term impacts of site-specific developments. The way it works in a forest management agreement is that the forest management agreement encompasses the umbrella agreement, and in that they have to come forward -- by "them" I mean the companies -- with a preliminary forest management plan within 12 months. Then they must come forward with another one that outlines it for three years. The reason it's done that way rather than each time, Mr. Speaker, is that you would

have to do an environmental impact assessment each year, because a forest is a changing resource and must be adaptable each year. Wildlife, for example, move from one area to another. You have to be able to adapt that occurrence in your management plan. Watershed management is also taken into account. There are very stringent environmental controls. The companies have biologists on staff as well as our biologists, and we make sure that we've had those discussions with trappers and hunters and others with respect to areas. That's also made part of your annual plan.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

The environmental impact assessment would only occur once, but the annual operating plan that must be approved is always open to full public input and is an opportunity for the public to review. It's very important in a forest resource that the public does have that opportunity, and they have a chance to have their input and review and make comments and suggestions and recommendations that encompass all the environmental concerns. As well, the professional foresters and wildlife managers have set in place a comprehensive system of checks and balances to ensure that environmentally sound forestry is the kind that's practised in Alberta.

I know there are repeated calls for environmental impact assessments by the opposition in forest management agreement areas. That isn't coming from the public; it's coming from certain select groups. Because if you study closely the forest management agreement and you're involved in the annual operating plans and the input into those annual operating plans, I think it would be a regressive step to have to do an environmental impact assessment and all that would entail, each year on each area. The area that is outlined in the forest management agreement for a company to log in -- until their annual management plan is in place, they cannot cut any wood. Also, we need that opportunity partway through the year, when they're cutting that wood. We need that opportunity to go in there and say: "No. Because of wildlife concerns, water management concerns, fishery concerns -- or whatever they might be -- we have to adapt that management plan." There has to be that flexibility to allow professionals and the public to have that opportunity to make sure that it's a flexible plan but doesn't compromise the environment in any way.

Mr. Speaker, I regret that because of the way it is worded, I must ask for a rejection of this particular motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hadn't intended to debate this motion, but I do wish to respond to the remarks made by the minister because he said that it's only the opposition that wants an environmental impact assessment in the forestry operations and that nobody in the public wants one; another cynical attempt to divide us from the public, Mr. Speaker. I think my experience is quite a bit different than that, starting -- and I think it's valuable to go back and look at the hearings held by the Environment Council of Alberta into forestry operations in Alberta in the 1970s and the landmark report on the environmental impact of forestry operations published in 1978. A critical recommendation of that report was that the province of Alberta should be very careful about signing new forest manage-

ment agreements because of the long-term impact on the environment and all of the other impacts which I suppose should be considered environmental impacts as well, in a broader sense.

These are critical decisions that tie up vast tracts of land over a long period of time. I simply make the point that having an environmental impact assessment will allow informed debate, discussion, and dialogue about the policies that govern forestry practices within those areas. You see in various parts of the world tremendous fights over logging practices. In the community of Ladysmith in British Columbia right now people are blockading roads over a forestry company practice of logging too close to their water supply.

Now, I hope we never get in our province where people are blockading highways in protest against forestry operations and the types of logging practices that go on. I think the only way to be sure of that is to make sure that we know what we're doing when we sign these agreements -- "we" meaning not just ministers of the Crown but members of the public who are concerned about forestry operations, and there are a lot of those.

The other evening we had brief discussion about what's happening in the province of Ontario and the fact that there is a \$30 million environmental impact assessment in the forestry operations going on 20, 30 years after the fact. Again, I don't want to see us get into a situation where we're studying not environmentally sound logging practices in the future, but how do we cover up and heal the mistakes of the past. I don't think we want to get into that, and I think the way to avoid it -- and this is the whole technology of environmental impact assessment -- is you talk about it ahead of time rather than talking about it after the fact.

The minister several times has said that there will be opportunities for public involvement in the forestry management plan, the annual logging plans. I think that's been a deficiency in the past, that by and large it's been a bilateral negotiation between the Forest Service on the one hand and the company on the other hand, with minor input from other branches and departments of government and very little input from the public. If the minister is moving in a direction that way, I applaud it, but I think we should have some more details at some point in time.

I take it the reason for not approving the motion is that there are no guidelines for environmental impact assessments on forestry operations, forest management agreements, because there aren't going to be environmental impact assessments into forestry management agreements, and I think that's a shame. I think it's a shame for the reasons I've already stated, but also because we now have an environmental impact assessment on the Alberta-Pacific project which does include timber harvesting operations. Somehow the Minister of the Environment and his federal colleague are going to structure an environmental impact assessment with respect to the Al-Pac project which examines the impact of timber harvesting operations on native Indian reserve lands.

Now, we have a problem here because, first of all, nobody knows who's going to do the environmental impact statement, which is the first part of our EIA process, so that there's something to talk about in the hearings. Nobody knows who's going to prepare that document. When it was raised in question period, the Minister of the Environment handed that over to the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, and the minister said that he didn't want anything to do with it, basically, which is his position today. Now, how in the world this Al-Pac review panel is going to hold hearings into the environmental impact of tim-

ber harvesting operations without an impact statement to begin with, is beyond me. I mean, I think that's a significant problem with those hearings that's yet to be ironed out between the two ministers, the one who signs an agreement saying, yes, we'll have an EIA into timber harvesting operations but only on federal native Indian reserve lands, and the other minister who says it's impractical; it's folly; we shouldn't have anything to do with it. That's got to be ironed out before those hearings can proceed.

My argument on that point is simply: if it's a good idea to have an environmental impact assessment on the timber harvesting as it affects Indian reserve lands, it's also a good idea to have the environmental impact assessment as it affects lands in Alberta jurisdiction, because people who are within Alberta jurisdiction have every bit the right to be apprised of how these activities will affect the environment as do people who happen to live on Indian reserve lands. So it'd be nice to have some reconsideration on this point.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed in the response I have received from the minister. I'm not disappointed, I suppose, to the extent that in fact he has answered the question, and I think if you read between the lines of his answer, it's very clear: his answer is that there are not terms of reference and guidelines for environmental assessments associated with the forestry management agreements for these projects.

This is disappointing for any number of reasons. One, because this government has made the commitment, on many occasions, that there would be proper environmental assessments and subsequent approvals on the forestry management area. I can recall on numerous occasions the Minister of the Environment trying to get out of a difficult situation in question period on the EIA, the environmental impact assessment process, for these projects, saying: "No, no, no. Forestry management agreements and their environmental assessment are different, and they will follow." Well, "follow" isn't good enough, because we want to see that the approvals for those areas are in place before construction were to begin. But it's not even the case that they will follow.

