

Legislative Assembly of AlbertaTitle: **Thursday, March 22, 1990 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 90/03/22

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Lord, forgive our excessive busyness as we seek to do our business.

Grant us an awareness of these moments of life that we might take on a renewed sense of commitment as we seek to serve all Albertans.

Amen.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today under Standing Order 30 to present notice of motion that today I intend to rise after question period to move to adjourn the ordinary business of the Assembly to discuss the urgent matter related to the sale of General Systems Research and the loss of \$31 million of taxpayers' money.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the response to Motion for a Return 235, which was accepted on August 17 of '89.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. SCHUMACHER: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 13 students from the Carseland elementary school. They are grade 6 students and very enthusiastic and interested in the processes they're observing around these environs. They're accompanied by their teacher Rudy Luttmmer and parents Grant and Lee Wrathall. I'd ask them to rise in the members' gallery and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Redwater-Andrew, followed by Edmonton-Avonmore.

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly four outstanding senior citizens from the town of Bruderheim. They are Mr. and Mrs. Bill Ungeran and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Gabert. They're just visiting here to find out about some senior citizen programs. I ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly 47 students from Lee Ridge school seated in the public gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers Mrs. Olga Severin and Mr. Barry French. I would ask that they now please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to other members of the Assembly Ms Molly Anderson, who is a teacher from the state of Florida who is here on a Fulbright exchange. Ms Anderson tells us she is very impressed with the education system in Alberta.

head: **Oral Question Period****Meech Lake Accord**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Yesterday we learned that the Premier and his western counterparts have agreed to set up a task force that will try to develop a common front among western provinces to deal with the constitutional crisis. I'd say to the Premier that we welcome this initiative because we've watched with growing alarm the constitutional crisis developing and the thought that our country could break up from lack of unity. At the same time, we are concerned that the formation of this common front does not lead to a hardening of positions and that the committee will explore all avenues that might lead to a solution to this current constitutional crisis. My question flowing from that is: will the task force that's being set up be as open as possible, and would this task force be prepared to meet with interested citizens in the western provinces who might have some useful ideas on how to end this deadlock?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want the hon. member to go too far along the lines of crisis in referring to the Meech Lake accord and the various discussions going on with regard to it. But I do respect and certainly heartily endorse his view that we need to give serious and open consideration with a generosity of spirit and special tolerance of the views of other provinces.

The task force is not set up in order to have public hearings or that type of thing. The task force is representing the four western provinces and would be looking at the recent move of New Brunswick, because what it has introduced is a new factor in the entire Meech Lake matter, and that is a companion resolution. That's what the task force will be working at.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, following along, then, from the Premier's answer. The government of New Brunswick has suggested a compromise: a companion resolution dealing with among other things gender equality, dealing with making it easier to have new provinces join Confederation, and highlighting aboriginal rights. My question to the Premier. In the spirit of compromise would the Premier be amenable to these changes in a companion resolution?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I would assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that the government of Alberta will consider Mr. McKenna's and the province of New Brunswick's initiatives very, very seriously and will also look at them in the context of the actions of the province of Newfoundland and the province of Manitoba. As well, since this idea of a companion resolution is a different initiative, we want to make sure that if such a thing is being developed, the interests and needs of western Canada are seriously considered as that development takes place.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, part of the dilemma seems to be the increasing pressure, because we feel we have to secure agreement to the accord by the first ministers' perceived deadline, I believe of June 23, 1990. As the Premier is well aware, there's some evidence put forth by constitutional lawyers

and scholars and others that this deadline may have, in fact, no basis in law. My question to the Premier. Given the urgency of the matter, would the Premier agree to have cabinet send this matter to the Alberta Court of Appeal for reference, as allowed by section 27 of the Judicature Act? That may give us some more time to solve the problem.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I would say no to the hon. member. As a matter of fact, I want him to know I personally and my government feel that too much is being now passed to courts to make decisions or to govern. We want the act of governing to be in the hands of those who are elected by the people of Alberta.

MR. MARTIN: Trying to get some more time, Mr. Premier.

Lead Poisoning in Medicine Hat

MR. MARTIN: My second question, Mr. Speaker, is to the minister of Occupational Health and Safety and the Workers' Compensation Board. Finally, yesterday after question period the minister did admit that in fact showers were not in place at Alberta Recoveries & Rentals, where workers got lead poisoning. I think that matter itself should show that his department was negligent in this matter. Workers from the shop have also denied that they were ever given instructions on the use of protective equipment and special safety procedures. My question to the minister is this: now that he has acknowledged in this Legislature that his department's instructions were not enforced, is he prepared here in this Legislature to apologize to Maurice Gauthier for implying that Gauthier was to blame for the lead poisoning suffered by himself and his children?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, at no time did I blame anybody. I will not apologize to anyone because I laid no blame on anyone.

