

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, March 21, 1990 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 1990/03/21

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a friend and former colleague of many members of our Assembly, the former Member for Stony Plain and presently the mayor of Wabamun, Mr. Bill Purdy. He's sitting in your gallery and is accompanied by Mr. Willie Cass, a student visiting our province from New Zealand. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, it's also my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Mr. Danny Nishlis, the executive director of the Canadian Zionist Federation. He is accompanied today by two young people from Israel. They are students visiting our province also: Miss Mazor Matzkevich and Mr. Amir Oron. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Presenting Reports by
Standing and Special Committees**

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Motion 14, passed by this Assembly on August 15, 1989, I am pleased to table a report and recommendations of the Select Special Committee on Electoral Boundaries.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, it is my intention at the end of question period to request under Standing Order 40 unanimous consent to deal with the following motion:

Be it resolved that this Assembly wishes to commemorate today as International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, declared by the United Nations, and that this Assembly is of the opinion that in the context of recent incidents of racism, racial discrimination can be reduced in Alberta through the leadership of members of this Legislature and that this Assembly urges the government to take immediate and substantive action to provide financial and policy support to programs throughout the government which will work towards the elimination of racial discrimination in every aspect of Alberta society.

I have 85 copies.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under

Standing Order 40 to give notice that at the conclusion of question period I will seek unanimous consent from this Legislature to deal with the following motion:

Be it resolved that in recognition of today being International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Assembly make clear its strong support for the goal of ending all discrimination in Alberta and, as an indication of its strong support for this goal, the Assembly extend its congratulations to the federal government on its decision to allow Sikhs in the RCMP the right to wear turbans while on duty.

I have 90 copies.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After question period I will rise under Standing Order 40 to seek unanimous consent of the Assembly to present the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Assembly congratulate the federal government for its prompt recognition of the new government of Namibia. This government was recently elected in an historical event, the first democratic election held in the newly independent state after years of foreign domination by the apartheid government of South Africa.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The Chair would like to point out that when we get through question period today and various points of order, the Chair will be dealing with the three requests under Standing Order 40 in the following manner: number one, Calgary-McKnight; number two, Edmonton-Gold Bar; number three, Edmonton-Avonmore. That's the order in which notice was given to my office. Thank you.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

Bill 15

Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 1990

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 15, the Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 1990. This being a money Bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

The purpose of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is to provide additional benefits to the injured worker.

[Leave granted; Bill 15 read a first time]

Bill 245

An Act to Amend

the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to request leave to introduce Bill 245, An Act to Amend the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Act is to extend Alberta health care coverage to include services and supplies needed for the treatment of diabetics.

[Leave granted; Bill 245 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a series of statutory requirements as required by various codes, including

the 1988-89 public accounts; the audited statement of the Treasury Department, the annual report; the activities and audited financial statements of the government land purchases; a statement of payments to MLAs and direct associates, as required under the Legislative Assembly Act; reports of amounts paid to MLAs on boards, also required under the Legislative Assembly Act; the response to Motion for a Return 204, 1989. As well, I'll be filing copies of the supplementary public accounts, which are normally found at this time along with the requirements of the public accounts, and as well financial statements for 354713 Alberta Limited.

CLERK: Introduction of Special Guests.

MR. SPEAKER: Another tabling. The Minister of Municipal Affairs couldn't be seen because of the paperwork.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the 1988-89 annual report of the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislature a grade 6 class from Rio Terrace school in the constituency of Edmonton-Meadowlark. They are accompanied today by their teacher Ms Desrochers and by parents and assistants Mrs. Elleker, Mrs. Winterton, Mr. Bharmal, and Mr. Parker. I would ask that they all rise in the public gallery and receive the welcome of the members of the Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: Athabasca-Lac La Biche, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MR. CARDINAL: [remarks in Cree]

On behalf of my friends and colleagues I would like to thank the students from northern Alberta for visiting this Legislature. [as submitted]

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly 26 students from the AVC, Lac La Biche. They are accompanied by their teacher Richard Sachko and bus driver Albert Happner, and they are seated in the public gallery. I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm privileged today to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly a number of visitors with the Canadian Diabetes Association. This is a voluntary society that provides excellent service in our province of Alberta. Those present are Mr. David Corry of Calgary, the vice-president, advocacy, of the society; Mr. Peter Portlock, the executive director from Edmonton. Both are seated in the public gallery. Mr. Wayne Oakes of Edmonton, Mr. Howard Blank of Calgary, Mr. Ralph Cartwright of Red Deer, and Ms Colleen Preston of Red Deer are seated in the members' gallery. Oh, they're all up there. I'll ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the

House.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Centre, followed by St. Paul.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce 25 students in social studies at the Alberta Vocational Centre just up the street here in Edmonton-Centre. They are sitting in both the public and members' galleries. I'd ask that they please rise and receive the welcome of the members of the Assembly.

MR. DROBOT: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my neighbour and colleague Hon. Ernie Isley I would like to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 39 students from the Assumption junior and senior high school, Bonnyville constituency. They are accompanied by teacher Seb Stang, parents Mildred and Collin Springchief, Mrs. Bernadette Blackman, Mrs. Nick Rawlake. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would request that they rise and receive the traditional welcome of this Assembly.

head: **Ministerial Statements**

**International Day for the Elimination
of Racial Discrimination**

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, today is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Hon. Doug Main, Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism, and Steve Zarusky, MLA, Redwater-Andrew, join me in inviting all members of this Assembly to recognize and support this important event. Indeed, all members will have on their desks the Diversity and Unity pin, courtesy of the Multicultural Commission.

Across Alberta a wide variety of organizations, in many cases with the participation of members of the Human Rights Commission, are renewing their pledge to work for a province and a world without racial discrimination. Our government's position has always been clear. We believe that all Albertans should be on a level playing field with rules that are fair to all and with no penalties based on what you look like, how you worship, or where you come from. In any society, and ours is no exception, there are a few people who out of fear or frustration or ignorance try to handicap those who belong to racial groups that are in the minority. In Alberta this has penalized and hurt members of the native community in particular, as well as many new Canadians from all over the world who have chosen Alberta as their home.

Later today, Mr. Speaker, this Assembly will participate in the second reading of Bill 8, amending the Individual's Rights Protection Act. This legislation is Alberta's rule book for fair play. It ensures that people who are unfairly discriminated against have a place to go for help.

I know that the great majority of Albertans are dismayed by the mean-spirited behaviour of a few of our citizens. Overwhelmingly today, as they have in the past, Albertans are drawing on the wellsprings of fair play and generosity of spirit that have made this the great province that it is, to let the world know that there is no room, Mr. Speaker, for racial discrimination in Alberta.

MR. TAYLOR: But it's okay in your caucus.

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MS McCOY: On this special day, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in reaffirming our faith in our diversity and recognizing that we are stronger and better when all Albertans treat each other with dignity and respect.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to reply to the ministerial announcement, it would be hard to disagree with the sentiment expressed. I think we all, I would hope, in this Legislature believe in what the minister is saying.

But I'd also want to say that it disturbs me, as I hope it disturbs other people, that there is, I believe, intolerance growing in the province. It was highlighted recently, as I mentioned in question period. Dealing with lapel pins, T-shirts, and various other means of showing absolute discrimination is becoming big business. We can't ignore it, Mr. Speaker. I, like the minister, agree that it's probably a small minority, but it's a minority that has become very visible in society. I want to say that the minister of multiculturalism said the other day that his department goes beyond that, that it's not concerned just with minority rights. I say to that minister: he better learn what his department is all about.

I also want to say that this was highlighted recently by the intolerance shown over the debate on the turban issue, dealing of course with Sikhs. But I want to say to other groups that if people can take an issue like that, dealing with the Sikhs, they can do it with any other group in this society, most easily to visible minorities.

I was not happy, not with this minister but with the leadership shown on this issue from this government. Silence sends a message. Silence sends a message, Mr. Speaker. So I'm saying to the minister that while I agree with this, she has to put some backbone in some of the other people across the way. Platitudes are not enough. Nice statements are not enough. We have to show leadership on this issue, Mr. Speaker.

head: Oral Question Period

Lead Poisoning in Medicine Hat

MR. SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. To the minister of Occupational Health and Safety and the Workers' Compensation Board. The minister said yesterday that his department could not be blamed for the tragedy that occurred in Medicine Hat, because after all they'd visited the place 16 times. He conveniently forgot that 10 workers had serious lead poisoning and three children were in the hospital. His compassion was certainly underwhelming, to say the least. I find it absolutely indefensible that this minister would claim that workers are to blame when companies ignore his health and safety inspectors. His own department says that lead levels above 2.5 micromoles per litre are dangerous. Dave Ladouceur's level in December was 5.8. Maurice Gauthier's level in December was 4.8. His daughter Samantha's level was 2.2, and she was 10 months old at the time, and she was nowhere near the shop. My question to this minister. How can this minister justify dangerously high levels in these children and these workers nine months after his department got involved?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday, it's unfortunate that we have this incident in Medicine Hat, but I

think I want to set the record straight. At no time did I suggest that the worker was at fault. Let me go through the happenings in Medicine Hat. On January 30 of 1989, the company accepted old plastic car battery cases. On February 24, 1989, Occupational Health and Safety received a complaint relating to guarding of pulleys, belts on the wash, et cetera. This was a safety complaint and not a health issue. On February 24, Occupational Health and Safety visited the site for the safety problem and at the same time identified a possible lead problem. The Occupational Health and Safety officer requested that a hygienist visit the site and issued orders regarding guarding, sanitary conditions, electrical wiring, access and egress, and body protection. On March 7 and April 26, 1989, an Occupational Health and Safety hygienist and officer provided guidance and instructions on control and personal protective equipment. A compliance order was also given regarding respiratory equipment and other safety hazards to be addressed. The employer took responsibility to enforce and educate his employees. On May 10, 1989, a letter to the employee by the hygienist relating to the protection of equipment and engineering controls for the safety of workers. July 20 . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. The Chair is watching the record from yesterday as well. Perhaps you could leave a few of the dates for supplementary questions, please. The point has been made.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, he still didn't answer the question. The fact is that they still have these high lead counts in their bodies, no matter how many visits they made. And he did – I saw him – blame the workers. He said they didn't shower properly and do all the rest of the things. For him to deny it here is ludicrous.

I have a question, Mr. Speaker, dealing with what he says were adequate warnings and safeguards and education of the workers. The workers say this is nonsense. They did not have proper warnings about these things. My question I will ask for Mr. Gauthier, who has a question of his officials. I'll ask the minister in charge for him right here in the Legislature. He wants to know why they are sitting at home with lead poisoning, why his kids are in the hospital, and what his department did to prevent it. That's the answer we want.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I beg of you to allow me the time to run through what we've done and what we've accomplished at that site. I can cut it short. We did 16 visits to that site in that period of time. We were informed on September 28 by the physician that he was treating an employee for elevated blood-lead levels. On August 14, 1989, we had an Occupational Health and Safety officer visit the site and instruct the employees and the employer on ways to protect the workers. Verbal instructions on the use of protective equipment and hygiene were provided. The employer was also instructed on stringent hygiene practices. That would include cleaning up the area, showers to be installed, educational material, a copy of the Act. Material on lead exposure was left with the employer and employees. The employer took the responsibility to continue the ongoing education of his workers.

Mr. Speaker, to continue this, all workers were advised that the procedures were such that before leaving work they must remove their contaminated garments, shower, clean up, scrub up, and put on clean clothes before they went home. Apparently one or two of the workers did not follow these procedures.

That's unfortunate, and it's sad that the children at home were contaminated by lead in clothing from the workers taking it home.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to this minister. Where was the enforcement? Because these things obviously didn't happen.

My question is: how in the world are they supposed to shower, with the amount of people working there, when there are no showers and only two sinks sitting there. How would you do it, Mr. Minister?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, the showers were installed, and they're there.*

MR. MARTIN: No they weren't. They're not there now.