In fact, what we see here revealed today is a very, very vague process of assessing the potential impact of these pulp mills via their forestry management area agreements on huge tracts of land in this province. We know that there are grave concerns about the clear-cutting techniques that this government has allowed companies to use in the past and will very likely permit companies to use in the future on these projects. We know that projects that cut timber and require transportation networks through the forests have huge impacts on wildlife habitat, on migratory patterns that can, in fact, endanger species that are indigenous to a given area. There are species in the area, for example, of the Athabasca pulp mill forest management agreement which are, even now, in serious danger. The woodland caribou is an example; certain owl species, and so on. But there will be no, obviously, no concerted, structured, responsible environmental impact assessment of those areas despite the huge geographic area they cover and despite the magnitude of the environmental impact clear-cutting and other forestry techniques, forestry infrastructure, will have on those areas. I am also disappointed, not only because the minister is, in fact, saying that they do not have guidelines but because that answer raises even further doubts about the Alberta-Pacific environmental impact assessment.

Mr. Speaker, if I could draw your attention and the attention of the members of this House to page 1.5 of the Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc. environmental impact assessment, I would like to point out one very, very critical sentence which this company has construed as a defence of the inadequacy or the lack of breadth of this environmental impact assessment. They have anticipated the question of assessing forestry management areas in leaving that assessment out of this impact assessment document, which is only site specific, and they say:

Environmental impacts . . .

And I draw the minister's attention to this. This is important.

. . . associated with forestry operations are outside the scope of this assessment and will be addressed in separate reports filed with the Alberta Forest Service.

It would come to my mind that these reports will be filed by Alberta-Pacific.

It seems to me difficult for Alberta-Pacific to know what reports are required, what the nature of those reports would be, what kind of financial commitment would be involved in assessing the information required for those reports if they don't receive from the Minister of the Environment or from the minister responsible for Forestry, Lands and Wildlife guidelines which would indicate to them how to do those environmental impact assessments. We know for sure that if they're going to get guidelines at all, they have to come from one of these two ministers; they have to be at the whim of these two ministers, because such guidelines are not laid out in legislation as they should be, as is the case in other jurisdictions. I would encourage the Minister of the Environment, who's shaking his head, that in this proposed review of environmental impact assessments he address the issue of guidelines for environmental impact assessments for forestry management areas.

It may be, and I accept that certain features of this geographic area could be assessed on an as-required basis when that particular area is going to be addressed by the timbering operation. It might be that there should be some flexibility in that. However, I think that most reasonable people who are concerned with the environment are now agreed that there is a consensus; that is, that we require a baseline environmental impact assessment for these areas so that we know from which standards, from which signposts, milestones, we are changing and altering the environment. It will, as sure as we are sitting here today, be the case that company A or company B will say: "No, everything's okay. Oh, yeah, there's a little bit of this effluent in the river, but it's not significant." We won't know how significant it is on one scale unless we know how much different it is than it was before they started. We need a baseline environmental impact assessment that underlines, that precedes, perhaps, more flexible environmental impact assessments for given areas or given environmental issues within a forestry management agreement.

If I'm not mistaken, the minister has said that there will be ample chance for public input. I'd like to know how that's going to occur. There are no guidelines for that public input. No environmental impact assessment public hearings have been called for the forestry management areas. No environmental assessment board has been established that could hear the public input. Are the foresters and the environmental staff going to stop at farms and say, "Well, we'd like your input on this particular environmental issue"? Are they going to drop into the town and say, "We'd like your input," or are they going to have a coffee party? How is it that this is going to occur? It would

seem to me that one of the most important features of the minister's defence of the process they've got is that there would be room for public input. We don't see that room, and that would be one of the features of properly structured guidelines for environmental impact assessments under a forestry management agreement which I am requesting in this motion for a return.

It simply isn't good enough, Mr. Speaker. There are outstanding issues, issues of substantive environmental concern with respect to these forestry management areas that are not being addressed, that have not been addressed. They are habitat issues; they are migratory pattern issues; they are: how do you recycle or regenerate a boreal forest, a mixed forest of aspen and spruce? The techniques that are required -- one, we do not know whether we even have them, and two, even if we have them, we're not certain that they work, and nobody is making a concerted effort to assess that. These projects have been ill-conceived in the way that this government has approached them from the outset. It's not getting any better. The hope that we might see some improvement reflected in the minister's response to this motion for a return has turned to disappointment. I'm sorry to see that. I would, nevertheless, encourage the members of this Legislature to support my Motion for a Return 194.

[Motion lost]

195. Mr. Mitchell moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing

- (1) the documents that constitute the written presentation of the Ghost River integrated resource plan,
- (2) the documents presented by public intervenors in the public hearings process relating to the plan,
- (3) the schedule of public hearings related to this plan, and
- (4) the names of those individuals presiding over the public hearings.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I have had discussions with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, and I propose an amendment which he has agreed to and which you have a copy of. I'd like to read the text of the amendment.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Perhaps this motion should be circulated to all members of the Assembly before we . . .

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, while it's being circulated, I'll read into the record the motion.

That Motion for a Return 195 be amended by deleting the words in part (2) "in the public hearings process relating to the plan," and substituting therefor the words "at public open houses and information exchange sessions,"

The reason for the amendment, Mr. Speaker, is to make sure I can file with the Assembly what's being asked, and the change in wording will allow that.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Has any member not received a copy of the amendment?

[Motion as amended carried]

196. Mr. Mitchell moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of any employee conflict-of-interest guidelines implemented by the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife under section 23(2) of the Public Service Act, *RSA 1980*.

[Motion carried]

197. On behalf of Mr. Wickman, Mr. Mitchell moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a detailed account showing
- (1) all provincial grants to amateur sporting groups or individuals, including the name and location of the recipient, amount granted, and the purpose for which the funds are to be used; and
  - (2) all provincial grants to professional sporting groups or individuals, including name and location of the recipient, amount granted, and the purpose for which the funds are to be used.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I'll have to reject this motion. Although it carries merit for answers for a very positive level with all the groups in the province, it's quite sloppily prepared. It targets, first, no time frame. It asks for a detailed showing of accounts for provincial grants to many organizations. It could go back to time immemorial, and I have to reject it on that principle. Again it doesn't target any department. If you have all provincial grants, you could be taking in some seven or 10 departments that flow through to different organizations from different groups, all the way from lotteries right up to the grants that go through Education, Advanced Education, and the Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

So rather than amend this motion for a return, I reject it so that it could be brought back in a better fashion, better targeted to the purpose of the motion for a return.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I dispute the minister's response. I believe that while it may be that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud hasn't been able to anticipate all the specific criteria that the government or that minister would need to respond properly and adequately to this question, certainly the minister can anticipate all those criteria. As was the case with my Motion 195, and is common practice within this House, those ministers who are willing to be forthcoming will make amendments. I can see where a number of amendments consistent with what the minister's concerns were would quickly meet those concerns and fix the problem. We would certainly be prepared to sit down and talk about date guidelines, perhaps the last year or the last two years. We would certainly be prepared to sit down and limit the sources of funding to, for example, lotteries. That would be a very good place to start, in fact, because it is lottery funding which we know does not have to come before this Legislature. In fact, that process is a travesty of the democratic process.