But just to correct the record, Mr. Speaker, in regards to the visits there by Occupational Health and Safety and about discussions with the workers, I have information today that these discussions were held with the employers and workers who were available at the time on three occasions: August 15, December 1, and December 4. Talks were held with every worker at the plant on those times. On each occasion printed material was left for information and distribution to the employees. So Occupational Health and Safety did talk to all the workers at the site on those three days.

MR. MARTIN: Is your information as good this time as it was yesterday, Mr. Minister?

I think it's appalling that you don't have the courage to stand up and apologize to people in this Legislature even though yesterday you admitted that it was wrong, Mr. Speaker. But flowing from that. Obviously the owner of this company did not follow the instructions and do it properly. Rather than just talking about the workers, what action is this minister now prepared to take against the owner of Alberta Recoveries & Rentals and any other owners to make sure that they're not making a mockery of his department?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to advise all members that in my statements I've suggested a number of times that if an industry or a worksite did not follow procedures, they would be closed. That's something we've done on a couple of

occasions already. But I want to suggest to all of you and to announce that the company has agreed today to stop production. I want to table with the House four copies of that release. Occupational Health and Safety will continue to work with the employer, will continue to provide information to the workers and the employer, and we will not allow that plant to reopen until all measures of safety and health are installed.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, it's nice that it's happening now. But again, there are three children in the hospital and 10 workers that were lead poisoned. I guess we want to know: why wasn't this done before? That's what we've been trying to get from this minister. The question I would ask, flowing from that, is: does the minister have any idea at all how many other industries might be in the same position and how many other workers may be facing similar problems?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, it's difficult for me to know if there are other industries, but I would encourage those industries, those workers, and those MLAs that know of instances such as that to notify us.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, that I look at the questions presented to me by the Leader of the Opposition on two occasions in *Hansard* on page 154. The question was:

There are 10 workers and three children in the hospital. I don't care how many times you visited [the site]. Why didn't you shut them down? Why didn't you shut them down?

The second question that day is:

Why is it, then, that 10 workers and three children are in the hospital in very serious condition?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Answer it.

MR. TRYNCHY: I will answer it. Mr. Speaker, we went there to see if we could do something. There were no workers in the hospital on that date. So there have been examinations of some workers, but that's been resolved, and most of them are back at home and working.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Senate Reform

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, since 1961, \$100 billion has been paid by the Alberta taxpayers, Alberta government, to the national government over and above the benefits that we've received from Ottawa. By way of comparison British Columbia has paid about \$4 billion, Ontario about \$18 billion. Every other province in Canada has received more than it's paid in. I think the conclusion is clear, and that is that Triple E Senate reform is essential. However, two Premiers have not shown, in my view, a commitment towards Triple E. Certainly Mr. Bourassa has said nothing, and Mr. Peterson has even advanced a position paper not agreeing with the "equal" portion of Triple E. My questions to the Premier are these: what assurance can the Premier give Albertans that in the discussions that are taking place today, particularly with respect to Triple E, we will get Triple E as part of the new constitutional reform in Canada?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, one of the most important features, I believe, of the Meech Lake accord has been that for the first time in the history of our country, some 120 years, because of

the leadership of the province of Alberta we have raised the issue of Senate reform to the number one constitutional issue to be dealt with by Canadians. Now, that has never happened before in the history of our country. The second thing under the leadership of the province of Alberta is that we are fighting to have a constitution, for the first time in the history of this nation, that is made in Canada and agreed to by all the governments in Canada. That has never happened before in the history of our country. Those are the issues we are working on.

I find it interesting that the hon. member talks about the dollars flowing out of this province compared to those flowing in, because if there was ever a party that was responsible for ripping the dollars out of Alberta to the benefit of other provinces, it has been the Liberal Party.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I don't see much improvement in Mr. Mulroney's presence. In fact, the GST that's coming will be an even bigger tax grab.

My next question is this: given that the companion accord, that's been talked about already that Mr. McKenna has brought forward, deals with committees of a Canadian Senate looking at regional economic disparity, is the Premier prepared to state today that that provision is unacceptable, is too weak, and that Alberta will not buy into that particular provision?

MR. GETTY: Just briefly referring to the first part of the hon. member's comments, Mr. Speaker. As I recall, in the times when we had a federal Liberal government and the members for Alberta were fighting against the imposition of such things as the national energy program, those people in this province who were supposedly strong members of the provincial Liberal Party kept their heads down, hid, and never spoke out at all against their own party, just took the benefits that flowed to them as a result of a government who were their friends in Ottawa. So let's not have these new champions of Alberta suddenly appearing in our Legislature.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the initiatives by the Premier of New Brunswick and his government, in terms of placing a companion accord into their Legislature along with the Meech Lake accord, I think is a positive step. There are certain specific items that are in that accord. They are being assessed by our government; they will be assessed by all governments in Canada. I'm sure, as the Premier of New Brunswick said, this is not the final document; this is not carved in stone. This is placed here in the hope that we are able, by starting along this line, to move in a positive way to coming to a solution and a new constitutional accord in Canada. We will look at his initiative with that type of regard, in that he's done something positive. Let's not start ripping it apart right now but try and build from that base.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Premier, I hope you can be as concise and precise on this as possible. Inasmuch as movement is taking place because of this companion accord, are you prepared to show some leadership for Albertans and insist – insist – that in that companion accord there be a distinct reference to the fact that Triple E Senate reform should take place?