MR. TRYNCHY: Well, they certainly are, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Tolerance and Understanding

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, some five months ago the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism released his report from the Alberta Multicultural Commission, Focus for the 90's, the first direction of which called for, and I want to quote here: "the development of an environment in which Albertans respect and accept each other's cultural heritage." Now, I'd like to ask the minister, since he's done absolute nothing to achieve that goal in the last five months and since today is the UN day for eliminating racial discrimination: will he stand in his place and announce some new, concrete initiative to combat racism in Alberta?

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased at the opportunity to stand again in my place and describe the work of the Multicultural Commission and the work of this government in eliminating racial discrimination. You heard the Minister of Labour deliver an eloquent address expressing the views of this government towards those who do harbour racist feelings, but I'm sure you'll agree that these are harboured, given the evidence of pins and calendars and buttons and bumper stickers, by a very, very few.

It is true that the report of the Multicultural Commission was presented last October, and the direction provided there is for the government to create an atmosphere in which – and you heard the quote. Mr. Speaker, that is our commitment. That has been the objective of this government all along, ever since it established the Multicultural Commission and many, many years prior to that in its cultural heritage division. We are going to continue to work towards those aims with a variety of policies, a variety of new programs, and a variety of initiatives that are taking place, even now as we speak, at the Multicultural Commission. In the due course of time, you will see on the Order Paper legislation, and as you work through this time, you will see an ongoing effort aimed exactly at correcting the problem the hon. member describes.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, this minister is a joke. The editorial cartoonists are having a field day with this guy. I want to ask this minister one more time: will he stand in his place and show some concrete leadership in leading the fight against racism in Alberta, yes or no?

MR. MAIN: Is the question: will I lead? The answer to that question is yes.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, let me put it to the minister this way: will he abandon the ideological baggage that he carries from his association with the racist party of Canada or else step down and let somebody else get on with the job?

MR. SPEAKER: Order. As a matter of fact, would you care to withdraw the comment about a racist party? Thank you.

MR. GIBEAULT: I withdraw that. I refer to the Reform Party of Canada.

MR. MAIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods obviously is unable to differentiate between a federal party and the provincial government that I now represent. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, my commitment as outlined in the various pieces of legislation for which I have responsibility deal with multiculturalism, deal with race relations, and deal with racism. The commitment that this government has to fostering an environment in which people from all nations are welcome, in which people from all nations have ample and equal opportunity for access to all that is available here: that commitment is my commitment and will continue to be my commitment. I suggest to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods that he pay close attention and see exactly what it is that is being done by this government and will continue to be done in the months ahead.

Pension Liability

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Provincial Treasurer. Alberta has an unfunded pension liability of \$9 billion with no plan to deal with the problem. Ontario has an unfunded pension liability of \$5.7 billion and has instituted a 40-year paydown plan of that liability, which costs Ontarians \$142 million each and every year. If Alberta followed the same plan, the cost to Albertans each year would be \$225 million. My first question to the Treasurer is this. The Treasurer has indicated through reports that negotiations with the stakeholders are necessary to talk about the benefits, to talk about how this matter can be resolved. Can the Treasurer inform the House when these negotiations will take place?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry has one question and one question only. I'm glad he keeps bringing it forward. It shows the lack of research, the lack of creativity which flows in the Liberal Party. It's becoming clear to all Albertans that that's the way they think. What they have done, clearly, Mr. Speaker, is just put fear in the hearts of those people who either are now participating in the pension

*see page 202, left col., para. 3, lines 1 to 5

plan or are now receiving benefits. Certainly this government would not do that. As I have said in this House on many occasions, we think that the pension obligations are obligations of the government, that the people who receive those benefits should be secure in the notion that their payments are guaranteed by the government. Moreover, as we have said before, we'll continue to index without contract, without formal obligation, the benefits to those people. Now, if the member is suggesting that in a manner which would be typical of the Liberal party we simply gouge those people now in the pension plans by increasing the contributions and by changing unilaterally the benefits under the plan, then clearly that would not be the course of action adopted by this government. We are much more compassionate, much more clear thinking in our plans and would find a much better resolution of the problem than the one suggested by the Liberal leader.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, it's my experience in this House that when the Provincial Treasurer has no answer and doesn't know the facts and hasn't done his homework, he blames the opposition by saying that they haven't done their homework. Frankly, that's getting tiring, Mr. Treasurer.

Mr. Treasurer, my second question is this. Last year you informed this Assembly that a review process was put into place by you to consider and to deal with this horrific problem, a \$9 billion problem. Would you inform the House as to the recommendations that review group made to you to solve this problem?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member claims to have been here for some time. I can assure you that it will be a short time.

What we have is a plan obviously, Mr. Speaker, which deals with these very delicate and complex issues. We have a series of recommendations, but as you well know, we are not going to divulge them to the member of the Liberal Party. He wouldn't understand them to begin with, and moreover we want to give them careful consideration, not just among the government but among the stakeholders, on a reasonable, discussed basis. That's the way we operate, contrary to how the Member for Edmonton-Glenarry would operate.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I regret that the Treasurer continues to consider this matter so flippantly and sees no seriousness to this problem.

My last question to the minister is this: based on the plan that Ontario has put into place, will the minister confirm that this \$220 million-plus payment is likely what Albertans are going to have pay to bail Alberta out of the mess that you, sir, have created?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, let me assure you that nowhere in our comments have we treated this as a casual or flippant matter. Quite to the contrary, we have treated this with a great deal of thought. We have a plan in place which will deal with this whole problem, and we will reveal it when the time is appropriate, not being forced or driven by any agenda which may satisfy the shortsightedness and the not researched position of the Liberal Party but one which *is* based on a very reasoned position, well thought through and based on sound advice, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North, followed by Calgary-

Mountain View.

Meech Lake Accord

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Deputy Premier. Premier Getty negotiated at length during the Meech Lake discussions to make sure that Albertans achieved significant gains in terms of provincial powers. Some of the goals that were achieved through these negotiations should Meech Lake become a reality include more say for Alberta in immigration matters, a voice in Supreme Court appointments, more control of federal transfer dollars, a veto for Alberta in constitutional matters, and the entrenchment of Senate reform discussions. Now, I appreciate the sensitivity of compromises and other accompanying resolutions being forwarded by Premier McKenna, but can we have a commitment today from the Deputy Premier that as negotiations continue – and I believe we should negotiate – we will not back off or compromise on any of the gains that have been won so far in these accord negotiations?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member has indicated, new developments are taking place with respect to Meech Lake. The 1987 Constitutional Accord has outlined in its preamble several of the benefits to Alberta of our endorsement of that accord, which was done in this Assembly unanimously, and we are reviewing carefully the newest proposal, which was tabled in the Assembly of the New Brunswick Legislature yesterday. As a matter of fact, I can advise the members of the Assembly that later this afternoon I will be meeting with the Attorney General of New Brunswick to discuss in more detail the proposal which they have put forward. We are anxious to understand clearly what is being proposed there. Needless to say, we are encouraged that another province has put the 1987 Constitutional Accord before their Assembly for consideration, and we will give the new proposal careful attention. But we will, as the hon. member has asked, make sure we do not give up the gains that were achieved for Alberta in the process of achieving the '87 accord.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, again to the Deputy Premier. It was Premier Getty's input at Meech Lake that really opened the door for meaningful Senate reform and paved the way for 600,000 Albertans to elect their choice of Senator. Again, appreciating the sensitivity of the ongoing discussions, can we have a commitment from the Deputy Premier that he will continue to use the influence of his office of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs to continue to press for the appointment of Stan Waters?

MR. HORSMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. We have, of course, made our views well known. As has been indicated, over 600,000 Albertans went to the polls to deal with that matter. We will have an opportunity to discuss the matter further with the federal Progressive Conservative Members of Parliament on Friday of this week, when our caucus meets with theirs, as was pointed out in this Assembly by the Provincial Treasurer earlier this week. We will continue to use that vehicle. We are encouraged by the fact that other Premiers are entering into these discussions, such as Premier Peterson's request that the matter be dealt with as soon as possible in the national interest. Of course, we will await the Premier's return from his meeting in Vancouver with the other three western Premiers, which just concluded, and his return to the House tomorrow in order to

hear from him as to the progress that had been made during the course of that meeting. We are encouraged by some positive signs with respect to the overall issue of constitutional reform, because we believe strongly that this country of ours, this Canada, is worth preserving, fighting for, and protecting. That our Assembly will pledge to do.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

Goods and Services Tax

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's abundantly clear that New Democrats have been at the forefront in fighting the GST, both here in Alberta and in the House of Commons in Ottawa. We've provided alternatives for tax reform. Alberta's Member of Parliament recently organized an anti-GST blitz. We've attempted to prevent closure in the House of Commons finance committee. However, now that the Conservatives have brought in closure for committee study of the GST Bill, the opportunity to influence the course of events is rapidly disappearing. So I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer this afternoon, Mr. Speaker: has this government abandoned any further efforts to fight the GST, or is the Treasurer now able to tell us what last-minute efforts they're making to try and axe the tax?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, it's curious to hear the Member for Calgary-Mountain View. He's much like a rooster who thought the sun had risen to hear him crow. You know, it's interesting; we heard that the Member for Calgary-Mountain View was traveling to Ottawa, at taxpayers' expense, to fight the GST and to appear before the finance committee. I took some time to find out if he appeared before the finance committee to advance the case of the GST. No, he did not appear before the finance committee. Fortunately, he did not, because it would have taken us, the government, at least three months to recover the ground we lost by his presence.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: I didn't see any Conservative members of this Assembly down there trying to fight the tax.

I will say this to the Provincial Treasurer, Mr. Speaker: our caucus is prepared to set aside our partisan differences in order to block this tax; we are so concerned and so committed to stopping it. I'd like to indicate to the government that we'd be prepared to work on a joint committee of this Assembly to lobby the federal government and put pressure on Alberta Members of Parliament to stop this tax. Mr. Speaker, to the Treasurer, given his comment on Monday to the Leader of the Opposition that it's important that we combine forces. Will the Treasurer do at least this much: will he commit his government to establishing a joint committee of the Assembly to fight the GST on behalf of Albertans while there's still some time left to influence the course of events?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the assistance which has been provided by all parties, not just the NDP across the way. It is very clear, as I've said in this House before, that the champion of the anti-GST position is the Alberta government. There is no doubt that the course of action, the plan of action, adopted by this government is one which has been recognized across Canada. I noticed even Mr. Nystrom, who I understand is associated with the provincial NDP Party, has in fact recognized the job done by this province in

taking on the GST question.

Let me make it also clear, Mr. Speaker, that we have met with the parliamentary committee, but we believe that one government should not appear before a parliamentary committee. We deal on a minister to minister or first minister to first minister basis. I have given abundant examples of the way in which we have dealt at that level, examples which, in the case of the Premier, turned the tide with respect to the consolidation of provinces, and at the ministerial level ensured that all provinces had the research and understanding of this very complex issue which is held by Alberta.

Let me finally go on to say, Mr. Speaker, that in terms of communication there is absolutely no doubt that the people of Alberta, as a result of the encouragement of this government, have the strongest possible opposition to the GST. We believe that the GST is wrong for Alberta; we will continue to hammer that issue.