It is a very, very reasonable request that is being pursued in this motion for a return. It is also a very reasonable concern that the minister would want us to refine it. We would be happy to refine it. We would be happy to contemplate amendments. I am left simply with one further question, and that is: why is it that the minister would not want to contemplate some kind of amendments so that we could get information, some of which is already public and the rest of which that isn't we would simply

like to receive?

[Motion lost]

198. Mr. McInnis moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all reports prepared by and for the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife on the Ice Age Company operations at Cline Glacier.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Minister of the Environment for ordering an environmental impact assessment into the Ice Age Company mining operation for the yuppie ice cubes, the ones that sink to the bottom of your glass. But I do feel that it's important that the conclusions of the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife in respect to this operation be available prior to the environmental impact assessment process. For that reason I move Motion 198.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I of course always would like to provide whatever information I can. However, in this case I am unable to provide any information because they are internal documents. The way the approach works under the integrated resource plans is that they apply for a miscellaneous permit, the application comes forward, and that's subject to all the internal reviews after. If that meets all of the criteria under our legislation and regulation that everything would be sufficiently controlled and the operations would not compromise environmental values and all of that, then it goes forward from there and has to get approval from the Minister of the Environment. In this particular case of the Ice Age Company it was only a one-year, and there were very strict criteria with respect to the helicopter path they were allowed to go in on and what they were allowed to take in and what they were allowed to do. I'm not making a judgment on whether it's a good business, a poor business, or whatever. My job in this department is to make sure that it meets within the criteria. Of course, to make another application this coming year, they now would have to do the same thing, and this year the Minister of the Environment has said that he wants the complete environmental impact assessment done before he would give the necessary licences.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can't provide any of the information that's asked, because it's internal documents. So I ask that the motion be rejected.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark to close the debate.

MR. MITCHELL: No, I wouldn't be closing it. I'm prolonging debate, but with good reason, Mr. Speaker.

I wonder if the minister could just indicate whether -- did he say that he can't reveal these reports because they're documents internal to his department? Did he just nod his head? No? Oh.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The minister has already participated, and according to the rules, he's not allowed to again take the floor.

MR. MITCHELL: He simply mumbled. I couldn't quite get it, but I will operate on this.

Clearly, there are documents that must have been prepared by this minister's department, because as I understand it, it goes from his department to the Environment department, and I sim-

ply think it's not a reasonable response to say that these are documents internal to his department. If I'm not mistaken, *Beauchesne* makes it very clear that documents that are public documents, to the extent that they're in a file, should be documents that are available in the House as a reasonable request. We're looking for studies. I think it's a very reasonable request to try to find studies, assessments, that this government made before it allowed Ice Age Company operations at the Cline Glacier last year, before it made that decision. It is one thing to say that they're going to improve the decision-making process this time; it's another thing for us to have an assessment of what was the state of that decision-making process last time.

Therefore, I would encourage the House to pass this motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place wishes to close the debate.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think this whole operation is becoming more and more problematic rather than less so. My understanding is that this began more or less as a trespass, that some people went there and started gathering up ice to be fashioned into very expensive ice cubes and then they were issued a miscellaneous permit to sort of legitimize the operation -- with certain restrictions, admittedly « and now the Environment minister has come along and said, "Well, wait a minute; we'd better check this out and see whether it's a good idea," in what was part of a wilderness area but I understand is now what's called a prime protection zone.

So there is a concern among some Albertans that this wilderness area is now open to certain types of commercial operations, and I think it's reasonable of them to want to have an environmental impact assessment. But, again, how do you do that if you don't have access to the conclusions of the biologists employed by the provincial government in respect of the question of how this is going to impact upon the environment of that area, especially the wildlife of that area? I think it's a bit misleading to say to the public, "Well, we're going to have an environmental impact assessment and give you an opportunity to review this thing" if the government isn't prepared to make the information in its possession available prior to those hearings.

I know that the Minister of the Environment thought he was doing a good thing in this, because his executive assistant was phoning me to offer me some information, and that's the first time that's ever happened. So I assume he must feel that he's done a capital "G" good thing by ordering an environmental impact assessment into this operation. But then along comes the other minister and says: "Well, guess what? We can have the impact assessment, but we can't know what the government biologists think about this thing and what they've done." I think it's a bit of a mistake to operate a government in that fashion, if I may say so, with all due respect, because these people work for the public. I know that the biologists who work for the government have the view that their job is to serve the public by protecting the wildlife of our province for time to come. Therefore, I think they would feel that they were only serving the public better if this information were available.

I really hope we can change the minister's mind on this one, because the government has ordered the environmental impact assessment; it's gone half-way toward meeting public concern. Why not go all the way and make the information available to go along with it?

[Motion lost]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pursuant to Standing Order 8(3), we must now move to the next order of business.

head: **PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS  
OTHER THAN  
GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS  
(Second Reading)**

**Bill 207  
Alberta Primary Health Care  
Trust Fund Act**

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and the members of the Assembly. I'm very, very proud to be able to stand today in the Assembly and present Bill 207, which I'm calling an Alberta Primary Health Care Trust Fund Act.

Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, this Act before us, though I want to have a good, lively debate here today and it needs some work in the next little while, I think bears the seed of what might well prove to be a revolution in the health care system, somewhat as I referred to in estimates last week, not just a revolution in terms of evaluating exactly what's going on currently but also shifting the system we have and as we know it, shifting more of the methods and means and incentives within the system much more toward the primary end of health care; that is, the end where we most experience health care: in the community and at the first point of becoming aware of how we ourselves in our community can renew our own health.

So the Bill really is calling on us to be creative, Mr. Speaker. I think what we want to do with this Bill is to draw out the creativity of members of the Assembly and members of our constituencies and people throughout the province to really think creatively about some innovations and new initiatives in terms of primary health care, whether it's prevention or health promotion, and actually, then, to give it some teeth and give it some money. It's not just to talk about it, not just to give it another motherhood kind of statement, but actually to set up a fund and a pool of money, carefully allocated, through which people can get access to some very necessary funds to begin to get beyond the rhetorical stage and get to some really exciting, innovative, creative projects which we in the province need with respect to our primary health care.

Just before I go any further, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce some people who are here visiting with us today. Could I introduce them? Could we revert to Introduction of Special Guests, Mr. Speaker?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the House agree that we revert to the Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

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

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



REV. ROBERTS: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly.