MR. GETTY: It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, how there was just one Premier and one party who were supporting the Triple E Senate and then through Alberta's leadership we have rallied to the point where we now have eight Premiers who are supporting Alberta's Triple E Senate. How quickly some who kept quiet all these years are now in a rush to get on the bandwagon.

Meech Lake Accord

(continued)

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I think it's interesting and certainly very appropriate that both leaders of the opposition parties today have raised questions to the Premier regarding the Meech Lake accord and the recently announced western provinces task force. As a follow-up to those questions I'm wondering if the Premier could clarify for the Assembly today: what issue priorities, guidelines, terms of reference, and priorities have been given to that task force as they embark on their re-examination of the accord and the question of a companion resolution?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the number one thing, of course, for the committee, which will be led by Alberta representatives and will be operating out of Edmonton next week, is to assess the variety of initiatives that are now being proposed to try and solve the potential impasse over the Meech Lake accord. As hon. members know, there are the B.C. proposals, there are the proposals more recently from New Brunswick, and there are some papers and reports that have now been presented from the province of Manitoba. We're also familiar, as most people know, with the feelings and actions of the province of Newfoundland. We will want our committee to work specifically on assessing the recent proposals.

We also know that we will have, perhaps, a new approach, a new initiative tonight from the Prime Minister, who is speaking to Canadians on national television, and we'll want to make sure that his comments are taken into their assessment as well. But, Mr. Speaker, because the companion accord is now a new part of the Meech Lake efforts, we want to make sure that Alberta's view and the views of western Canadians are also being incorporated in any potential companion accord.

MR. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, the word "negotiation" has been used a couple of times today, and of course that word implies give and take and compromise. I'm wondering if the Premier could indicate those accord areas that are not negotiable.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I think one of the most effective ways in which to look at the position of the government of Alberta is to review the principles set out in our throne speech: the principle of equal provinces, the principle of making sure that the federal government cannot end run the Constitution with its spending powers, the principle of being equal in terms of being able to negotiate Senate reform, the fact that Senate reform must stay as the number one constitutional issue to be dealt with by Canadians. There are others in the throne speech; I won't repeat them now for all members, Mr. Speaker. But those principles set out in the throne speech are the keys for Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Strathcona.

Electoral Boundaries

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Government House Leader. It's plain from the McLachlin decision in the fall of '88 on how the Charter affects constituency boundaries that the imbalance between the largest and the smallest of constituencies in Alberta, particularly as between the city constituencies and rural constituencies, denies some two-thirds of the citizens of Alberta their full voting rights. The

government realizes this, or something like it anyway, and has set up a select committee to make recommendations. However, the delay which we now see occurring in the recommendations of that select committee raises the possibility that the rules cannot be in place for all the changes to be made so that citizens have their rights before the next provincial election. My question, therefore, is: will the Government House Leader move at once to further amend the legislation so that a boundaries commission can be set up with rules based on the McLachlin decision so we will have timely changes to the boundaries?

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Deputy Premier, there's a whole series of references in *Beauchesne* in terms of legal opinions not being part of question period, so the Chair watches with great interest how you're about to answer this.

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

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'll try to do it this way. The select special committee reported yesterday. Obviously the government will have to review how to respond to the report. As yet we have not had an opportunity to do that.

But I have noted very carefully that it is suggested that a fall sitting of the Legislature be held this year to deal with a further report and recommendations which would flow from that committee's deliberations. It would seem to me that what the hon. member is asking the government to do, however, is to prejudge the work that the committee is undertaking. Quite frankly, as we said last year when we brought in the amendment to the electoral boundaries legislation, we wanted to make sure that such legislation would be Charter-proof and that it would withstand the test that the hon. member has referred to so that we wouldn't find ourselves in the same position that British Columbia found itself in. That is the objective.

Now, in order to accommodate the recommendations of the committee, it seems to me that in all likelihood I can't imagine not proceeding with a fall sitting to receive their final report. I think hon. members of the opposition are concerned about the government's intentions in that regard, and I can advise the Assembly now that a fall sitting is likely for November.

MR. WRIGHT: It helps to some extent, Mr. Speaker, but the hon. Government House Leader did also say on that previous occasion that the opinions he had suggested to him that our presently constituted rules would not withstand a Charter challenge. Therefore, can we at least have a guarantee that the people of Alberta will enter the next provincial election with amended rules to give them their full rights?