Now, I will not agree, Mr. Speaker, to an all-party committee. First of all, that's not the way in which this issue was taken on. This is a government-to-government problem. This is an intrusion into our jurisdiction. This is centralization of decision-making. This is an infringement on the traditional revenue sources of the province, Mr. Speaker. The provinces themselves are in fact taking on this issue, and we have other steps which we'll take to continue to oppose and continue to send the message to Ottawa that we strongly oppose the goods and services tax.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Advanced Education Funding

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For years the Auditor General has drawn attention to problems that postsecondary institutions have in managing budget surpluses. Yet this government in typical Tory fashion does nothing to implement his recommendations and thereby protect the financial interests of all Albertans. My question is to the Minister of Advanced Education. Given that students wanting programs such as computer science are turned away at the doors of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, how does this minister justify the use of surplus operating funds to meet the needs of foreign students when our own students are lacking?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, programs authorized by the Assembly, I want to give assurance to the members, are carried out. With regard to the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, matters have come to my attention regarding budgetary matters and deficits, and I believe I've spoken on those earlier by ordering and having an emergency meeting of the board on the 26th day of last month. I don't think there is a question about the use of accumulated reserves or surpluses. However, I have ordered a review of the whole question of accumulating surpluses and reserves. I expect to report shortly. That would be in accordance with the matter raised by the Auditor General. I want to give the assurance to the House that to this minister's knowledge the programs authorized by this House are carried out for Alberta students.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, the colleges have to do something with their surplus funds, and the safest place would be for them to invest in the Consolidated Cash Investment Trust Fund of the province. Then they could at least use the interest to cover their

deficits or provide greater opportunities for Alberta students. My question is to the minister. Will the minister assure this House that he will follow the recommendation which the Auditor General has been making since 1979 and commit to amending the Colleges Act and the Technical Institutes Act to allow them to invest their money safely in Alberta?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has made recommendations over a series of years with regard to amendments, not only to the Colleges Act but to the Technical Institutes Act, of which SAIT is a member. I have every intention this year of proposing legislation that will deal with the institutions' investing funds in the consolidated investment fund of the province of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Public Service Code of Ethics

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Family and Social Services. The proposals for changes in day care continue to create a level of fear and anxiety for parents and communities, indicating, I think, that there's still a great deal of need there for more information, for understanding, and for openness. One of the pieces of the puzzle is where family day homes fit into the whole picture. The rules here appear to be being relaxed while they're being tightened in day care. It's come to our attention, Mr. Speaker, that the executive director of family support services has a close family member who has a major interest in one of Alberta's largest networks of family day homes. My question to the minister is: can the minister confirm that Anne Ward Neville assists and advises the minister regarding child care programs and the funding of these programs?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that Anne Ward Neville is a very valued employee of this department, that she is a very dedicated and committed employee of this department. I appreciate very much the assistance and advice that she provides me, and I appreciate very much the effort she's making on behalf of Albertans as it relates to our day care programs here in the province of Alberta.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the minister. Will the minister then tell us if the fact that Mrs. Ward Neville is related to the owner of a major family day home agency is of any concern to him related to potential conflict of interest and ethics?

MR. OLDRING: Well, Mr. Speaker, again I would want to say that I resent the member casting those kinds of aspersions. We have some 6,000 employees here in the Department of Family and Social Services, and no, I can't possibly keep track of the relatives of some 6,000 employees. Clearly, we have some very appropriate guidelines for all government employees, and I'm satisfied that Anne Ward Neville, as a cherished employee of this department, is meeting all the stringent requirements that we do have in place for our government employees.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The Chair's been concerned in the last two days at the line of some questions in the House with regard to people who do not reside even temporarily in this House. The Chair would then

direct hon. members to reread *Beauchesne* 409(7):

A question must adhere to the proprieties of the House, in terms of inferences, imputing motives or casting aspersions upon persons within the House or out of it.

This relates to more than one question, hon. members.

Calgary-McKnight, followed by Cypress-Redcliff. Calgary-McKnight, let's go, please.

MRS. GAGNON: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. It's unusual for you to have two Liberal questions back to back.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, that comment is inappropriate.

MRS. GAGNON: Sorry.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Thank you. Let's now go with the question.

Advanced Education Funding

(continued)

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question concerns the province's actual commitment to advanced education. From 1986-87 to 1988-89 federal transfer payments have increased by over \$85 million. During this same period provincial expenditures for advanced education have increased by only \$31.4 million. Over \$50 million of federal payments for post-secondary education have either been redirected to other government expenses or been used to reduce the province's commitment to advanced education. To the Minister of Advanced Education. Why has the province used increasing transfer payments to cut its commitment to advanced education?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I have great difficulty with the facts of the hon. member's question. The Provincial Treasurer is the minister responsible for negotiating transfer payments between this province and Ottawa. I can only say that the hon. member is talking about the sum of some \$50 million when this year's budget for Advanced Education, dealing with 29 postsecondary institutions, is over \$900 million.

MRS. GAGNON: My next question, then, would be to the Provincial Treasurer. I would like to ask you, sir, and I know many other Albertans would want the answer to this question as well: where has the money gone, and what have you and your colleague the Minister of Advanced Education done about it?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, not only do the Liberals get two questions back to back; they get two questions built into each question.

Let me say that the whole question of budget debate will take place sometime after tomorrow evening. I would imagine we'll have a string of questions which would be satisfied in this Assembly as each minister is up to defend his estimates and to talk about how his budget is built and about the fiscal and economic impacts of the Alberta budget on each of these areas. I don't think we should take the time of question period today to deal with an area which will be exhaustively considered in the detailed estimates coming up over the next two months or so.

Soil Conservation

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Associate Minister of Agriculture. Last session I asked the minister

several questions related to the Canada/Alberta soil conservation initiative agreement. I wonder if the minister can at this time update the House by letting us know how many counties, MDs, rural municipalities, et cetera, have filed their agreements with her department?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to comment on the soil conservation initiative at this time. As all members are aware, when we approach the spring season, we are concerned about water erosion from vast water runoff, wind erosion, et cetera. We're also very pleased to advise the Assembly that although our agreement was not signed until July of last year, the challenge went out to our ag service boards and our producer groups to get involved with this. To this date I believe there are 67 ag service boards and 22 individual producer groups in all of the province that have filed three-year plans for a conservation initiative. So we're extremely pleased with the commitment that all service boards and producer groups have made in this very important area in agriculture.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, the agreement was signed late in the season last year. The minister has talked about the organizations that are signing three-year contracts. Indeed, I know some organizations, such as the Alberta Wheat Pool, that are just getting things going on conservation initiatives. I wonder if we have considered extending the term to get it into another crop year.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we're looking at the soil conservation initiative on a long-term basis, although the commitment that was signed is a three-year program. We are delighted with the take-up of the Alberta Wheat Pool's Conservation 2000 program, which is a voluntary program and which will certainly enhance soil conservation initiatives. We will continue to monitor the progress we make in our conservation initiative. I think that this government and the Department of Agriculture recognize that this is a program that will be ongoing. Our commitment to soil conservation in this province and, indeed, across Canada must remain constant, but we'll be working very hard, as we have in the past, to maintain our commitment to preserving our soils.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly.

Housing Rent Increases

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The housing market in this province of Alberta is becoming increasingly unfair to tenants. The Minister of Municipal Affairs finally admitted last week that there is a problem with landlords gouging tenants. In addition, the market projections are that the problem is going to become worse rather than better because new housing starts are not coming on stream quickly enough to deal with the problem that exists today. My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Now that the minister has finally admitted that there is a problem, will he tell us specifically what he plans to do to stabilize rental markets and to protect tenants from unfair rental increases?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, the comment with regards to gouging in the marketplace was a matter that concerned me very much in that some of the facilities that are being purchased in the province of Alberta are being flipped two or three times, and

excessive rents are the result of that process. I'm concerned about that, and I certainly issued a warning to the community that gouging of that type is not an item to be tolerated.

I want to say this with regards to the action the government is taking: the action is significant. First of all, I've met with the construction and rental people in both Edmonton and Calgary and discussed the issue and opened the doors as much as possible and encouraged them to move into the marketplace to build facilities for rental opportunities. Secondly, I've opened the doors with regards to discussion with the cities of Edmonton and Calgary so that at the municipal level we can move through land development and into construction as quickly as possible. The third item that we've looked at is the whole area of rent supplement opportunities. Where people who are in need require the rent supplement support in terms of moving into housing, we've made that available as well.

The other area that is growing quickly in this province and has in a sense grown significantly over last year's construction is in the single-family residence area. It is projected that some 17,000 single-family residences will be built this year in the province, which creates new opportunities and certainly opens up the rental market area for vacancy possibilities.

Now, those are some of the things we're doing, Mr. Speaker. There are others we're contemplating as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course those are long-term projects. We're worried about the 30 or 40 percent increases in rent that are occurring right at the moment and wondering what you're going to do about that.

My next question is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is one of three provinces which refuses to protect tenants with some form of rental stabilization. Tenants now have had enough of government inaction. As a matter of fact, on Monday of this week a group of tenants met and formed the Edmonton Tenants' Association to do what this government is not doing, and that is to establish some rights for tenants. My question, then, to the minister is: will the minister take away the alleged rights that landlords have to gouge tenants and move now to protect tenants?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is very general with respect to his question. What alleged rights and what should be taken away, I'm not sure. I have informed the hon. member and members of this House previously that we are expecting soon a residential tenancies report. The members of that committee, in consultation with Albertans generally, have been asked to review aspects of that legislation to ensure that we have a fair and an honest marketplace, and I expect that to take place.

Mr. Speaker, I should mention to hon. members that while I agree with the Minister of Municipal Affairs in terms of this government having no sympathy for those landlords who might abuse the system, in a general sense the rental rates have not, as of our last statistics, reached the point that rents were in 1983. So in terms of Albertans generally there is a catch-up period in the marketplace, which is required in order to make sure there is more accommodation and that all Albertans have the accommodation required.

I'm interested in the member's suggestions and look forward to a more specific question at another date in terms of the rights that he's talking of.

MR. SPEAKER: Innisfail, followed by Edmonton-Strathcona, if there's time.

Outfitting and Hunting Control

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. Wildlife management unit 220, which covers the eastern portion of the constituency of Innisfail, recently allotted and allowed for 14 white-tailed deer to be taken at a cost of \$1,100 each by guided nonresidential hunters. Could the minister indicate where in unit 220 these hunters may fill their licences?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, there's the new policy on outfitting and guiding for Alberta. It allows a maximum of 10 percent of the allowable harvest to be for nonresidents. I can't speak specifically on wildlife management 220, but I believe there's a fair amount of private land there. The outfitter or the hunter would have to get written permission from the landowner to have access to the land. But that would give him the right, if he has that permission, to hunt anywhere in wildlife management 220.

MR. SEVERTSON: Mr. Speaker, could the minister reply to the concerns raised by some of my constituents? Due to the amount that will be charged by the outfitters to provide service and because the majority of the land in this area is privately owned, does the minister think that this will lead to fees for access being levied by landowners, or paid hunting?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: No, Mr. Speaker, definitely not, because under section 49(1) of the Wildlife Act it strictly prohibits that. In fact, I believe it says that you shall not indirectly or directly barter or trade in an effort to sell access for the purposes of hunting. There are very strict fines – in fact, up to \$2,000 and one month in jail or both – if you are convicted of that. So, no, I don't believe it will lead to it, and if it does, they'll be prosecuted.

Meech Lake Accord

(continued)

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister of intergovernmental affairs. It's become plain, Mr. Speaker, that if the Meech Lake accord is to be saved, it will only be saved by a companion or parallel resolution. The Premier of New Brunswick unveiled his yesterday, and if you look at it, it identifies very largely the same problems that the New Democrats identified in this province after our task force in 1987, which formed the basis for our amendments to the resolution then before the House. Will the minister undertake to revisit our 1987 amendments or any other sources of inspiration to come up with the province's own proposals to save Meech Lake and the country?

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question in view of the earlier questions from the hon. Member for Red Deer-North. We're going to take a look at everything possible to deal with the issue. I appreciate the tone and tenor of the question in the sense that the hon. member recognizes the very serious problems facing this country in the event that constitutional reform is stymied and this province and the other provinces and the federal government are driven away from the constitutional table for an extended period of time without full participation from all the partners in Confederation.

I will certainly review the debates in our Legislature in conjunction with these new proposals, and all ideas that have been identified by the province of New Brunswick will be explored later this afternoon, as I indicated, with the Attorney General of that province. And our Premier will continue his leadership efforts with the other Premiers to try and resolve this very difficult situation facing our country.

MR. WRIGHT: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Since it's plain that we need more time now to see this process through, will the minister undertake to have someone in his department examine the legal underpinnings to the alleged necessity of the accord's being signed by June 23 of this year, since there is a respectable body of opinion that says that that deadline is a myth?

MR. HORSMAN: The hon. member has obviously touched on an interesting point. There has been a disagreement amongst constitutional scholars and experts as to whether or not there is a deadline date of June 23, 1990, for the implementation of the accord. Careful consideration of the situation has led our government to believe that that deadline does in fact exist. But we are, of course, prepared to re-examine all legal opinions and those advanced by scholars and constitutional experts throughout the country.