Visiting with us today and supporting this Bill and the number of things behind it, I'm pleased to be able to introduce to members of the Assembly members of the Primary Health Care Society of Edmonton, including Shelley Lester, their vice-president, Helena Voth, Lorraine Dawe, Janet Dixon and, I believe, Ida Samson as well. In addition, we have with us Jean Innes, who's a faculty person at the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Alberta here in Edmonton but is a leader within the nursing community with respect to primary health care; as well as Mr. Les Hagen, the executive director of Action on Smoking and Health here in Edmonton in the province. I'd like to ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of members of the Assembly.

head: **PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS  
OTHER THAN  
GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS  
(Second Reading)**

**Bill 207  
Alberta Primary Health Care  
Trust Fund Act  
(continued)**

REV. ROBERTS: So what is primary health care anyway, some have asked. I think this term seems somewhat self-explanatory, but let's get clearly on the record what we're talking about with this term. Really, in fairness, it hasn't been around in terms of this concept for too long a period. It was officially described and defined at a World Health Organization conference back in 1978. Just for the record, I'd like to read the World Health Organization's definition of primary health care. I think it will be self-explanatory to most members: Primary health care is essential health care based on practical, scientifically sound, and socially acceptable methods and technology made universally acceptable to individuals and families in the community through their full participation and at a cost that the community and the country can afford. It forms an integral part of both the country's health system, of which it is the central function and main focus, and the overall social and economic development of the community. It is the first level of contact of individuals, the family, and the community with the health system, bringing health care as close as possible to where people live and work, and constitutes the first element of a continuing care system.

That, I think, sums up in a nutshell what primary health care, understood in this concept, is really all about. It's basically low cost. It's community based. It's not high tech. It's not going to cost a lot of money. It's not necessarily medical. It has to do with health, not necessarily medicine. It's the first line of health concern and not the secondary, which has to do with more chronic diseases, or tertiary, which is very heavy trauma or very intensive care kinds of medical situations. It's not that. It's at the primary level.

Members can see in the Bill that the fund would be set up to get at some of these things under section 2(2):

The purpose of the fund [would be] to support initiatives contributing to the improvement of health services for Albertans [in the areas of]

(a) activities that contribute to the development of prevention

and promotion programs in the health care field;

(b) activities that contribute to the development of community health care programs

to further the work of the boards of health and the health units.

(c) activities that introduce incentives for the economical delivery of health care services,

a goal we all want to reach.

(d) activities that investigate future directions in health care services.

We have the Hyndman commission currently doing that, but what about after the Hyndman commission? I hope we're not going to stop in terms of looking down the line at what's coming and how to deal with that. So we need some ongoing ways to keep that agenda open.

(e) activities that promote access to quality care in mental health services

or in some of the more rural or remote regions of the province.

A big issue in this area as well is funding for retraining. Of ten persons get into the health care field but need some continuing education or retraining to meet the needs of developing issues which arise that they haven't got the basic training for. Or:

(h) generally to support measures aimed at improving the health status of Albertans.

We've spent a lot of money in the health care system, but we need to sit back and ask: are we healthier as a result? Is our morbidity rate any less or our mortality rate any longer? Are we having a higher quality of life as a result of what we're spending? What is our heart disease rate? What is our cancer rate? What is our accident rate? All these things have to do with our health status, and we need to look clearly at that in ways to set some goals and targets as to how to improve our health status. In fact, Mr. Speaker, as I've looked at the legislation, as far as I know, the term "health status" here is the first time it appears in any legislative drafting. I'm very pleased to begin finally talking on a legislative level about health status and how to improve it.

With respect to the fund, again we can have some debate here. I'm not committed entirely to how I propose initially to set it up. We know how the trust fund has been used for a variety of different purposes in the province, and I'm pleased to be able to be on the Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee and find out more about allocations through the trust fund, but we have some experience in this area with, for instance, the already existing Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research or for nursing research. Dollars have been allocated in the capital way, interest of which is used for a particular area. I would set up the fund in a similar sort of way, that we would in fact allocate a capital amount of some \$200 million from a variety of sources, primarily the trust fund, the interest of which, 10 percent, say \$20 million, would be allocated each year for projects which comply with the goals of the Bill; \$20 million dollars a year to enliven and embolden a number of these community initiatives, which are going to have two aims: one, to improve health status, and secondly, to lower overall costs. Now, if we can have projects which are going to meet that criteria, then let's give them some funding. Let's give them some dollars in which to meet those goals. I'd point out to members -- again, we can argue the exact dollar figures -- that if we set up \$20 million in which to fund these kinds of projects, that's still less than 1 percent of all we spend on health care in the province currently at the \$2.7 billion level. I'm saying let's take even less than 1 percent of that, \$20 million, to this special fund and dedicate it for these purposes.

Now, again I would argue two primary reasons as to why we need the fund now in the province. One -- and members might argue that we're doing this already through the existing boards of health or through the FCSS, and a number of volunteer groups are coming up with ideas and so on, but I fundamentally disagree. In my discussions with people in the health units and throughout the province who are in the community side of the health care sector, their resources are more stretched and strained than ever. They're having to meet a lot of existing needs with some very limited dollars. And they say over and over again to me that we have incredible numbers of ideas in terms of prevention, in terms of some health promotion activities, but we just can't get the extra funding we need to pilot some ideas or to get it tested out there in the community, because in fact we have enough of a time just meeting the budget for already existing programs. Again, it's difficult.

We hear the rhetoric from the federal level, whether it's Marc Lalonde or Jake Epp or Perrin Beatty today talking about health promotion and the needs for prevention in Canada, but no funding at all to help the provinces or help local groups really get some things under way. I shouldn't say no funding. There is New Horizons and some other things they do fund, but here we could really do them and ourselves a big favour in terms of setting up a new pot of dollars in which they can really get innovative, really get creative and test out and pilot out some things which they know will be very effective.

The second reason I'd argue why this fund is necessary -- and it's again a matter of some debate, and I'd like to get into it with members. But I contend that the current health care system, as it's operating, basically is skewed with a variety of incentive patterns. It's skewed in favour of funds being zapped to the tertiary care level, to the very expensive, high-cost hospital sector. There is a variety of reasons for that. I mean, there was a time when in fact provinces could access federal dollars by virtue of how many hospital beds they bill. So if you build up the institutional sector, then you get more dollars federally. That kind of incentive, I think, perhaps is no longer, but there was a time when that was the incentive that was at work. There are still a lot of incentives today in the system which say, "Well, let's zap it to this high-tech, very expensive approach." We need to look very, very seriously and creatively at what are going to be some of the incentives for wellness, what are going to really help us keep people out of the tertiary or secondary level in the community as much as possible, and not only incentives for better health but incentives for better economizing of dollars within the health care system.