MR. HORSMAN: It was the purpose and intention of the government to make sure that the legislation would withstand the Charter and that it would fit the rules. That's why the committee was established to go out and seek out not just opinions from Albertans as to what the boundaries might look like – and unfortunately it seems to me that some of the reporting indicates that's what people have been talking about, rather than to try and find a way that would guarantee that people were adequately represented in this Assembly and that the legislation complied with the Charter. So why I have a little problem with the first question is that it would be difficult to bring in amendments to the legislation at this stage without knowing the recommendations of the select committee.

So I think what we're looking for is to have them complete their work, have them complete their public hearings, and then come to us with their recommendations so that we could in fact bring in legislation to implement the changes that are necessary, permit a restructured Electoral Boundaries Commission to be established so that work could be done in time for what would normally be the next general election in Alberta. However, there is no guarantee that an election could not be brought upon the Assembly within six months. You know, that would be certainly within the realm of . . . [interjections] Mr. Speaker, hon. members should not regard that as a shot across the bow. I don't intend to make it that. The fact of the matter is that I can't predict exactly and precisely when the next general election will take place, but assuming the normal length of time, we should be able to deal with the matter according to an appropriate timetable. But it would be foolhardy to go into an election with an electoral boundaries process that would not stand a Charter test. So I just give the House my assurance that we'll be here in the fall to receive the report and deal with what consequential legislation will be required.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Calgary-Buffalo.

Pension Liability

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a question to the mordant prestidigitator, who will recognize when he is being described. The Treasurer on March 20 told this Assembly that the reason for the province's unfunded pension liability of \$9 billion is because the province had oh so generously indexed pensions. In fact, our inflation indexing hasn't been generous, since five other provinces provided over 20 percent protection in the past five years, while Alberta provided only 13.2 percent. The main reasons for underfunding are really that, firstly, the government shortchanged the pension fund by \$3.7 billion when it set it up in 1981, and second, the government has so badly mismanaged the pension fund that it earned \$500 million less than if it had received the average return for 2,500 other pensions across this country.

MR. SPEAKER: Now the question, hon. member.

MR. CHUMIR: I'm wondering whether the Provincial Treasurer will agree that it's time to bring forward a plan for indexing Alberta pensions on a basis which eliminates the absolute government discretion and which gives pensioners some real future security in the face of the huge unfunded liability facing this province's pension plans.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'd have to disagree, of course, with the mélange of half-truths which have flowed from the Member for Calgary-Buffalo. As is natural, we've seen that it's convenient to take one side of the equation and not the other, but generally speaking, the assumptions under which he based his question are just false, particularly with respect to the rate of return. Any comparison with respect to the indexing, of course, is not accurate.

Let me make two points. First of all, in the case of a pension arrangement you can expect that people agree to pay into the pension plan what they expect to get out of it. That's matched by the province in most cases, with the possible exception of the Alberta Teachers' Association. Now, what has happened is that

the commitment made by both the government and the employees under the pension plans is to pay in a certain set amount based on the expectation that they'll receive a benefit at the end of that period with no indexing, no cost of living adjustment. So you can see that because the government has agreed to index the pension plan, going back at least to 1973, in fact, the benefits flowing out of the pension plan are larger than what each individual contracted to pay. That generally, Mr. Speaker, has caused us this problem with respect to the unfunded liability of the pension plan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear that, generally speaking, the rate of return on our funds, particularly those of major funds, excluding the MLA pension fund and the ATA pension fund, are as high as any other indexed fund in Canada. It's very well measured. The mistake that the Member for Calgary-Buffalo made, of course, is he doesn't understand the way in which these calculations are made. Now we, as I've said before, are in the process of dealing with this issue. We have a plan of action. As I've said before, it has to be carefully thought through, discussed well, and balanced carefully with not only the people who have to make the payment – that is, the beneficiaries – but with other plans across Canada. That's what this government is doing.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, Mr. Speaker, Alberta guaranteed pensions have fallen 32.6 percent behind inflation over the past 12 years, and pensioners are not happy. The Provincial Treasurer may be happy but not pensioners.

Now, let's look at the management of this plan then, Mr. Speaker. Since the Alberta pension fund should have earned at least an extra \$500 million to \$600 million over the past nine years if it had received the median return of 2,500 pension funds across this country, will the minister recognize that it's time to take away management from himself and his department and put it in the hands of an independent body?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, you see, Mr. Speaker, the member doesn't understand how the funds are operated. That's quite clear, because in the case of the Alberta Teachers' Association that fund is in fact managed by the ATA not by the government. So presumably he's eliminated from his calculations any reference to the yields or the yield comparisons or the performance of the portfolio under Treasury management. At the same time, we do use outside consultants to ensure that we have an index which compares our rate of returns with what is being generally considered a reasonable rate of return on other pension plans.