I am aware of the hon. member's interest in this matter and his concern for what will happen if in fact June 23 passes with Canada in a constitutional impasse which would lead, I believe, to very serious strains on the fabric of Confederation. I wish to avoid that. I'm sure the hon. member and all members of this Assembly would wish to avoid that dilemma being placed before the Canadian people. So certainly we'll examine that, along with other methods of dealing with this in a reasonable – and as the Premier stated, in a spirit of compromise and understanding and caring for Canada.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair would like to ask a question of Edmonton-Centre and the Minister of Health. Have discussions taken place as directed by the Chair on two separate occasions? Yes or no? Edmonton-Centre.

REV. ROBERTS: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Minister of Health.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Chair has reviewed the Blues. It finds it most unusual that the Chair has to ask members two and three times, and if it doesn't occur, it's a bit

difficult for the Chair in the operation of the House.

The Chair has reviewed the Blues for the day, March 16, when the minister spoke to the House in response to a question that was raised by Edmonton-Centre, the text of which was:

I have written to the Minister of National Health and Welfare and told him that the province of Alberta will do everything we can to ensure that those immunization levels come up and in fact have impelled the federal government to please take note of the level of immunization, particularly on that reserve.

In the opinion of the Chair, this is not a matter of citing a document or citing a letter. Again I would refer all hon. members to a citation in *Beauchesne*, 495(3):

A public document referred to but not cited or quoted by a Minister need not be tabled.
and subsection (5):

To be cited, a document must be quoted or specifically used to influence debate. The admission that a document exists or the reading of the salutation or address of a letter does not constitute citing.

Therefore, there is no point of order with respect to the purported point of order as raised by the Member for Edmonton-Centre.

The Chair recognizes Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a point of order, if I may, in reference to Standing Order 65(3). There was some correspondence between myself, the Clerk of the House, and yourself regarding the need for the Leader of the Official Opposition to have a copy of the report of the Electoral Boundaries Committee that was tabled by the Member for Taber-Warner. I can appreciate some of the reasons given by you in note to me, that there are a lot of things going on in the House today, with the number of standing orders, reports tabled, files, et cetera, and things like that that require a lot of effort on the part of the pages. But I think it's important to point out that the Leader of the Official Opposition has a great number of responsibilities as well – responding to Ministerial Statements, preparing for question period – and will, of course, be called upon to respond to the contents of the report tabled by the Member for Taber-Warner.

The Clerk made it known to me that the report would be distributed to all members at the end of question period so that everyone got it at the same time. I just don't think that gives the Leader of the Official Opposition reasonable opportunity to do the job that's expected of him. I refer to the section in Standing Orders, 65(3), that says:

All documents which come into the possession of a committee or which are prepared by or for a committee belong to the committee until the committee reports or ceases to exist, whichever first occurs, after which they belong to the Assembly.

And looking as well at *Erskine May*, page 215, regarding the distribution of parliamentary papers, it says that copies of Parliamentary papers are made available to Members of Parliament as soon as they are issued.

Again, I realize that it's difficult to distribute everything to all members at the same time, especially when there are a number of things that need to be distributed, but in this case I think it's important that the report be in the hands of the Leader of the Official Opposition as soon as possible after it's filed. I'd like to know on what basis the distribution of things like this is deemed to be discretionary, and am wondering what sort of precedent this might be establishing, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: With due respect, hon. member, this is a complaint. The purpose of that situation really ought to be

dealt with in a private fashion, as we were attempting to do in the exchange of notes during question period, which just adds to the fun of being Speaker: trying to do rulings and attempted rulings and all the rest of it while question period is going on. [interjection]

Thank you. Thank you very much. This is the third time I've had to warn various caucuses about interruption when the Chair is trying to get a message across.

The Chair wants to make it abundantly clear that in terms of the operation of the House we are doing our utmost to be able to get the information to the members of the House as soon as we have it. There's a cardinal principle also to be noted here, and it's this: if there's a report to come to the House, it comes to the House and it doesn't go to be distributed, for example, to the general public or to the media before members in the House have a chance to get it themselves first. Because any committee, as in the case of the Electoral Boundaries Committee, is a committee of this House. Now, in the flurry and the confusion and the exhilaration of what transpires here in the first hour and a half of the day, I believe we, on an operational side, have been doing our utmost to be able to get the information to all members in the House.

Now, again as pointed out in the note to the hon. Member for Vegreville, we also directed that as soon as possible we would get a copy to the Leader of the Official Opposition. We are very much aware of the fact of the extra responsibilities of the Leader of the Official Opposition and, for that part, of the leader of the third party.

But all I can say here is that this is not establishing anything new here. We're doing our level best to be able to serve this House, and the Chair takes a certain amount of displeasure on behalf of the Table officers and staff at the method of the criticism and the fact that it's being raised in the House. It's entirely out of order.

head: **Motions Under Standing Order 40**

MR. SPEAKER: Now, let's go to Standing Order 40 requests, which were also part of the problem today of trying to deal with a fair number of interesting challenges at the same time. As pointed out earlier, under Standing Order 40 the first one to be recognized is Calgary-McKnight.

Mrs. Gagnon:

Be it resolved that in recognition of today being International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Assembly make clear its strong support for the goal of ending all discrimination in Alberta and, as an indication of its strong support for this goal, the Assembly extend its congratulations to the federal government on its decision to allow Sikhs in the RCMP the right to wear turbans while on duty.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking to urgency, because this is International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, a perfect opportunity exists for us today to discuss issues of racism and to indicate strong support for tolerant practices which indicate our respect for pluralism and for the Canadian mosaic and for the dignity of all persons regardless of the colour of their skin. I, as a former member of the Tolerance and Understanding Committee, as well as all members of this House who are leaders know that discrimination and racism is caused by fear, by lack of knowledge, and by mistrust of everyone who is different. A discussion now, today,

could dispel some of this fear and misunderstanding. It is urgent that we send out a strong signal to all minorities, not only visible minorities, that we see their presence in our society as a gift and as an enriching situation.

Urgency also exists because so many Albertans are swamping offices of Alberta MPs and offices of many MLAs with reactions to the recent RCMP decision. By debating this issue today, we could explain why the decision was made, why we as leaders support the decision, and why we as leaders fight racism every step of the way.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Under Standing Order 40, those in favour of giving unanimous consent for this matter to proceed, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The request fails.
Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mrs. Hewes:

Be it resolved that the Assembly congratulate the federal government for its prompt recognition of the new government of Namibia. This government was recently elected in an historical event, the first democratic election held in the newly independent state after years of foreign domination by the apartheid government of South Africa.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to speak to a notice of motion that all members have received regarding the federal government's recognition of the new government of Namibia. This recognition has taken place within the week. I think it's important, if we are to recognize the action of our federal government, that we do so today. We have waited for this day for a long time. All of the world has waited and watched the process in Namibia, and I believe it is incumbent on us to congratulate this country and to congratulate and thank our federal government for taking the action they did as quickly as they did.

MR. SPEAKER: Again under Standing Order 40, those in favour of giving consent for the matter to proceed, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The request fails.
Edmonton-Avonmore.

Ms M. Laing:

Be it resolved that this Assembly wishes to commemorate today as International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, declared by the United Nations, and that this Assembly is of the opinion that in the context of recent

incidents of racism, racial discrimination can be reduced in Alberta through the leadership of members of this Legislature and that this Assembly urges the government to take immediate and substantive action to provide financial and policy support to programs throughout the government which will work towards the elimination of racial discrimination in every aspect of Alberta society.

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask for unanimous consent to debate as a matter of urgency this resolution. In speaking to the urgency of the motion, I point out that Albertans are waiting for some leadership from this government in combating racial discrimination. Recent events in this province have shown only too clearly that intolerance still exists in this province of Alberta, and it is supported by the silence of many of our elected officials. The urgency is required because in the wake of silence, much of the intolerance is allowed to go on and expanded.

On March 19 in this Assembly the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism stated that we should all speak up when we encounter examples of racism, but he failed to condemn racism outright. That sends a message of equivocation to all minorities in Alberta. Furthermore, that minister said that he was not responsible for minority rights. But how can he hope to promote equality for all people if he fails to understand that racial discrimination underlies cultural intolerance? The government must provide alternatives about how to reduce racism. Pious platitudes don't keep people safe on the streets or provide them with equal access to opportunities. Albertans need to have some indication from this Assembly that we will provide real action to eliminate racism. They need to know that the government will support more than just singing and dancing. Albertans, again . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. This is speaking to urgency – urgency. Please conclude.

MS M. LAING: It's urgent that Albertans know the real position of this government on racism, Mr. Speaker. Last week some ministers said they supported the federal Solicitor General's statement about the RCMP uniform, while others equivocated. Then on the weekend a member of this Assembly came out with racist and intolerant statements. We need to know who speaks for the government, Mr. Speaker, and what *is* the real message. This is an urgent matter.

Today we have the opportunity to join with people all over the world in saying that enough is enough. Today we can prove to Albertans that we honour the principle of equality of opportunity, and we can debate the kinds of actions which are possible for this Assembly to take on this important issue. Today we can eliminate once . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Thank you. That's sufficient on Standing Order 40. Thank you.

Those in favour of giving unanimous consent for the matter to proceed, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The matter fails.

The Chair has had an unusual communication. The minister responsible for Occupational Health and Safety would like to correct some information given in question period earlier today, for the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, thank you. In my answer to the hon. Leader of the Opposition I suggested that we had showers in place. In reading my notes, I notice I erred. The showers are to be installed, and they are not in place at this time. So I want to correct that, Mr. Speaker.*

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. members.

head: **Orders of the Day**

MR. SPEAKER: The next order of business is actually dealing with second readings, and before we get into that the Chair would just briefly like to remind hon. members of a couple of quotes. The references are there, indeed, in *Beauchesne* with respect to second readings, and I'm sure that all members have carefully studied those kinds of comments. Nevertheless, the reference is with regard to *Beauchesne* 659:

The second reading is the most important stage through which the bill is required to pass; for its whole principle is then at issue and is affirmed or denied by a vote of the House. It is not regular on this occasion, however, to discuss in detail the clauses of the bill.

The Chair feels that that needs to be reminded to the House. Again, the appropriate references in *Erskine May* are on page 472 and again on page 473.

Thank you.

head: **Government Bills and Orders** **Second Reading**

Bill 8 **Individual's Rights Protection** **Amendment Act, 1990**

MS McCOY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure for me this afternoon to present for second reading Bill 8, the Individual's Rights Protection Amendment Act, 1990.

It's an honour, too, for me to be able to participate so directly in the evolution of our human rights law. The Individual's Rights Protection Act is special. Together with the Alberta Bill of Rights it takes precedence over every other law on our books. It says that here in Alberta we want to create a society where people are free to achieve; we want to build not walls but bridges between individuals and communities. What we want is a place where there are no second-class citizens and where nobody has to worry about being abused or exploited or shut out for being different.

Mr. Speaker, we have not created that society yet. Most Albertans are fair minded and generous; I'm convinced of that. But there are exceptions, and lately the exceptions have attracted enormous media attention. But we can't despair. Instead, each and every one of us needs to reaffirm our commitment to fairness and understanding. The protection of individual rights is very much an individual responsibility, and the events of recent months are a call to each of us to actively promote, within our own lives and within our own families, respect for individuals and respect for the wonderful diversity of

human beings. We do well to remember the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, who said:

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? They begin in small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any map of the world.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 8 proposes 15 amendments to the IRPA. These changes reinforce and clarify our human rights law, they expand its protection to some of the more vulnerable members of our society, and they bring the IRPA into line with recent Supreme Court of Canada decisions and with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Many of the amendments simply clarify ambiguities or make certain sections of the IRPA more consistent with others.

However, Mr. Speaker, there are several changes that warrant elaboration. This Bill will prohibit discrimination based on mental disability, it will extend protection from sexual harassment to domestic employees and live-in farm workers, and it will protect all pregnant women from gender discrimination. Perhaps the most eagerly awaited amendment in this Bill is the addition of mental disability to list of grounds that are protected under the IRPA.