Now, there's a terrific example. We've just experienced it in the province, and I know the minister did in her estimates last week. I said, "Hallelujah." It was a great victory that we started in this province through the initiative of some very visionary people, a couple of pilot projects in terms of home care and accessing people into the long-term care sector through home care. So we set up some dollars, set up a pilot project at some of the health units, and were able to test out how it was that if we were able to get elderly people or others with long-term caring needs through home care first or through the assessment placement of home care expertise, maybe they could find some resources in the community which would forestall or make it not necessary for them to have to be admitted to the long-term care setting.

Now, this has been such a victory that the minister even in her estimates last week said it's really working, that we're able to reduce the level of admission to the long-term care sector

such that we're even at a point now, with the Mirosh report, recommending lowering the number of long-term care beds or even not building any more because of this pilot which has said, "Let's look at how we can use home care and assessment and placement through home care to reduce institutionalization." And it's worked. What a victory for everyone involved to think that this kind of incentive, this kind of pilot, has become now policy and with proper funding is going to save us, I submit, millions of dollars in terms of what would otherwise have been spent if that initiative had not been taken.

So this kind of creativity is really what this is based on. It's creativity coming from local people who know about the health care system but also know about the needs and the resources of their own community. They need not just collaboration with the various players in the community but also the necessary funding to really begin to take these initiatives the step beyond rhetoric. Again, the goal -- if they can convince us that they're going to be able to improve health status and lower costs, and if they can have some measure of effectiveness in that, then let's set up and give them some money to do that.

Now, for the remaining time I just want to suggest again to the members of the Assembly the kind of groups, the kind of initiatives, the people, the ideas, the things already existing in the province here which I would think in the first year or so of this fund being in operation could well be accessed and could well be used in terms of the dollars for them to really get on with a number of things they want to help us with. I just want to run through a number of the areas and let people see how valuable this kind of fund and the work that can be done through it would be for us in the province.

Let's look, for example, in the area of children's health. We have been very concerned -- I know on all sides of the House -- but in our caucus we've been particularly concerned about children's health, particularly in the area of mental health. Now, there is a whole lot that can be done in terms of better assessment, better meeting the needs, whether it's through crisis intervention or through better diagnosis or better home support or better community activity to support parents who have kids that are really troublesome. Whether it's actually a mental health problem or whether it's a behavioral problem or an educational problem, whatever, there needs to be a lot of interest taken in terms of children's mental health in the community. As it stands now, these kids fall through crack after crack in the system and end up in their teen years being wait-listed for psychiatric care and having dropped out of school and all kinds of attendant problems. I think some innovative people in the community could, under this fund and with this Bill, say, "We've got an idea how to develop some parent support groups, some kind of home support or some crisis intervention which would really forestall the further deterioration of children's mental health." Accessing this kind of fund, they could do some very innovative projects in a health promotion way for children.

Now, accidents among kids in this province, I'm told, are among the highest in the civilized world. The board of health in Calgary said that preventable accidents among kids is really a shame, a blight on our province; that kids, whether they fall off their bikes or fall off their tricycles or fall off their skateboards or whatever, are having a number of different accidents and there are methods and ways in which we can reduce accidents among children. Why not? Let's get on with the expertise that's already existing at the board of health and others in Calgary and really look at how we can reduce the accident rate

among children.

Or poverty. As we know, children living in families with low income and below the poverty line are really kids who are going to present more health problems than any other. Let's get some innovative projects and ways to develop more community schools, to develop more community activities, particularly in the inner city and among low-income families and single-parent moms and all the rest, to really help support them in their knowledge of health and in their being able to renew their own health. There is a program out of Nova Scotia called Nobody's Perfect, and it's a very proven program that can help kids who live in very destitute situations to improve their health.

Well, let's leave children for a moment and talk about the elderly. I wish that Diane Spillett could be reappointed, not only to the board of health but to some senior post in government. Diane Spillett left in frustration because time after time after time she'd go to the Edmonton board of health and say, "We've got some ideas here for health promotion for the elderly." She would just list them out year after year. She was being told, "Well, sorry Diane; there's just not enough money." It got assigned the lowest priority time after time. But certainly with the fastest rising population being the elderly, we can get some health promotion programs generated, whether it's in case management or self-help or foot care or housing or adult social day care programs or Meals on Wheels or helping them look at their drugs and medication levels or elder abuse or nutrition: a number of things which are very, very important for the vast majority of elderly -- I think 90 percent of the elderly are well elderly -- to keep them well. Yet why is it that we underfund this so much? I think this fund and this Bill would set up some very significant initiatives to keep well elderly healthy and to keep them from having to rely on costly institutional care.

Heart health is another one, Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly. I mean, here we sit in a province and in a country where heart disease still ranks number one in terms of disease. We spend admittedly a lot of money in terms of cardiovascular care and double or triple bypass surgery and heart transplants and all the rest. All right. I'm not arguing that. Let's look for a change, though, through this fund, what we could be doing to improve the cardiovascular health of individual Albertans throughout the province. I'm told that if we could reduce the risk factors for heart disease, we could save millions of dollars in this province by adjusting our cholesterol levels, our lipoprotein levels, the fatty tissue, and all the rest. If we can improve our exercise levels, then we can much, much clearly reduce the rate of heart disease. Or stress management. Now, all of us men sitting here get stressed out with all the problems here. [interjection] I know women don't have this problem. But what are some ways we can innovatively and creatively look at stress management, which has a clear effect on heart disease, or lowering the rate of heart disease?

MR. DAY: Cut out ambitious speeches.

REV. ROBERTS: Oh, listen. You want to see our blood pressure rise, Stockwell.

These are some things which really need to be looked at. In fact, in the literature we can see very clearly that the reduction of heart disease by very expensive high-tech spending is not at all what the reduction of heart disease can be through these low-cost but much more primary health care means. Yet heart health programs here in Edmonton or Calgary are again grossly

underfunded. They can't get the money to get programs going, and not only to get the programs going but to do some research on it.

Then we come to another area which I know everybody in the Assembly has a view on. I do want to ask them if they know what kills more Albertans than alcohol, traffic accidents, impaired driving, drug abuse, or AIDS combined? Tobacco and smoking. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, tobacco and smoking kill more Albertans than all the rest put together. I'm not saying we neglect and ignore the rest, but let's really look seriously at the use of tobacco and smoking and what impact that's having on our health in the province. I mean, it's clear that members of Action on Smoking and Health and the Non-Smokers' Rights Association have a lot they want to contribute and do in this area, but they keep being batted down time and time again by the tobacco industry and the ability of the tobacco industry to do an incredible advertising job. And you know who they direct their advertising at? It's at young people, at teenagers, and it's at slim people who want to use tobacco as almost an appetite suppressant so they can be slim and look beautiful and be a young teenager. Well, this has got to stop, and we are trying to stop it by a program called peer-assisted learning . . . [interjections] I'm sorry. I know there are some who smoke who don't have that thin problem, but that's how it's marketed. I don't know what happened here, but . . .