But it is interesting, Mr. Speaker. The member keeps coming back to the COLA arrangement. I don't want to put any fear in the minds of the beneficiaries of the plan right now, but I can say that in Saskatchewan they had a similar arrangement, an arrangement whereby COLA was not a matter of contract. They made major changes to the pension arrangements, and suddenly the next year the government of the time said, "No, we have no contractual arrangement to provide a COLA increase," and they ended it. The point is that we have maintained our commitment to ensure that COLA takes place to protect those people on fixed incomes against inflationary pressures. The individual's not paid for it. It's a cost against the plan and against the government ultimately, and it has been made as a matter of our commitment to those beneficiaries as opposed to a matter of contract. It's unfortunate that the Member for Calgary-Buffalo continues to generate fears in the minds of the beneficiaries that that right is going to be retracted. That's the shame of it, Mr.

Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Highwood.

Cargill Plant Impact on Environment

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is to the Minister of the Environment. My constituency of Highwood is rightly proud of the new Cargill beef packing plant. Success, however, sometimes carries a little price; in this case, one that offends the olfactory nerves with at times a rather strong smell. My question, then, to the Minister of the Environment. What is his department prepared to do about this mendacious odour?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we have in fact issued an order to the company requesting that they come up with an action plan to address this situation within 30 days. That order was issued about two weeks ago. So I suspect they have a little more than two weeks to go before we receive that action plan. We will look at it. If we find that it's suitable, we will continue their permit to operate, understanding that there is still going to be an odour until they've had an opportunity to physically fix the problem. If their action plan, in fact, is not a correct action plan and does not address to our satisfaction the problem, then their licence to operate will be lifted.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Highwood.

MR. TAYLOR: Two weeks is getting pretty ripe. It's getting very ripe.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Oh, I'm sorry but . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order.
Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you can see, it's a controversial issue.

The supplementary is to the Minister of the Environment. It concerns a related problem, that of the occasional murky effluent. I wondered if his department was prepared to clarify that issue.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, like the order that was issued with respect to the odour, we've also issued an order with respect to the discharge of effluent. Similarly, the company has been given 30 days to provide us with an action plan as to how they propose to deal with that problem. Again, that order was issued at the same time as the odour order, and we will review the action plan in a similar manner.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

Construction Contractors' Conference

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour is scheduled next week to attend a conference in Banff cosponsored by the Merit Contractors Association of Alberta.

The goal of the Merit Contractors is rather straightforward: destroy the collective bargaining process and destroy the unions in our province. Indeed, there's a professional strikebreaker by the name of Ed Kennedy, a man infamous for hiring goon squads to break strikes. He's going to be a keynote speaker at this conference. Now, to the Minister of Labour. Given the blatant antiunion focus of this conference, would the minister now agree that her attendance is inappropriate and, therefore, revoke her acceptance?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, I accepted many months ago an invitation to address the opening of the First National Open-Shop Construction Conference, which is being held in Banff later this month. I accepted the invitation because I am the Minister of Labour, and as the Minister of Labour it's my job to make sure that I speak to one and all who are involved in our workplace, whether they are owners or workers and whether they are organized labour or otherwise. One of the messages I must constantly bring to all of the people of Alberta is that we believe very strongly in the right of free association between people and that we believe very strongly in the right of free collective bargaining in this province. Furthermore, we will not let any development in this province take place that puts any of our workers at a disadvantage.

MR. SIGURDSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not bad, but the horror story of open-shop contractors and jurisdictions is filled with chapters on the destruction of the apprenticeship program, the destruction of worksite safety and, as if it's not already bad enough in our province, the systematic attack on fair wages, benefits, and working conditions. If the minister is intending to go, will she commit today in the Legislature that the province will not adopt any of the policies of open-shop or merit employers or what euphemistically is called right-to-work legislation in our labour laws?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, there is no one on this side of the House that wouldn't stand up stronger for workers' rights than I do, whether that is organized labour or otherwise. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MS McCOY: We uphold the right of free collective bargaining, and we uphold the right of workers to a fair share of the pie in this wonderful province we have. We have a large enough pie in this province for everyone to get that share. Let me say that when we are talking about the right to organize, the people who choose whether to have a union or not are the employees. In the end it is their choice that counts, and in the end and right along we have always upheld their right to pursue that choice.

Hazardous Materials Transportation

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the head-smashed-in cabinet jump, the Oldman River dam. This relates to a different disaster, the disaster of some 4,000 litres of hydrochloric acid spilled earlier today near Bonnyville. My understanding is that despite hundreds of spills on Alberta highways and a full-fledged debate in this Assembly last year, these incidents are still happening. I wonder if the minister could confirm that there is currently no Alberta regulations governing the safety conditions under which hazar-

dous material can be carried in containers on Alberta highways. Is that still the case?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, that most certainly is not the case.

MR. McINNIS: Well, the minister is perhaps aware of a case in which his department attempted to charge Byers Transport for failing to report. He lost that case, and he knows, I think, that there are no regulations governing the type of containers that material can be handled in. I would like to know when he's going to stop this material literally flying off the backs of trucks and leaking out of transport vehicles across this province. When are you going to act on it?