Mr. Speaker, over the years individuals and groups have brought to our attention that some mentally disabled individuals are being treated unfairly. Some are denied jobs even though they are fully capable of performing them. Others are denied simple services like being able to play in a bowling alley or being waited on in a restaurant, services that are customarily offered to the public. Some are subjected to unnecessary restrictions or denied the right to live in apartments, like one young professional woman who was evicted from her home because she had been hospitalized and treated for anxiety.

The inclusion of mental disability in the IRPA does several things, Mr. Speaker. First, it brings the Act into line with section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Currently all other jurisdictions, with the one exception of Saskatchewan, protect mental disability in their human rights law. Without this amendment the Act is subject to Charter challenge. Second, this amendment reflects the principle that individuals with mental disabilities should receive the same protection under the IRPA as persons with physical disabilities. The physically disabled were first given IRPA protection in 1980. Third, and this is an indirect effect, the amendment will help Albertans better understand mental disability. Through education and mediation the Alberta Human Rights Commission will be able to foster wider acceptance of the mentally disabled along with a fuller appreciation of their capabilities. This helps us to build more bridges, and it helps Albertans with mental disabilities to achieve their personal goals. And when individuals reach their potential, then everybody wins.

This Bill also extends protection from sexual harassment to domestic employees and live-in farm workers. Again, individuals and organizations, particularly those dealing with immigrant women, have alerted us to the need to broaden our law to include individuals who, because they work in private homes, are especially vulnerable to this unfair treatment. It is time they were afforded the same protection offered all other employees in this area.

Another amendment to the IRPA is made necessary by the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the Brooks and Canada Safeway case. In essence, Mr. Speaker, the court ruled in May 1989 that discrimination on the basis of pregnancy is gender discrimination. Currently the IRPA does not protect

*see page 194, left col., para. 4, lines 1 and 2

from discrimination pregnant women applying for jobs. This Bill provides full protection to all pregnant women in every area in which gender is a protected ground.

This Bill also changes the word "sex" to "gender" in the preamble and various sections of the IRPA, which makes clear that we are talking about a biological characteristic and not an activity. In other words, sex is something you do; gender is something you are.

Another amendment will strengthen the whistle-blower section of the IRPA. This section protects from retaliation individuals who in any way assist or participate in the initiation or prosecution of a complaint under this Act.

I think one more amendment is worthy of special mention, Mr. Speaker. The title "chairman" is changed to "chief commissioner," a term that is gender neutral and consistent with that used in other jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, in passing these amendments, we carry out our responsibility as lawmakers for the protection of human rights, but just as importantly, we better equip individual Albertans to promote the cause of understanding and fairness. Through the IRPA we help set the tone and provide the guidelines for human relations in the public sphere. Our law says to everyone that here in Alberta we treat people fairly. We are judged by and play by the same set of rules. This is a particularly important thing to be saying, especially in a society as diverse as ours. And we are diverse; make no mistake. One in every six Albertans was born outside Canada. One in every five people living in Calgary or Edmonton is an immigrant. Our population includes more than 40 different cultural and ethnic groups. Sixty percent of the nearly 90,000 immigrants who came to Alberta between 1980 and 1987 do not speak English.

Our diversity extends beyond culture. Just look at the average workplace as an example, and you will see diversity of gender, age, physical abilities, skills, family obligations, philosophies, attitudes, and issues. Diversity is a fact of life, and the IRPA, with its protection in the area of employment, accommodation, and public service, is helping us to manage and accept that diversity. As we progress through the 1990s, we will need the IRPA more than ever to safeguard the principles of equality of opportunity and the right of all persons to achieve. We will need the IRPA more than ever to help us build bridges and tear down walls, and that's important, because if Alberta is to continue to prosper in the global economy of the 1990s, it needs the talents, skills, and full participation of each and every one of us. That's what the IRPA and human rights are all about. They are about letting individuals work and play and live in harmony, equality, and prosperity. They are about sharing and believing in certain values. For all our cultural, gender, and racial differences, we do share common values. We value family in all its diverse forms. We value volunteerism, hard work, self-reliance, and thrift. We value helping those in need, and most importantly we value the individual. Because we value individuals, we uphold certain standards of behaviour: we expect people to treat one another fairly and with respect. It's a standard upheld by the Individual's Rights Protection Act.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I failed to thank the Alberta Human Rights Commission for its guidance as I prepared this Bill. Over the past few months the commission, under the direction of Chief Commissioner Fil Fraser, has been doing a tremendous job of raising the profile of human rights in this province. His devotion to the cause of understanding and fairness is demonstrated yet again today: he is here in the members' gallery to watch and listen to our debate on second

reading. I am proud of this commission and proud that human rights specialists in other jurisdictions are beginning to come to our commission for advice. I know the commission will continue to be a leader.

I would also be remiss if I didn't point out that many of the amendments today, and ones in the past, are the result of public input, of community participation. Time and time again private individuals and groups have come to government and the commission to alert us to problems and to suggest how the IRPA could be made better. Physical and mental disability, sexual harassment of domestic workers: all of these things have been addressed because individuals cared enough to work for change, because communities cared enough to participate.

We haven't always responded immediately. For example, the first request to include physical disability as a protected ground came in 1972 during second reading of what would become, when passed, the first Individual's Rights Protection Act. That first request was rejected because the lawmakers of the day did not understand the need for such protection. But Albertans who did understand did not give up. They continued to document discrimination, to make their arguments, to press their case. It took time, hard work, and determination, but they did succeed. By accepting responsibility, these individuals have helped to make Alberta a fairer, kinder place. To those people who have worked for change in the past, my heartfelt thanks, and to those who continue to work today, my encouragement.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I ask that all members of the House support this Bill, and I look forward to their contributions in debate.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I feel privileged to rise to speak to this most important Bill which addresses a fundamental value in our society: that all people should be treated with dignity and decency and respect, and treated fairly. There is not much that the minister has said with which I can disagree. I certainly would also commend the work done by the Human Rights Commission, as it has, indeed, had a higher profile, and that has meant that more people have felt less alone, more people have felt less powerless, and more people have felt that there was an avenue through which they could have injustice to them addressed and corrected.

I would rise, then, today to speak to the philosophy and the spirit and intent of this Bill. As I have said, it is a Bill that all of us have the right to be treated with dignity in accord with our status as human beings. We are not born equal in our abilities in this life. But we certainly are born with equal human dignity, and with that comes the right to be treated with respect and decency. That human dignity should be accorded to all members of society. Although this Bill is to be welcomed because it extends protection of rights to the mentally disabled, protection on the basis of marital status, and protection against sexual harassment, it does, in fact, leave out an important group: that group covered under sexual orientation.

This Bill as it stands now reflects a long struggle to overcome the ignorance and prejudice that surrounded mental disabilities. Our understanding of the mentally disabled and our extension to them of a recognition of their humanity is a process that many of us have observed in our lives, for it has occurred in the past two or three decades. I certainly remember how people spoke of the mentally disabled when I was a child, and it is good

to see the kind of progress we have seen.

As people with mental disabilities have had increased opportunities to participate, we as a larger society have come to understand them better and to overcome the ignorance and stereotypes that used to surround them, and the prejudice and denial of their rights that they suffered. As their rights and opportunities were extended, many of the disabled were able to actualize more of their potential, a potential that was not thought to exist or thought possible in the past, a potential that includes employment, independent or dependent living. In some sense, we must acknowledge the shame of the denial of their rights and opportunities that has existed in the past, the denial of their full human dignity. So we welcome this extension of human rights legislation to include the mentally disabled.

We would also welcome the inclusion of protection against sexual harassment of domestic and farm workers. Certainly the area of sexual harassment is something we've only started to deal with in the last 10 years. It is a form of employment discrimination. It is a most destructive form of power-tripping and of abuse. It's on a continuum with rape and sexual assault. So I welcome this inclusion.

I'm also happy to hear that we now have a chief commissioner. Good. And I was happy to hear the minister, in her opening quote, use a quote by a woman, because all too often we hear quotes made by men. So it's good.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

However, as I said, this Bill does not include one group – two groups, actually – that I believe need protected category. I believe that the category of marital status should be extended throughout the Bill and not just to areas of employment. We know that there are a number of statutes in this province which allow for discrimination on the basis of marital status, and I would refer specifically to the Widows' Pension Act. I, in fact, have a Bill to amend the Widows' Pension Act on the Order Paper, as well as an omnibus Bill to amend eight different Acts that allow for discrimination on the basis of marital status. Certainly the discrimination that is embodied in the Widows' Pension Act causes great hardship to many people, and therefore I would ask that this minister and her government include it as a protected category.

Finally, this Bill does not include sexual orientation as a protected category. Thus, 10 percent of Albertans are denied protection of their human rights and dignity and their right to full participation in this society. Mr. Speaker, we do not know how it is that sexual orientation is determined. Many theories exist as to what happens. However, the reality is that sexual orientation is a central part of our being and our relationship to the world. Some would argue that sexual orientation is chosen, and thus lesbian and gay men could choose to be otherwise; therefore, they do not deserve the protection of human rights legislation. For the sake of argument, if sexual orientation is, indeed, chosen – and I am not for one minute accepting that thesis – then I think we need to address that position and the arguments that are presented to support that position.

I would do that by comparing it to religion. We recognize that religious preference is a chosen preference. Yet we recognize also that the beliefs and practices of a particular religion are so central to one's sense of self and well-being that we do not allow for discrimination on the basis of religion. We recognize the destructiveness of slurs and negative images based on religion, so that we, in fact, do promote religious understand-

ing and tolerance. It is held to be a societal good, even, as we do not require an individual to give up personal religious preference to embrace the dominant or normative religion of a society. Indeed, if one were asked to do so, one would get a very negative reaction, especially from the members across. We do not ask people to deny, keep quiet about, or somehow hide their religious preference. We would find such demands offensive.

I believe that sexual orientation, like gender, is a given with which we, for the most part, cannot argue. As a member of the gender that was subject to discrimination and exclusion from full participation in society until well into this century – indeed, women were denied the vote until 1916 and women were denied full rights and privileges as persons until 1929, just 61 years ago – and as women continue to be victims of derogatory and negative images, something we call sexism to this day, I believe I can speak to this issue. What is being denied is women's essential humanity and their moral integrity and their right to participate in society in accord with their freely chosen alternatives. This discrimination has meant that society has not benefited fully from women's contributions, but more importantly, the sense of self and self-esteem of many women has been severely damaged by our cultural devaluation of women.

Similarly, I believe sexual orientation is a given, and by denying the protection of human rights, lesbians and gay men are diminished by our society. Their sense of self and self-esteem is damaged as they are denied opportunities for full participation in society and as they are subject to negative, derogatory comments and images.

In addition, I would call on the minister and her government to listen to the people of Alberta. Fifty-five percent of Albertans agree we should have legislation making it illegal to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. Only 28 percent disagree. The human rights commissions in 1977, '81, and '85 have recommended inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected category. In addition, over 50 percent of the population of Canada in three other provinces – Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba – as well as Yukon, are covered by this protection. Because of failure to enact such legislation of protection, lesbian and gay men are subject to physical violence and derogatory myths and stereotypes, and even, in some cases, hate literature.

When I first came to this Assembly, I received a package from somewhere, purporting to give the facts about homosexuality. It was so filled with hate that I threw it in the garbage, unfortunately. I say "unfortunately" because if I could have found it, I would have turned it over to the Attorney General to have had it evaluated as hate literature. This kind of stereotyping and these kinds of myths are soul destroying. Lesbian and gay men are subject to scapegoating because we do not understand them, especially in the areas of sexual abuse by members of a society that cannot deal with the reality of sexual abuse, particularly child sexual abuse, and a society which cannot distinguish homosexuality from pedophilia, pedophilia being a preference for children which may be of a heterosexual or homosexual nature – and let me say, the majority are heterosexual.