A peer-assisted learning program in the school system is trying to develop ways in which teens can really get first-hand knowledge that if you start to smoke, there's a problem that happens and that is that you become addicted. Nicotine is one of the most addictive substances going, and it's going to be a problem. If you're going to start smoking socially, just beware of the cost, that there's an addiction there which is very, very hard to break. Yet again they're underfunded. They don't have the funds to get these programs going and get them developed and find out how effective they are and how it can be adjusted and so on. Or even by imposing an increased tax on cigarettes. Maybe they could do a study. Say, if tax on cigarettes goes up 10 percent, does the rate of smoking go down by 4, 5, or 6 percent? Research indicates that it does. We need a bit more research. Or in terms of smoking cessation: once someone has started, how can they break the habit? I mean, we're learning an effective way we can stop people smoking once they get addicted, yet there may be some ways in which that kind of smoking cessation can be more innovatively funded or developed. Under this Bill we can get at that, and through the reduction in the rate of smoking we can not only keep the tobacco industry and its marketing powers at bay but can also develop peer-assisted learning for young people and smoking cessation for other people who really want to break the habit before they have to break into the tertiary care unit at the Royal Alex hospital for a heart bypass.

Another area is inequities in health. The federal government has talked, again somewhat rhetorically, I think, about the fact that when you look more at health, it is more a matter of social and economic inequities than any other. So looking at health initiatives among native people, among low-income people, among newcomers to Canada and to our province, multicultural groups: these are all areas where the inequities in terms of income and other social inequities really have a deleterious effect on one's health. Again, there are all kinds of some very proven programs which at a primary care level, if they were to get some commensurate funding, could develop some very strong ways of

reducing some of those inequities and meeting the needs of people in some particularly low-income and difficult areas.

Multicultural health is a big one here. As we become more of a province that wants to be for all of us, we can't continue to impose white European medicine on people. Even as they go up to Lac Ste. Anne this week, there are other things that work on people's health, and I think with some innovation and creativity, meeting the criteria under this Bill and this fund, a lot can be done to reduce ill health which is a result of inequities in our society.

I want to talk, too, about workplace health and safety. This fund could be used for people who want to develop some interesting and new and creative or already proven areas in the workplace that can make work environments far, far more healthy and reduce the rate of accident, injury, and disease because of the workplace.

Women's health: again, a prime area where there is a lot of unnecessary medicalization and hospitalization of women and where, through some primary health care initiatives and some innovative thinking and proposals under this fund, a lot could be done in terms of the resources, the information, the referral system, which can much better enable women's health and at a much lower cost, particularly in the area of reproductive care. I mean, the incidence of women in this province who have low birth-weight children is staggering, and we need to do a whole lot more in terms of pregnancy to reduce the rate of low-weight births. There are a number of areas where we can really develop some primary health care ways to improve women's health, particularly in the reproductive area.

Now, again we're told that despite the fact that someone wants to improve their health or health status or despite the fact the system might want them to do that, a lot of it really is reliant upon them being part and parcel of some self-help groups or some peer support, and there are a number of ways in which at a primary care level in the community people can develop some very health-promoting life-styles, but they need some better self-help groups and mutual support.

Of course, the primary one here is AA, and we know of the value Alcoholics Anonymous has and continues to have for people with drinking problems. But there is a whole variety of others, and under this Bill, with this fund, self-help groups could apply for some funding and set up better self-help and mutually supportive groups, whether it's parenting or whether it's in grief or loss or, again, in smoking or people who have had cancer problems and want to work with others in terms of mutual support. There are migraine headache support groups, people who work together in terms of things they can do to help reduce migraine headaches, a whole variety of self-help groups, and they, too, would be eligible, and it would be a primary health care thing that would go a long way.

I don't want to touch too much on sexually-transmitted diseases, but again we have just heard from the STD director in the province a week or so ago that chlamydia is growing in terms of sexually-transmitted diseases, yet we know how to reduce transmission of chlamydia. Yet the education programs and the information programs and so on just aren't there. Under this Bill we could find some ways to do that.

All of this is based on us needing some much better data and information than we currently have. Part of this fund could be set up for people to do some innovative research and to get the statistics necessary to prove that, yes, this prevention, this health-promoting, this activity really in the long run meets the

criteria of improving health status and lowering cost, just as we saw in the single point of entry system. There's a host of others out there, yet we're told, "Well, we don't know if it works." Let's give them some money. Let's find out how and when it does work, ways in which perhaps it might need some adjusting, and so on. With this kind of funding, that kind of necessary information and research data could be accumulated and a lot more could be done to increase health status, reduce costs, because we know, and we have it proven on record, that it is statistically the case.

We know from Gerry Bonham and people at the Calgary board of health about the 1 percent solution. He's got it all documented there. He says if we do these things, it takes less than one 1 percent of the current budget. We can save hundreds of millions of dollars. What we don't have is the continuing development of the data in other areas, let alone the funding to do what he's already advocating.

I know now that members are all convinced and supportive of my Bill, and I don't need to say much more. I just want to close by saying something I said over three years ago in this Assembly, because it still rings true as I read through it. It forms the basis, I think, of this Bill and a lot of activity which we need to do in the health care system, and it really means that what we need to do is to articulate another vision. How we get there is by no means clear, but the scientific and demographic forces before us are unprecedented. There is no doubt that the current industry players are rich and powerful, and it seems to me that the government and we in the province of Alberta must have the ingenuity and the innovative thought and policy to develop an efficient system whereby the people of Alberta can renew their own health and their own well-being, and the health care system before us is one which much more promotes the health of the common good other than just treating the sicknesses of our various pathologies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must admit that I am a little puzzled by what the hon. member is trying to achieve here in Bill 207. It appears that the member is trying to rewrite the Department of Health Act and has incorporated in his Bill the very planning and policy process we already have in place in Alberta. I'd also like to remind the member that the Minister of Health gave her estimates on July 21 and I wondered if he was paying any attention, because these funds that you just outlined are already available. I'd just like to draw your attention to the prevention and promotion programs that are already occurring with regard to the minister's budget. In the family and community program grant there's almost \$32 million; prevention of communicable diseases, \$12 million; independent living benefits, \$43 million. Twenty-seven health units in the province of Alberta are providing primary health and home care, environmental health, dental health, speech and audiology, auxiliary health. All this totals \$137 million being dedicated towards these programs.

REV. ROBERTS: Talk to Gerry Bonham.

MRS. MIROSH: I have talked to Gerry Bonham. He has a substantial budget and should be adopting some of these prevention

and promotion materials. They're there and so are the dollars, and they've just been increased 47 percent from last year.