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's very, very apparent that once again the hon. member is not aware of what's transpired. OC 171/90 has been in fact enacted, signed by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor today. It's now in effect. It appears that the information provided by the hon. member is dated, and the government has responded to this particular matter.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Calgary-North West.

AGT Privatization Proposal

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last several months several ministers of the government have been talking about the possibility of the sale of AGT. The Provincial Treasurer has been talking about this for some years now. The possibility of sale worries a number of Albertans. My question today is directed to the Provincial Treasurer. When any company is privatized, it becomes subject to paying federal income tax and other fees and levies as well, and the telephone company then would have to potentially increase rates by as much as 20 to 30 percent to make up for this lost income. My question, therefore, is simply this: what has the minister done to ensure that Albertans are not faced with those kinds of increases of perhaps 20 to 30 percent on their phone bills?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is entirely a speculative question. I don't know at all where the member gets the intention or is seeing that we have announced the privatization of Alberta Government Telephones. Therefore, I think his question is really out of order.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, if I could quote from *Hansard*, then, the Provincial Treasurer speaking: "It's been on the agenda as part of the fiscal plan for some time under the umbrella of privatization."

Page 111, June 22, 1988. So thank you for the nonanswer.

My second question, then, again to the Provincial Treasurer. In their considerations that have been going on for some years, has it been determined that any possible purchaser will be required to complete the individual line service program to rural residents?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, the second part of the question, of course, is relevant. The member knows full well that the appropriations last year had dollar amounts allocated for the completion of the line service to rural Alberta, a very

wise program initiated by southern MLAs of this government, carried through by this government, which will put in place individual line service throughout Alberta. Everyone in Alberta knows that this government stands behind its commitment, and we will carry through with it, obviously. Of course, there's been no other announcement about AGT. I don't know where the member is coming from.

I can say, though, Mr. Speaker, that this government realized a long time ago the significant shifts that are taking place in the world economies, shifts from economies driven by governments to economies driven by markets, and these opposition members should well learn it. You'll be hearing more from us with respect to the way in which Marxist socialism has changed in this country, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Drayton Valley.

Farm Lending Program

MR. THURBER: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to pose a question to the Minister of Agriculture. I've had inquiries recently about a new program that he has announced to do with agriculture by the name of the vendor mortgage plan. I would like to know if you could tell us how this will really benefit the farm community as of today.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I believe there will be a number of benefits flow from this plan to the agricultural community. I'll just quickly touch on two or three. It should be an easy, convenient plan to access. The seller simply is carrying the mortgage to the borrower, with the Ag Development Corporation guaranteeing 80 percent of that loan and handling the collection and administrative work. It's innovative in the sense that the seller and the purchaser can tailor the interest rate and the repayment terms to suit their situation yet still access the benefits of ADC's preferred lending rates. It's economically sound in that it should provide a sound return on the investment to the vendor and hopefully, then, keep the retiring farmer's money in the industry he knows best, and that's Alberta agriculture.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. THURBER: Yes, supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. Might we have unanimous consent to complete this series of questions and also to allow the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism to supply additional information in reply to the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods from a previous question period?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.
Drayton Valley.

MR. THURBER: Yes. To the minister. Is this going to be a major cost to the Ag Development Corporation, and if so do you have any figures on that?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's our judgment that this program will to a large extent be replacement lending; hence, there

should be no significant incremental costs to the Ag Development Corporation. We anticipate that many people instead of accessing our beginning farmer program will start looking at our vendor lending program. We also anticipate that with the continued involvement of the seller we'll probably experience less loan losses.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism.

Multicultural Initiatives

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The other day the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods asked a question about what the government was doing to combat racism. The tone of his question was such that he was imputing motives to me. I neglected at the time to provide the member with some information on what we've been doing and what we're planning to do. It might help the member and other members of his caucus to listen to this.

Of course, we have established a Multicultural Commission in this province that conducted hearings across the province in 1988 and submitted a report. One of its first recommendations was the establishment of a cabinet committee on multiculturalism. That has been established. That committee meets on a regular basis. There is an ongoing effort by the Institute of Multicultural Resource Development to engage in cross-cultural training for human resource and personnel professionals, and efforts in those areas are being enhanced. The member is well aware that the Minister of Labour has established a task force on foreign professional credentials, which is continuing its work and which will report sometime soon. The Department of Education has undertaken a human rights and multicultural rewrite of its curriculum in recent years and will probably do that again. The Department of Career Development and Employment has an ongoing effort in the area of immigration and immigrants' settlement services. We've funded a number of studies in the area of health and cross-cultural training. The chairman of the Multicultural Commission provided a grant to the Misericordia hospital to do that. We're also supporting an effort for seniors, cross-cultural health conferences. I'm working with ministers . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister.