In addition to this kind of pain that lesbian and gay men suffer, we need to look at what happens to them in terms of their loving, long-term human relationships, something we see as so central to the well-being of our society. These relationships are denied legal status and legitimacy, so that couples have trouble providing for each other with power of attorney, and providing for pension and insurance benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that it is time to include protection

on the basis of sexual orientation. It is a matter of accepting the diversity that exists in our society and embracing that diversity. It means that people too long subject to prejudice will receive the protection they deserve. It means that our Human Rights Commission will be empowered to do education around this issue so steeped in prejudice and stereotypes. It will mean that we can be more fully human as a society. I would, therefore, urge inclusion of this category.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Associate Minister of Family and Social Services.

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak very briefly in support of this Bill. I say briefly, because it really shouldn't take a great deal of debate to get this long overdue amendment through, and I congratulate the minister for bringing it forward.

Just recently, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to chair a committee that looked at the service delivery to people with mental disabilities. It was an eye-opener for me, because I had never really been exposed to people with mental disabilities to any great degree. I can honestly say that for the first time in my life I gained a far greater understanding of some of the challenges they face on a daily basis. I'm reminded of a saying: disability cannot be changed by society, but a handicap can. That's really what this amendment to this Bill is all about. It wasn't too long ago that we talked about a person with a mental disability as being retarded. Even now we hear the terms: handicapped; consumers; clients; the disabled. When I think of the disabled — my background is in the car business — I think of a Buick on the side of the road completely out of commission. When I think of someone with a disability, I think of that same car with a flat tire that can be fixed. I think it's all terms, Mr. Speaker, and I realize that. There's not a great deal of strength in words, but they set a mind-set, and it is that kind of mind-set that this Bill is attempting to address.

Much of the report that came out of that committee that I chaired dealt with citizenship. It dealt with freedoms that everyone in this gallery takes for granted on an everyday basis.

- Freedom of conscience and religion
- freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression
- freedom of association
- the right to vote in elections
- the right to life, liberty, and security
- the right to not be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned
- the right to not be subjected to any cruel or unusual treatment. . .
- equality before and under the law
- equal protection and benefit of the law.

These are rights that you and I take for granted, Mr. Speaker, every day. But, until now, in many cases they have been denied to people with mental disabilities.

Much of what has to take place today in society is a greater awareness and, through that awareness, a greater acceptance of people with mental disabilities particularly, but all disabilities. Hopefully, through that acceptance and awareness we will be able to remove the greatest portion of discrimination. Hopefully, all people will be eligible for training, for employment, for alternatives to employment, to equal access to accommodation, to individual life-style planning, to equal educational opportunities and recreational opportunities. Those are all of the things that this amendment to this Bill is addressing, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to just remind everyone in the gallery of something

that was written on the back of our report.

A citizen with a mental disability is:

- not a burden but an asset
- not an inmate but a neighbour
- not a strain on society but a contributing member
- not someone in need but someone who has much to give
- not strange and different but one of us
- not less than but the same as
- not someone to fear but someone to love
- not someone to be pitied but someone to share with
- not handicapped but a person.

This Bill will help to achieve these goals, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask every member for their unqualified support.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just have a few very brief remarks about Bill 8. I thank the minister for bringing it forward and for her very important comments, which I agree with.

Mr. Speaker, it's tragic, in a way, that we have to legislate rights of this kind. But in our society, as we have become more complex, perhaps it is only sensible that we write down for all to see and understand and obey what we really mean about human rights and individual rights, because too many people for too long have lived lives that have not been full, have not been productive, and have been full of a sense of hopelessness and helplessness because of their circumstances. So we do put down in writing and create in legislation a protection for the vulnerable in our society.

I'm pleased to see, too, that the Bill does deal with mental disability. It deals with gender, and it deals with domestic and farm workers, some very important categories. I'm glad to see that the language has been cleaned up, and I think that's important. That sends a signal to all who read and understand our legislation, Mr. Speaker.

The section on mental disability is one that, of course, is of immense interest to me. My own experience for many years was working with people who were or had been mentally ill, and their families. I still find myself deeply and consistently connected to many people who have suffered mental illness. That experience goes back over some 25 years, and there've been many changes in that time. But, alas, there are still many gains to be made.

This particular addition to the IRPA has been asked for by associations and groups and individuals in our community for some four or five years now that I know of, partly to bring it into conformity with the Charter, but partly simply because although we have progressed mightily, we still have very grave and evident acts of discrimination against persons who are or have been mentally ill and those who are mentally disabled.

Mr. Speaker, in the years that I've been a part of the mental health movement, the treatment of individuals has been very different. Our capacity to keep people out of institutional care and keep them in our communities and to get them out of institutional care earlier is infinitely greater than it was even a decade ago. We can, with any good luck at all, intervene early in an illness and afford a person an opportunity to recover within their own community setting. It is a great advantage, but it also means that we now have people in our communities who for short periods of time are unable to maintain certain family relationships or work relationships while they are in treatment

or while they are recovering from treatment. And it's these people, who are very, very vulnerable still, for whom employment is hazardous, because although employers are far better educated as to their needs, there are still expectations of them that cannot be met; there are still suspicions about them that abound and that cause great difficulty in their work relationships.

We find that people who have been mentally ill have continuous difficulty in acquiring housing and in keeping housing because perhaps their behaviour is not acceptable to certain other neighbours. Mr. Speaker, it is a case of temporary intolerance for behaviour that is perhaps not as normal as one would want it to be, and we tend to be a somewhat uptight and intolerant type of society in regard to that; we don't have an awful lot of stretch about that type of behaviour. So people who have suffered mental disorders and are recovering and are not fully well experience immense difficulties with employment, with housing, with their connections with community, to say nothing of their interaction and interrelationship with their own family and friends.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of the immense changes, the stigma is still there. It still exists, and we must all do whatever we can to break it down. I see this Bill as taking some very necessary steps to point the way, to lay out the guidelines: what is expected, and what people have a right to. People who have been in a mental hospital can vote and can even vote in hospital, an immense move forward, showing our understanding. But we must now reach out and ensure that there is no discrimination to those same people in housing, in employment, or in their relationships in community life.

I'm also pleased that this part of the Bill extends to the mentally disabled. All of us know many beautiful persons who have limited mental abilities and the kinds of joys and beauties they've brought into our own lives and the kind of family happiness they add. But there is still in our world and our communities an uneasiness about what will become of so-and-so when the family isn't there to look after them. And there is still a great possibility that the individual without family who has a mental disability may in fact be taken advantage of in housing, in their opportunities for productive activity and participation in society, and in their interrelationships with other people in the community.

Again, we've come a long way in keeping people who are mentally disabled out of institutional care, and I expect that will continue to be our position, to assist them and support them in independent living. But the capacity for discrimination against such individuals still exists. We are still far more prone to invite the mentally disabled to work in sheltered work, in controlled work situations, rather than be integrated into employment with the rest of society. This Act protects against that kind of discrimination where the person has the capacity and ability to be integrated, and I'm grateful for that.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased that immigrant women are dealt with and protected within this Act. This is a very vulnerable group, often without a great understanding of cultural differences in our nation and perhaps with some language absence as well. They often find themselves in positions where they are taken advantage of. They live in fear, of course. I think the Act has gone a long way to protect that group of people, and in addition the farm workers. I am a little puzzled – and perhaps the minister will explain at third reading – why it's only farm workers who live in. The Act specifies against sexual harassment, and I'm not sure I understand precisely why that connec-

tion is made that they must be live-in farm workers. Perhaps I'm not reading it as it is intended.

Mr. Speaker, I do regret that the Act does not deal with sexual orientation. I think it's time in our province that we showed that kind of leadership. All of us in this House have had representations from the gay and lesbian society and from a number of other groups, church groups included, that are pleading with us to consider the circumstances of homosexual people in our communities: the kind of prejudice they meet, the kind of discrimination they meet, the kind of secrecy they are driven to that can make for a very difficult life, a life that is not open and not comfortable and where they are perhaps not able to find themselves in circumstances of work where they can participate fully and be the most productive in their lives. I would have hoped the minister would have seen fit to include this in this particular Bill. I'm not sure why it isn't here or how the decisions were made that it not be included at this point in time. I think it is an unfortunate omission that when the Act is being opened, it is not included. To be sure, many other provinces have already seen fit to do it. Again, this is a group of people who are vulnerable in our society, and although we don't like to believe this kind of discrimination occurs, in fact it is evident from the kinds of complaints that come to the Human Rights Commission and it really needs to be corrected and protected.

Mr. Speaker, overall I'm pleased that the Bill is here. I know the people in the Mental Health Association and many church and community groups I deal with will be very pleased that it is finally here and will give it their support. I look forward to an opportunity at third reading, Mr. Speaker, to ask some more detailed questions.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Three Hills.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a privilege for me to rise today to congratulate the minister for bringing all the amendments forward. I say I'm particularly privileged, because I served on Alberta's first Human Rights Commission and thus began a learning experience and a learning curve that I will probably never encounter again in my lifetime.

The minister introduced the amendments today in a very eloquent fashion, and that's been appreciated very much, I think, by all members of the House. It's particularly noteworthy that the chairman of the Human Rights Commission is in the gallery to . . . Chief commissioner. I've got to remember the new term. I'm going back in time. I guess it's a number of years, Mr. Speaker, in terms of my own life experience. But however we shall call him, the chief commissioner is in the gallery today, as the minister has noted, and I'm sure is interested in the remarks the members are making, hopefully all in support of the amendments that have been put forward today.

As I look back at the evolution of the Individual's Rights Protection Act from the time it was the companion Bill to the Alberta Bill of Rights, brought in by a brand new government after their election in 1971, Mr. Speaker, and then the commission was put together, we met on a very historic day, though it seemed some time after the legislation came into being, but all these things, especially when they are of particular importance, do take some time to put together. But we met on December 10, 1973, in celebration obviously of the United Nations celebration of Human Rights Day, and I came to know six other very special people who brought unique life experiences together, chaired by the then president of the University of Alberta, Dr.

Max Wyman. All of us, as I said, brought very unique life experiences together, and as I worked on that commission and met people from all over Alberta, coming from very different circumstances than my own, I realized that I had been raised very well by parents who never took the time to point out that somehow I might be different and shouldn't have been farming and doing some of the things I was doing because I was a woman or shouldn't have been doing some of the things I was doing because I was carrying a child and so on. I realized that in fact there was discrimination and a fair amount of systemic discrimination that didn't exist for the most part in the circles I traveled in in rural Alberta. It was important for us to make known throughout the province that in general the people of Alberta did not support that kind of thinking and the actions that would follow that kind of thinking.

Mr. Speaker, the world has changed very rapidly since that time, and it is always important for us to address whether the realities that were addressed early in the '70s are still real for us today or if there are new ones that need to be attended to. I believe that's precisely what the minister has done in looking at what the people in Alberta in general will support by way of framing the guidelines and the principles we all need, as other members have mentioned, to follow in conducting ourselves in society today. The world is at our doorstep. Where we used to see interesting and unique people living in other countries, they are living with us today, and they have brought their cultures and their ways of life to some degree with them.

Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, a word that used to have a great deal of meaning for me and that I thought was an important word to use in our society holds for me now some not so proper connotations. That word is "tolerance," that we must be tolerant. To me it has begun to take on a different meaning. If we are to be tolerant, we are making judgments that people have something about them that we must be tolerant about. I'm wondering if it's really the word that now should be operative. I say that not because anybody would have ever intended a meaning that was inappropriate, but in some ways it has somehow been adopted to take on a bit of that meaning. I don't think we can sit in judgment and say that we have to be tolerant of somebody or the people who are now recognized as being vulnerable, as the minister appropriately put it, that have to be addressed by way of the Individual's Rights Protection Act. Indeed, I think her words about building bridges and tearing down walls were the most significant words she spoke this afternoon.