Believe me, if these people in the health units cannot use these dollars to benefit prevention and promotion of health, then I really question their management of these dollars. There is a total of \$251 million already dedicated towards prevention and health programs. The long-term care program that I chaired: we're very proud of the recommendations that were submitted to the minister, and the minister is developing these programs as part of policy. It will happen over a four-year period. There is \$400 million dedicated towards prevention and promotion and wellness.

The minister's commitment, by addressing these programs, is being made by the adoption of a long-term care department in her department. They're implementing and co-ordinating health programs and directing them specifically to the elderly. This is a substantial commitment. It is also very economical, since the program is looking at home care and prevention of elderly entering into institutions and helping them exit institutions. There does have to be a very great balance between primary care and tertiary care. We do need to take care of the ill. We can't avoid that; we have to have institutions. We have to have a balance of both.

You mention in here about quality care. It's measured -- it's already in place -- by ongoing seminars being held in institutions and throughout the province with health care units, and in-service education is in our postsecondary care facilities. Quality assurance programs are being addressed by accreditation programs, and these are all aimed at improving the health status of Albertans. Albertans are very proud of all these programs they have in place. It's better than any other province in Canada.

There is also, I might add, just in the estimates given yesterday with regard to nursing research, \$1 million committed to nursing research five years forward. Nurses are very happy about this. There are retraining programs, training programs in place throughout the province of Alberta in our schools.

Then you mentioned also the women's illness. I'd like to just allude the hon. member to the Women's Health Centre, which is a preventative care program at the Grace hospital, and it's a very successful program. These programs are already in place, and that particular one was done on the initiative of that local board of health and that hospital within the funding that they already had. You don't need to continually throw dollars to provide these programs. The health promotion and risk reduction activities include the antismoking campaigns. The *Baby's Best Chance* television series about birthing and parenting, presented twice annually in co-operation with the ACCESS Network, and the advertising program Good Health is Everybody's Business and the Alberta heart health survey, which will be used to obtain information on the risk factors for those with cardiovascular diseases, which can then be used for health promotion campaigns in Alberta: this is already being done. I don't know where you've been.

The seniors' medical alert programs and many other seniors' programs are already coming into place, and dollars are being put towards these programs. This was recently announced with lower incomes to obtain grants for seniors to obtain these medical alert systems. The funds will also be available to assist volunteer groups to establish or expand the medical alert network.

The Premier has announced major initiatives to strengthen the family and to fight alcohol and drug abuse, including the

establishment of the Alberta family life and drug abuse foundation, which will encourage efforts addressed at prevention, research, and treatment of drug and other addictions. There's an early intervention initiative currently under way, which includes Alberta's early intervention program for families with children who have problems in developing, and the development of a single-entry approach, which you have alluded to with regards to long-term care. This has been a very effective program, and you alluded to the fact that it was piloted in Calgary and the rural area. Foothills health unit has been very successful. They've received extra dollars for this, and it will be an ongoing program. Many rural areas have adopted the single-entry approach through the health units without extra dollars. It's been very, very effective. Vermilion is an example.

There are a variety of programs directed at communicable diseases, which I've already mentioned with regards to the cost. This includes flu vaccine programs and various other screening programs for children and education programs. Alberta's program for the prevention, management, and control of AIDS disease was announced in October 1987, with the major thrust being on prevention through education. A report outlining a plan for care and treatment of persons with AIDS and HIV has been prepared, and consultation is taking place within this field. Funding this proposal from established programs funding, EPF, totally undermines the principles of EPF.

Mr. Speaker, there are just so many programs and community health services as well. There are ongoing programs in suicide prevention and mental health service clinics, approved home programs, and funding of community agencies, all totaling, just in that area on mental health services, \$27 million. Those dollars are already there, and the utilization of those dollars depends on the administration and the management of them. So I really cannot support a Bill like this. The member mentioned the possibility of \$21 million. Half the budget, \$3 billion, is being spent now for health care services for Albertans. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make my submission against this Bill.

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

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to join the Member for Edmonton-Centre in welcoming the guests from the Primary Health Care Society -- I hope I have the term correctly -- as well as Mr. Hagen from ASH. I would also like to congratulate the Member for Edmonton-Centre on presenting this Bill. It reflects his usual progressive, enlightened approach to issues. I divine from his comments that this particular Bill is not intended to be definitive but is rather intended to put the issue on the table and to stimulate discussion. Accordingly, I'm very pleased to say that I'm supportive of the goals that he sets out. However, I have some serious reservations about whether or not this Bill adequately establishes the most effective and appropriate mechanism. Indeed, I suspect there may be a better way.

The goals which are set out in section 2(2) of the Bill indeed outline a catalogue of the areas which have been neglected by this government over the years in the realm of health care. Notwithstanding the arguments of the Member for Calgary-Glenmore, those objective members in the health care field that I have spoken to tell of a number of significant failures to keep up with the needs of the community and a failure to keep up

with the cutting edge of our system. Indeed, I would also refer to the reports of the Calgary board of health, which have a tremendous amount of regard, who have pointed out so many directions in which we have been failing in this province.

Now, the goals that are set out in section 2(2) of the Bill are, amongst others, to stimulate prevention and health promotion programs. That, indeed, is the subject of the 1 percent solution of the Calgary board of health that has been alluded to earlier. The Calgary board of health and others, indeed, have pointed out how so much of our disease is life-style oriented and how badly we need education programs which will help us address those. Smoking is one that has been alluded to. Those in the Legislature for the last three years and earlier this session know how concerned I have been about that issue and how I've been raising it consistently over the past three years. Indeed, it is a matter very much of education, of enabling members of our community to focus their minds on how important the issue is. I remember once, several years ago, making a speech to a group in Calgary of the Knights of the Round Table and being pilloried by one of the listeners in the opening question, telling me how dare I come and speak on such an inconsequential issue as smoking. Well, it just shows how people's values and judgments differ, because I consider that to be a major-league issue.

Indeed, I would like to suggest with all humility and with no offence that members of this House could well note how important it is that we show leadership in this House with respect to that issue. We have expectations of the rest of the community, yet we fail to show even elementary leadership, and so I would hope that perhaps the goals of this fund may result, if I have failed -- and at least I seem to be failing so far to get through to members of this House. Perhaps if we had some funding and a little bit of outside stimulation on this issue, perhaps some help for Mr. Hagen's group, we could mobilize some support and even make members of the community aware of how little the government itself is doing or how little it is prepared to support even minor initiatives with respect to smoking in the Legislature. Indeed, as I have noted, it just seems so wrong that we should allow smoking within this Chamber -- indeed, within this building but certainly within this Chamber -- that we could certainly do well to address that particular issue.

Now, a second goal set out is to stimulate a greater focus on community health. Albertans have to become more responsible for their own health. It has to be brought closer to Albertans in their individual communities. There's a need for more peer support, and again this gets down to education. And that is certainly a worthy goal.