Edmonton-Mill Woods, brief supplementary.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, the minister just confirmed that he doesn't have any new initiatives since that commission report came out. I simply want to ask him: the problem of racism is a real one, and what specific program can you offer to people that is new since the commission report came out five months ago now?

MR. MAIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I was getting to that, but of course you called the House to order. The Multicultural Commission has on an ongoing basis studied the submissions it received during Interchange '88. We are now in the process, and on my desk is a comprehensive plan that includes the three main thrusts outlined in the report: bringing about public awareness on the benefits of multiculturalism, bringing about access to all the services that are available, and a genuine thrust towards integration. The member is obviously very interested in the cause of racism. [interjections]

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

MR. MAIN: I would just point out to the hon. member that a lot of the responsibility for the current flare-up in racism and racism tendencies in this province, I think, should rest at the hon. member's doorstep, for it is he who day after day continues to shout "racist, racist, racist" and points fingers and fans the flames. There is one member in this House who does nothing but encourage racist tendencies. Those people who do . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Careful, hon. minister.

Hon. members, perhaps we could give unanimous consent to briefly return to the matter of Introduction of Special Guests and then come back to various points of order and so forth, please.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**
(*reversion*)

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry. The guest I was going to introduce has left the gallery.

MR. SPEAKER: Would you care to make note of his presence?

MR. KLEIN: I would note that a good friend of mine, a constituent and someone who's very familiar with the mayoring business, was sitting in the gallery, a person who's proving himself to be a great municipal leader. Mr. Speaker, the person who was sitting in the gallery I'm referring to is, of course, none other than His Worship Al Duerr, the mayor of Calgary.

MR. DROBOT: Mr. Speaker it's a pleasure today to introduce to you and members of this Assembly 46 students from l'école Mallaig community school in the constituency of St. Paul. They are accompanied by teachers Don Katerynych and Jeanne Boutin. Also, Jillene Scheuerman, who is a grade 10 student from that school, is doing page duty in this Legislature. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Points of order, Edmonton-Jasper Place, Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the question period you called my colleague from Edmonton-Strathcona to order for asking a question about the McLachlin decision from the Supreme Court in British Columbia. *Beauchesne* and other parliamentary forms make it clear that it's improper to ask a solution to a legal proposition, such as an interpretation of a statute or the minister's powers. There are further protections against asking about matters currently before the court or asking about legal opinions. But my colleague referred to the McLachlin decision as a notorious fact and inquired as to when the government would cease its stalling and start to do something about it. That was the nature of the question asked. My point is that it's necessary that we draw a line around that area because from time to time important decisions are rendered by the courts, and the response of the government in this Legislature is an issue that's properly brought forward in question

period. Therefore, I submit that my colleague was correct to ask the government when it would quit stalling and do something.

MR. HORSMAN: Speaking to the point of order, perhaps there has been some lack of communication in the NDP caucus. It was agreed by House leaders and the Speaker that people wishing to raise points of order respecting their own conduct would do so on their own and not rely on other counsel retained by them to make their points of order. That was clearly agreed to as a matter of procedure: The hon. House leader of the Liberal Party nods in agreement, and had the hon. House leader for the NDP been in attendance, I'm sure she would have nodded in agreement as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, first off, when the Chair intervened in question period, it was an intervention and it was a warning. There was no ruling made. If you care to check the Blues, you will discover that, Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

The second point is that the Chair at that time said the Chair would listen with great interest as to the questioning and the answers being provided. Indeed, it is true, as pointed out by the Government House Leader, that it was brought forward to the meetings with the House leaders and the Chair that hon. members would stand up and defend themselves. All hon. members in this House are well aware of the fact that none of us here are rookies anymore.

The other point to be made is that the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona certainly has his own wealth of experience of being able to defend himself and rise to a point of order in the House.

Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order relating to Standing Order 7(1) and *Beauchesne* sections 348 through to 350. Both references deal with statements by ministers. Clearly, there is provision in our daily procedures that ministers can stand up and make statements at their own initiation, of their own accord. I know it's very, very difficult for you, Mr. Speaker, to be able to rule on all questions immediately and quickly, and I know that we all share a sympathy and a sensitivity towards all members being able to ask a question, whether they are from this side of the House or that side of the House. However, on two occasions today, one at the time I raised my point of order, one subsequent to that time, I felt that questions were asked which elicited nothing more than a ministerial statement. We have noticed that occurring on a number of occasions over the past several weeks. They have, in fact, had as many questions as the opposition members, and over time I believe that begins to encroach upon the proper use of question period.

I know it's a difficult judgment for you to make, and I am sensitive to all back-bench members' concerns about raising questions. However, I would ask that you might rule and encourage the ministers of the government to raise and utilize the Ministerial Statement provision in the Orders of the Day so that the question period can function as it should: to focus on the accountability of the government.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, this is indeed stretching the point of a point of order. This is nothing more than a complaint and an opinion of yourself, perhaps shared by other members in your caucus. But please, hon. member; in terms of the new

format of question period, for most members in the House – those who are not leaders of the Official Opposition or of the third party, where it's one question, one supplementary – on most days, checking the records, we're able to get more members in.