I particularly wanted to mention my very strong support not in terms of just all the amendments that have been brought forward but in particular the amendment that does deal with mental disability. I think it was Mr. Gary McPherson's words – who is, I believe, the chairman of the premier's council for persons with disabilities – that when he talked about disabilities, he wanted to focus on the ability part of disability. In a very fine fashion, the Associate Minister of Family and Social Services has mentioned that today. I think we are very fortunate that this individual, our colleague in the Legislature, has now taken on that very important role in cabinet. He was the one that chaired the study – at my request, I'm very happy to say, some time ago – to look into this whole area. Certainly it was timely. This very complex area and the very complex situations and ranges of abilities these special folks have needed to be looked at very carefully and now appropriately identified as a group of people who want to fit in with, again, the very broad range of Albertans, all of us, our own abilities, and looked at

more in the mainstream that all of us, I think, strive to be a part of in this province of Alberta.

I guess my last comments, Mr. Speaker, really deal with how each of us as we look at our own uniqueness, wherever it is we come from, whatever race we are – I think it's important that we keep the ability to laugh at ourselves. But most important in laughing at ourselves, and I'm speaking of our own idiosyncrasies and personal traits we bring, that doesn't mean that we can laugh at other people. It is always important that we laugh with others. In this very hectic world we live in today, with the constant changes I mentioned earlier, how quickly we are evolving in so many ways, I think sometimes we get just plain cranky about all these changes and don't want to be confronted by one more piece of information about one more person that we should have to so-called deal with. Indeed, we must make that special effort, but in making that effort, let us keep the big picture in mind. I believe that big picture really deals with all of us, and again in that very broad range of abilities and special things each of us brings to the fabric of Alberta and in wanting to incorporate more and more people and special groups into this Individual's Rights Protection Act, I think we must look very carefully at where our desire to help becomes the beginning of a fragmentation process where in fact Alberta is just a whole bunch of groups of people and not a wonderful cohesive mosaic.

So as we look to the future, hopefully we'll continue to evolve all the important aspects either *in* elimination of some things we'd like to see finally eliminated from the Individual's Rights Protection Act . . . And I'd love to see the chief commissioner out of a job because his job was done. I think that was the desire of Alberta's first Human Rights Commission. We wanted to work ourselves out of a job. But alas, with this evolution we come to many other things to deal with. So let us keep the big picture in mind, Mr. Speaker. I know the minister will in addressing the concerns of Albertans, and let's be careful that in addressing these unique and wonderful groups we don't fragment ourselves as a human race, wanting as Albertans to participate in this wonderful province and all it has to offer.

Thank you.

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

REV. ROBERTS: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to speak at second reading to this long overdue Bill that finally is before us. I think if members will only think back a bit and examine a little bit of the history around the battle that has gone on in the province to include mental disability as a protected ground from discrimination, they'll see that what we're really involved with here is a very sad history of neglect and a very sad history of this government's inaction on very important matters which affect the real lives of people in this province. So I don't think, despite what I'm hearing today, that there's much room for self-congratulation and comfort on the part of the government benches. If anything, there should be a sense of guilt and shame with respect to the delay and inaction which we and people throughout the province have had to live with and try to grow patient about. Yet we're not going to grow patient about this or any other matter of human rights for people as they're deserved in the province.

I've been in this Assembly nearly four years now, Mr. Speaker, and I've raised this issue of mental disability being included in IRPA four times. I've raised it three times in the Department of Labour's estimates, and I remember the lamebrain excuses by

the then Minister of Labour as to why we weren't going to be looking at it this year or why we were not going to be including it in legislation this year. We saw even then the weaselly manner in which government can disregard certain people who are marginal. Somehow in their caucus they haven't come to dealing with it in any real way until now. For many people with mental disabilities now is too late.

I also recall introducing a Bill into this Assembly back in 1987, Mr. Speaker, which called precisely for what this Bill is calling for today in terms of mental disability. It was a Bill of mine. I remember I had people from CMHA and people from the Depressive Disorders Self-help Group and others in the galleries. Where was government then? Did they just turn a deaf ear to the legitimate voices and experiences of those people in 1987? Why did we have to wait till now to have this? What took this government so long?

Now, I do get some satisfaction when I see that government finally moves to develop and to enshrine some of the things we in the New Democrat caucus have suggested. In health care I have up to about 18 issues I've raised where Marvin Moore or the current minister has finally come along and said, "Okay, we're going to try that now, Roberts," or "We're going to try that." This represents a victory of another sort on another front. We had it three years ago, and they finally caught up to where we were and where others in this province have been. I guess there is some satisfaction in that, but it's not any satisfaction knowing, as I say, how many Albertans have had to suffer because of the inaction and inertia of the conservative Tory party in this province.

I don't understand how it can happen. With the huge bureaucracy and expense and advisors and commissions and everything they've got over there, how can they continue to let burning issues that affect the lives of people go without direct statutory action? What is the holdup? What do you have to further study the matter for? Now, I try not to get too impatient. I've been told, "Well, Edmonton-Centre, just relax, because there were two very good reasons why government couldn't move," as we urged them to three and four years ago. One excuse was: "We don't have a proper definition of what mental disability is. In fact, we don't quite know what constitutes mental disability when you say that word, so we're going to sort of hold until we can redefine it and make sure we know what we're talking about." Well, okay. Let's try to sort it out in the government's mind, those who are meek of spirit. Let's try to find out if there is some difference between what a mental handicap is or those who in previous generations were called mentally retarded – if it's a matter of being cognitively delayed, as some development psychologists want to look at it, or if it includes those who have had emotional distress or in fact a complete mental breakdown or maybe some form of mental illness, whether it's schizophrenia or so on. Government argued that mental disabilities as a category was just too broad. Well, I'm glad to see that they sent the Human Rights Commission back out – I forget when it was, '87-88 – to again have some hearings and hear from people what the definition should be. I see it's in the Bill before us today, and in principle we can all agree to it.

But my heavens, surely such a definition with some minor alterations, which we have now, cannot be the excuse for the three-year delay or more that this government has had to come up with a definition that's going to meet whatever criteria they wanted to establish. I mean, they didn't have this problem, as the member said, with physical disabilities, did they? Back in

1980 they didn't sit down and say: "Well, what's a physical disability anyway? Does that include paraplegics or quadriplegics?" Obviously there's some other agenda going on here. There's been some bias, some reticence, on the part of government that there's a difference between a mental disability and a physical disability. So they had to take some time. Maybe there was some problem with how you could define a physical disability. I wasn't here to know whether they had hearings after hearings to come up with that kind of definition. But, Mr. Speaker, the very fact that they took so long to cosy up in some caucus manner to a definition of mental disability shows a bias that's at work here. I'm glad in some sense that they've overcome that bias, but it's been painstaking and many members of this province have been long suffering with a government that is insensitive and slow to move.

I've heard another excuse, Mr. Speaker, and this is rumour. I've tried to nail it down. Members opposite, I'm sure, will tell me I'm full of something. The other one is a rumour I've heard: we couldn't include mental disability as a protective ground for discrimination because our friends – guess where? – in the business community don't want it. The chambers of commerce and the business owners somehow just didn't want to have to be told by the Human Rights Commission they couldn't, if they so desired, fire somebody who had a mental illness. They argued it was bad for business to have somebody with a mental disability on the payroll. You know, does that person have some marital problem or are they a bit neurotic or paranoid about something? Any hint that there was some mental problem with an employee meant it was bad for business. Again, I submit this was rumour, but I've heard it from several sources. You can see how the argument might make sense to certain businessmen, let alone some landlords who do not have a sophisticated way of approaching issues and might think, "We just don't want to have a crazy on our hands here." Well, I'm not sure of the degree to which such a voice in the business community got organized and got to this government, but clearly something was going on to force this delay.

Now, as we sit time after time and hear about government loans and loan guarantees and, in fact, complete bailouts to business, we know that this government has a lot of friends in the business community. Don't they, Mr. Speaker? If this even hints at this kind of issue by the business community, saying, "Well, we just don't want this mental disability thing because we're going to be forced to do things we don't want to do" – I'd submit, Mr. Speaker, that business might have some rights in this province, particularly as recognized by this government, but what we're saying today in principle and what the New Democrats have said for years now is that individuals with mental disabilities also have rights, and those rights have only now been recognized by government in statutory amendment. They've had these rights before Bill 8. Bill 8 only enshrines them because this government's finally playing catch-up on the issue. So it's too late – too much inertia and some hidden agendas going on.

I'm sorry, but we sat here the other day and had to endure this pathetic display of caring or a purported sense of caring by the Deputy Premier, who went on at length about the way this government cares for people and the New Democrats think they're the only ones that care. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is not the issue. The issue is who this government cares about, when, and on what terms. Clearly they have now said, "We care about people with mental disabilities." We congratulate them on that, but why weren't they saying that three and four years ago? Why did the Deputy Premier have to get up in his sanctimonious,

self-congratulatory manner and say "We care" when the evidence is such that there are a lot of people in this province that they have not shown very much care about and toward until now?

I told the former Minister of Labour that he should care about a cousin of mine by the name of Sherri who was mentally disabled. Back in 1987 Sherri, who lived on the south side of this city down by Southgate, got a job in a long-term care facility doing the dishes. For Sherri this was ideal. She'd had a number of struggles in her life and in her family in just not being able to get together a career, as we might think of it, but was finally able to land a job in a nursing home doing dishes, so much so that it paid her to have an apartment so she could live on her own, away from her mother, who is up in the north side here. Then one day her mother called me and said: "Well, William, we've got a problem. They've changed ownership and management at this nursing home, and the new manager doesn't like Sherri any more. They're telling her that she's only got two weeks left." I said, "Well, Aunt Rita, I'm sorry, because in this province that manager, that employer, can do just that and there's nothing else you or Sherri or I can do about it." We couldn't go to the human rights commissioner or the chief commissioner or anybody in the province. We couldn't go to the Minister of Labour and demand some rights for Sherri, could we? I said, "We need to care about people like that." Dr. Reid stood in this Assembly and said nothing. She reported to me that it's the last time she's ever going to vote for this government. She'd been a Tory all her life, and she said, "William, it's the last time I'm ever going to vote for that party." I said: "Well, hold on. Who knows? They might change. Give us till 1990. We might get a new Minister of Labour and things might change."

Well, it's too late, members. It's too late. The point is: it's not just Sherri; it's how many others in this province who have had to suffer unnecessarily, suffer because of the discrimination they've experienced while this government just sat back and did nothing.

Yes, I support this Bill in principle, Mr. Speaker, but I do not support the principle of procrastination, which is at the root of this tired, old Tory government. We've had enough. Albertans have just had enough and it's time for a change. People are saying that from Medicine Hat to High Level. We're not tolerant. In the New Democratic caucus we're not tolerant of the sad history of this government's inaction and inertia. We cannot understand why the delays have taken up so much time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, comes another issue: sexual orientation. Well, we hear the platitudes and the talk from the minister and members opposite about building bridges, tearing down walls, and that's how we've come to Bill 8 today. Well, fine; thank you very much; dandy. What about building some bridges and breaking down some walls between people who are heterosexual and people who are homosexual in this province? Because heaven knows, and this government caucus knows, that there still are a lot of big walls put up between certain members in the government caucus and people who have a sexual orientation that is not heterosexual.

Well, so much talk for breaking down walls and building bridges. I mean, we're glad the Human Rights Commission and the chief commissioner are on side; we're glad that polling shows that 50, 55 percent of Albertans are on side with this issue; we're glad that other provinces, Ontario, Manitoba – even the New Democratic government in Yukon brought it in, then went to the polls, and were re-elected. Yet no: "Well, Bill 8. You know those gays, a bunch of weirdos. We don't care if they get fired

from their jobs. We don't care if they get kicked out of their apartments." They say, "They're a bunch of sinners and they're Godless; they should perish in hell." In fact, I was called an offence to the Lord at one point because I introduced some gays and lesbians in this Assembly. I want to know what kind of bridges are being built or what kind of walls are being torn down if we can still in this province have this kind of intolerance toward gays and lesbians.

So, Mr. Speaker, I rest my case. We only say that we don't disagree; we just want to ask some questions why it's taken so long. What are the excuses? Let's put it out on the table and see, really, where this government's at. What possible principle is at work within this government to exclude gays and lesbians from IRPA? What excuses are they offering now?

Mr. Speaker, Bill 8, second reading in principle: we support it. It is, I think, a symbol of the Progressive Conservative Party in 1990 in Alberta: a little progressive and a lot conservative and without much time left.