There's a reference in the Bill to the need for incentives for more economic delivery of health care services. I sponsored a forum on health care in the city of Calgary about a year ago, and we had health care experts at that forum, and they reiterated to a person the need for better management, more statistics, more information, more research. We're not doing these things. I've been told by those involved in hospital administration that, for example, our formulae for funding hospitals discourage saving. They encourage hospitals to spend as much as they can because it impacts upon them for the following year if they don't do that. They have to pay it back. There are other problems. The management areas are ones that we could well spend a great deal of time on very profitably in terms of assessing.

There's a reference here to something that I've been very concerned about for some years, having been involved through my civil liberties activities in dealing with patients involved in

the mental health system, and I heartily endorse the need for better quality within our mental health system. We've noted in recent years there's been a trend to having fewer Albertans with mental health problems in our institutions, but the community programs have not kept up. I must say that unhappily we've seen in recent years that funding has either been cut back or been frozen in terms of community groups who are providing and are the frontline shock troops in dealing with mental health problems.

Then we talk about children's mental health. It was only two years ago that a report commissioned by the government itself, the Fewster report, presented quite a scathing indictment of the way in which we address the mental health problems of children in this province. Very little, unfortunately, has been done to date to improve the situation. I had occasion to have on one of my health care forums a psychiatrist from the Alberta children's hospital in Calgary, and he was critical to the nth degree with respect to the failures of the system here in Alberta with respect to looking after the needs of children.

There are, of course, other areas, if I might name a few hobbyhorse areas with which I've been concerned. There's the area of bulimia. They say that 2 percent of women in the province suffer from eating disorders. Perhaps I shouldn't restrict myself to bulimia; it's bulimia and anorexia and other eating disorders. We find that during the last three years we've moved from a scenario in which there was a counseling program at the Foothills hospital, which was canceled as a result of the 3 percent budget cuts in 1987. There was a program in addition in which there were two full-time workers in an outpatient program at the Holy Cross hospital, an inadequate program but certainly providing some assistance, which is now down to a half a person, and recently the Holy Cross hospital in Calgary closed its waiting list. The waiting list was up to three years. These are life-threatening problems. We're paying a great deal of money, indeed, to send those bulimics who suffer from these problems to hospital care in other provinces and in the United States. I know of one situation where the province of Alberta is paying \$18,000 a month for someone in a hospital in the mid-west United States. It's not the only example; it's the one that happens to have been brought to my attention. I just don't think it's being sensitive to the needs of women in our community; nor is it being wise in terms of economics to ignore the need for programming in that area. I understand it's expensive, it's a difficult problem, but it has to be addressed. I know when I raise it in Calgary, I keep getting people coming up to me and encouraging me to keep after it, because they realize how much distress there is out there from sufferers of this problem.

Drugs. I think it's just unacceptable that this serious problem of teenage drug addiction has not been addressed in this province until all the pressure was brought on by the PRIDE group in Calgary and members of the opposition. I should point out that while some steps are now being taken, there's still no programming being provided for teenagers who are chemically dependent on drugs. The programs are good insofar as they go; they cover 80 percent of the problems. But the real serious problems, the ones that cause the real heartbreak, the wrenching, the potential suicides, the attempted suicides, a lot of the imprisonment: this is an area which still remains neglected. It's not from my own experience. I speak very, very closely to those parents who are involved in the Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education in Calgary, and they tell me about these problems.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Well, in any event I won't carry on with the catalogue of problems because I want to get on briefly to talk about whether or not this Bill is the way to address these problems and accomplish the goals set in them. I have a number of concerns which lead me to conclude that the Bill needs rethinking and reworking. Firstly, I'm concerned that the Bill vests too much responsibility and control in the Minister of Health, with all due respect for the current minister. This is not to be critical of the ministers. It may be critical, but I think a structural argument can be made simply that ministers find themselves too absorbed with the responsibility of managing the giant monsters for which they have been responsible. They're too busy to find the time to be able to direct themselves to get on to the cutting edge of the needs of the health care system. Now, perhaps this minister -- I have every hope and reason to hope that this minister will prove to be the exception.

So I would say that rather than this particular function being vested within the department and in the hands of a minister, we need an external mechanism for forcing these matters more effectively onto the public agenda. Now, similarly, I would ask whether the concept of a separate fund under the control of the minister -- and I emphasize under the control of the minister -- yet outside the normal budget process isn't a way of taking pressure off the minister to recognize that many of these goals should be central, not peripheral, to our health care system. I'd rather see the minister being pressed to do these right within the heartland of the budget and not having them off onto a separate fund. Again, I emphasize under the minister's control, which may end up being a separate fund being starved for cash and being the poor cousin.

So I would tend to prefer the direction of the proposal put forward by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar in Bill 204, which was introduced in the House in 1987, which would be to establish an Alberta health council. This would be an independent entity of, say, 15 persons. It would be appointed from individuals nominated by all members of the Legislature. The majority of the members of this body would not be members of medical or other health professions, and it would have the goal of providing an objective analysis of health care in Alberta. It would be able to initiate and carry out research to evaluate existing health care programs, to study alternate health care programs, and it would be able to do so through funding worthy community bodies, providing support and research funding. This type of entity I believe would be in a better position to provide more effective pressure on the government to address these particular concerns which have been raised by the member. So

it seems to me that we would combine this concept with many of the very fine ideas that have been expressed by the Member for Edmonton-Centre in this well-motivated Bill today, of which the government should take notice.

So the Bill is not quite in shape to go forward, I believe, at this time. I would hope that the member would go back to the drawing board and accept some of these ideas, which are the ideas of the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. Perhaps we can all work together to attempt to accomplish some of these very important and enlightened goals.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. CLEGG: Mr. Speaker, I just would like to say a very few words about this Bill. Obviously this Bill does not do anything for our health care, the future of health care in Alberta. Certainly I believe it takes away the absolute flexibility that the health care in Alberta has now. And let us remember that we in Alberta have one of the finest health cares in Canada, in fact in the world. I think by bringing in this Bill, it would just take away from our great health plan we have today.

Certainly the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre said that he was going to get some of this \$200 million funding from the federal government, and I can be corrected, but I believe that funding that comes from the federal government now is certainly being used in a very worthwhile way, and I don't think, again, that this would help our health care whatsoever.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo said -- and I heard him a couple of times and don't want to quote -- cutbacks in different programs. Certainly I don't question those cutbacks. I think that's the kind of flexibility we need in our health care plan, that we can have the flexibility that we need.

Now, I could speak longer, but looking at the clock, I move that we adjourn debate.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of the government, as announced yesterday, that we sit tonight to deal with business as indicated in yesterday's *Hansard*.

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