Thank you very much.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise to speak briefly in support of this particular Bill and to congratulate the minister on presenting what I believe is a helpful addition to the moves that this government has made through the years on behalf of people with mental disabilities and others who are at less of an advantage in our society.

I have to say in rising to enter this debate that I somewhat resent the implications made by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre. It is most amazing to me that a member would stand in this House and spend 90 percent of the time in his debate not supporting or opposing a Bill but somehow condemning the fact that it's here now rather than some other point in time. I think the member badly misleads people with mental health difficulties or mental disabilities or other difficulties if he implies, if he suggests, or in some way declares emphatically, as he has, that by passing a Bill those problems are gone; yesterday all those problems were here. That's not the case.

Mr. Speaker, I spent a number of years with the Canadian Mental Health Association on their regional board, on their provincial executive, dealing with individuals who had difficulties. In a prior occupation I assisted individuals who had drug abuse problems. It is true, in my opinion, that people with these difficulties should be protected in legislation to the degree that we can assist in educating the public about the many benefits there are of employing these individuals and assisting people to reach their maximum potential.

But, again, I would underline that this government introduced the first Individual's Rights Protection Act in the country. This government has assisted those with mental disabilities, mental health problems, in a variety of ways, which the ministers responsible, I'm sure, can delineate: effective ways of funding and assisting and supporting the volunteer organizations and the professionals involved in this area. I think this is one more step of many that this government has made in this area.

I'd be the first to admit that no government I know of has evolved enough assistance or moved far enough or has enough solutions in these difficult areas in terms of maximizing the potential of all our citizens, but I'm not afraid to put the record of this government in front of anyone. I again say, Mr. Speaker, that this is not just a realization or a move that has taken all of these years to put in place. It in fact is one more step, one which will assist but won't solve all the problems, as yesterday,

before we introduced the Bill, there were problems and, I'm afraid, will be tomorrow. We all will work to challenge those problems, to achieve that end, to do what the minister has indicated in terms of fulfilling those possibilities in our society. I don't think any of us will rest till they're all done. But I do regret that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre has seen fit to imply that you start and end with a few words on a piece of paper, even in such an august position as this Assembly is on behalf of all Albertans.

I support the Bill. I underline and, indeed, heartily congratulate the minister on bringing it to us and say that I know this government will continue to take steps. This won't be the last one; it isn't the first one. I would urge all members to support the Bill.

REV. ROBERTS: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. *Beauchesne* 492. It does seem to me we have a very interesting debate. I appreciate the context in which the member has put his comments, but I do resent being cited as having misled anyone in this and would ask if he would, according to *Beauchesne*, withdraw that remark.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I believe the rules indicate that it's "intentionally misled," but I don't see "misled." I think there has to be a certain intent there. It can be an inadvertent misleading, which isn't . . .

Would the hon. Minister of Labour care to close the debate? [interjection] Order please.

[Motion carried; Bill 8 read a second time]

Bill 2

Department of Transportation and Utilities Amendment Act, 1990

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 2, the Department of Transportation and Utilities Amendment Act, 1990.

The removal of these two subsections provides for the surpluses and the deficits of the Transportation Revolving Fund to be guided by financial policies established under the Financial Administration Act, which allows profits and losses to affect one another irrespective of the order in which they occur. This change is made with the support and the recommendation of the Auditor General and the Alberta Treasury.

MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Speaker, I'd be interested in knowing the exact reason for this internalization of the revolving fund. Previously there was a commonsense kind of provision that surpluses were paid into general revenue. Of course, if there was a shortage in the revolving fund, it could be made up from general revenue too. I have no doubt there's a good reason for it. I haven't read the Auditor General's report on this point, but it seems to me there is a capacity there for the department, if it chooses, to run its own little budget and own internal fund and so on that doesn't get prior scrutiny from the Legislature, yet it is in effect the spending of public money. On that point of principle I would like to hear from somebody, the minister perhaps, in closing.

[Motion carried; Bill 2 read a second time]

Bill 3

Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Amendment Act, 1990

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of Bill 3, the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Amendment Act, 1990.

This is a short Bill, and the reason is straightforward for this request to the Assembly. It is to give the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs the ability to enter international agreements in terms of the sharing of information. This power exists in most department Acts. It is not in the current Act and is required if we're going to be able to enter international and national agreements, particularly in the securities field where that fast-moving financial marketplace increasingly requires that on behalf of citizens we make sure we know what's happening with companies and operations as they move across borders and, equally important to other jurisdictions, nationally and internationally, to ensure that information we might have on difficulties, on problems, on circumstances that corporations or other organizations might face is shared on a confidential but sensitive basis.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, that's the essence of the Bill. As I say, it is a usual power given in other Acts. It hasn't been required in the past in this one, but we are contemplating agreements with the United States, with the United Kingdom, and within other provinces to ensure that we have a fair and honest marketplace and can keep on top of the fast-moving conditions we face in our rapidly changing world.

MR. WRIGHT: Now, that's the proper way to introduce a Bill, Mr. Speaker. It's a good Bill too.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. A couple of thoughts occurred to me. Yes, it is a good Bill as far as it goes, but I do have a few questions and observations.

You mention here specifically the Securities Act and the need to exchange information between the Securities Commission here, let's say, and the securities commissions in the United States or Britain. I can't help wondering whether or not over the last two or three years the Alberta government has done enough communicating with other provinces and particularly the federal government in this area. I realize that each stock exchange is under a different provincial securities Act and securities commission, but the federal government has tried to co-ordinate so that we have some consistency across the country. As we move into a more globalized sort of trading situation in the world generally, it would seem to me that the way to go is not so much for Alberta to communicate with London, let's say, or New York but for Ottawa to communicate with London or New York – or at least some of the time. I'm not saying you shouldn't be able to; obviously, you should be able to exchange information.

I guess I'm concerned about the consistency of regulatory approach across the country and then the need to co-ordinate with other countries if we are going to stay on top of a rather volatile situation in which not only the stock exchanges all around the world are becoming immediate to anybody anywhere

in the world that has a computer that's linked up but also even in the Franchises Act area. Certainly we've seen some troubles with that in Canada, in Alberta recently: some of the stories that my colleague raised in the Legislature about some of the franchise situations going on in this province. So I wonder if the minister could comment a little about what's happening in Canada. I know this refers to international, but that's certainly very important.

MR. SPEAKER: May the minister conclude?

Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the questions from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, I would agree with him that there is a need increasingly and constantly to share information and make consistent regulation between the authorities that govern our stock exchanges in this country. There are four, of course, in Canada; there are many others worldwide. It is essential as things move more quickly that we do that.

It is not part of the Bill; however, I can tell the hon. member that over the past couple of years, and specifically in the past few months, there has been an increasing move to have securities administrators meet on a very regular basis nationwide and make consistent regulation in the securities area. As the member may well know, the Securities Commission itself has the authority to make specific recommendations within its area and to share certain information. This will assist in further doing that on an international basis.

I would not agree if the member was implying that Ottawa should begin to control securities commissions in the country. In this nation we are in a circumstance where Montreal and Toronto exchanges have far more volume than Alberta and British Columbia do. In any case of the national government controlling the direction, I think it would be difficult for them to administer a securities commission on a basis that would benefit the specific needs of Alberta and British Columbia when the vast majority of issues would in fact be in those two central Canadian exchanges.

But I do believe that we have to co-ordinate efforts. The federal government may well have a role to play in that co-ordination of efforts. We have to make sure from our end that we're doing all that we possibly can to communicate with other exchanges and that information happens rapidly and quickly. It's not an easy task. As the member knows, we're changing daily, constantly. At a moment's notice financial transactions can be made across borders and between companies – as he mentioned, really by the touch of a computer. We have to and will continually make changes in order to try and meet those needs. This is one more requirement in that respect.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: There's a call for the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 3 read a second time]

Bill 4

Licensing of Trades and Businesses Amendment Act, 1990

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of the Licensing of Trades and Businesses Amendment

Act, 1990. This allows the government to establish regulations to licensed businesses selling goods or services in our Alberta marketplace. The purpose is to establish business operation standards and require businesses to provide consumer safeguards for financial redress for disadvantaged consumers. The management of the regulations rests with the government. The amendments I am proposing for the Licensing of Trades and Businesses Act will allow the government to delegate its management responsibility to an independent board comprised of industry members and consumers.

Many of today's Alberta businesses feel they must play a participation role with government and consumers to oversee their business community. It's also important for consumers to feel they have the same participatory role and feel they can have direct access to industry to express their concerns about the marketplace. The amendments that are before you will allow the government to carry a partnership agreement between businesses, consumers, and government to manage the business operation standards and provide consumer safeguards for the Alberta marketplace.

The government's role will in no way be diminished, but clearly business will now have the responsibility to ensure their peers are operating within the established regulatory guidelines. Industry will be challenged by this new responsibility, and it will be a fairer marketplace and create a fairer marketplace for consumers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Call for the question. The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore has moved second reading of Bill 4, Licensing of Trades and Businesses Amendment Act, 1990.

[Motion carried; Bill 4 read a second time]

Bill 6

Alberta Health Care Insurance Amendment Act, 1990

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to present for second reading Bill 6, the Alberta Health Care Insurance Amendment Act, 1990.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment applies specifically to section 8(4) and also to section 13(8) of the Health Care Insurance Act. Subsection 4 permits the minister to have regard to reports or recommendations of the College of Physical Therapists when reassessing physical therapy claims, and subsection 8 permits the minister to release Alberta health care insurance plan information regarding the members' claims or benefits. This has become necessary as a result of the coming into force of the Physical Therapy Profession Act of 1985, since the College of Physical Therapists did not exist prior to 1985. Prior to that there was an Association of Chartered Physiotherapists of Alberta. Also, the Act has several wording changes which are for the most part cosmetic and of no particular consequence other than to increase the efficiency of the wording within the Act. This amendment will put the physical therapists on the same footing as other health professionals who receive benefits under this Act; for instance, the dentists, the optometrists, and the chiropractors.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that gives a reasonably good outline of the intent of this amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Edmonton-Centre.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it does seem to be much of a housekeeping Bill, particularly with respect to including the physical therapists. I do wonder, though, about a couple of concerns we have. Maybe at committee stage we'll get into them more, but I wonder about other providers such as occupational therapists. I know we've just been through having their Act and council established. I take it insofar as they're not to this point in time on fee for service under the Alberta health care insurance plan – they might be excluded at this point, but I do wonder if there aren't some of the benefits they may claim under the insurance plan and whether they, too, should be included here or for what reasons they're being excluded, since they now have the same status as the physical therapists.

The other is with respect to section 13 as amended. We did have an interesting discussion in Public Accounts once upon a time with the previous Minister of Health, particularly with respect to information about physicians or others who may bill the Alberta health care insurance plan. If they were seen to overbill or defraud the plan in some way in terms of their billings, I understood the minister at the time to say that that would not be public information, that in fact he might notify the College of Physicians and Surgeons or the college appropriate to the provider who has called in suspicious billings. But I'll have to dig out the *Hansard* of that Public Accounts debate. I did think the minister was at that time wanting to move toward going beyond just the disciplinary body and even having the people of Alberta and the patients of some of these people be

notified that in fact there was some illegitimate billing under the plan.

Now, the new section 7. I do see that it is just, as the Member for Cardston says, a strengthening of the language there, but I wonder whether it doesn't open a debate on that whole issue, which is a thorny one. I think that in the public interest we need to be clear about it. I'll do some more work and bring it up again at the committee stage.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: There's a call for the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 6 read a second time]

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, hon. members are well aware that tomorrow afternoon is private members' afternoon, and tomorrow evening will be the Budget Address. On Friday, of course, we would continue with the debate on the Budget Address. I should advise members of the Assembly, however, that it's proposed to move fairly quickly into Committee of Supply. I have proposed that the first of those Committee of Supply days would be on Monday afternoon, with Advanced Education. Then in the evening we would continue on debate on the budget. That's just by way of advising members as to the first day or so into the Budget Address.

[At 5:28 p.m. the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]