The Chair would also like to point out that if you watch the flurry of notes coming up here during question period, the Chair seems to have to deal at least on a daily basis with complaints from members about whether they're getting into question period, not getting in, the length of the question, the length of the answer, and various other kinds of interesting wrinkles that get sent along here as well. The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark mentioned, perhaps inadvertently, that the government benchers were getting an equal number of questions as members of the opposition parties. That is patently not true. The statistics are there to prove it, and the statistics were shared with your own House leader as recently as yesterday. [interjection] Order please.

The other point that's raised here about ministerial statements. You will recall on the opening day, when we started with the first question period, that the Chair indeed continued yet again to ask the government to supply ministerial statements to the House, and the government has indeed acquiesced in that matter. There have been more ministerial statements made in this last 10 days than there were in a considerable period of time when the House last sat.

The Chair listens to the complaint of the hon. member, but it is not a point of order.

There is yet another point of order, if we can find our way through this forest. This regards the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark and the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. On March 13, 1990, in *Hansard*, page 44, in the first main question the Leader of the Official Opposition raised the matter of the Oldman River dam. In the preamble to a question, the Leader of the Opposition referred to pages 29 and 30 of the decision by the Federal Court of Appeal. The Leader of the Official Opposition did not quote from that particular document. The question was directed to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, and on page 44 we have the minister, where he referred to the Federal Court of Appeal document and said:

. . . contains no decision or order halting construction of the Oldman River dam.

He was not quoting from the document.

Then we go on to the next stage here. On March 13, the same day, the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark then quotes, but does not table himself, page 33 of the federal court ruling with regard to the Oldman River dam. One infers from the report that the member did not give a complete quote but that there indeed was an interruption in the flow of the quote, so the Chair was not able to see what the entire quotation was. That having occurred, then the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services gave a response and said:

The interpretation provided to me by legal counsel makes it . . . clear . . . that the court document "contains no decision or order halting construction of the Oldman River dam."

Now, please note that that particular quotation was the minister quoting verbatim his own remarks made earlier in the same question period when he made reply to the original question that was raised by the Leader of the Official Opposition. Having examined the record, no quote was given; therefore, there is no need to consider the possibility of tabling.

Now, in addition, all members should refer to *Beauchesne* 495(3), which reads:

A public document referred to but not cited or quoted by a Minister need not be tabled.

And *Beauchesne* 495(5), which reads:

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.

And also, from *Beauchesne* 446(2)(a), this following reference:

The following criteria are to be applied in determining if the government papers or documents should be exempt from production:

(a) Legal opinions or advice provided for the use of the government.

So if the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark was indeed in search of that particular document, that also fails the test of being necessary to be tabled in terms of *Beauchesne* 446(2)(a).

The Chair is sure that all hon. members will be careful not to cite or quote from documents that they are not prepared to table in this House.

We have a request, Standing Order 30. Calgary-North West.

head: Request for Emergency Debate

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move to adjourn the ordinary business of the Assembly for this afternoon to discuss the urgent matter of the planned sale of General Systems Research Inc. and a loss of \$31 million of taxpayers' money.

MR. SPEAKER: Please proceed with the matter of urgency.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking to the matter of urgency, yesterday there was a court judgment which came down which clarified what would happen to General Systems Research. Up until that time, of course, the matter was sub judice, and we were not available to ask questions of the government in this Legislature, so we have not had the opportunity to discuss that.

Secondarily, Mr. Speaker, speaking again to the matter of urgency, today is the Budget Address. We now have \$31 million of provincial money evaporating, as it were. Clearly, that must have an impact upon the budget and some ramifications there. So the two matters I think require debate today in this Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: With respect to urgency, other comments? Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I wish to speak to I would say the non-urgency of this, actually, because I do not believe that this requires an emergency debate at this time. It is true that the government squandered \$31 million on this company, but if you compare that to some of the other things that they squandered money on, like the Pocklington fiasco or the North West Trust/Softco cover-up . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. To the urgency.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of other things that this government has had difficulty accounting properly for in this Assembly, like the Alberta Mortgage and Housing claim that they make money when in fact they've been losing money since 1971. And there are other items that are so much bigger and so much more important that I can't see how we could consider GSR to be something of an emergency in that

regard.

From the point of view of urgency, of course we have question period, and the member could have asked questions in question period on this. He could wait for Technology, Research and Telecommunications estimates, or he could, indeed, talk about this issue at some depth and the pros and cons of investing in high-tech companies under Bill 1, being the Premier's Council on Science and Technology Act.

So there are a number of opportunities.. Certainly the press is interested in this issue; you can write press releases or call conferences, and there's no real need ... In fact, I was hesitant to give some of the list of other things that he could have called for an emergency debate for, because it seems to me that all I've done is given him more fuel for calling for an emergency debate every day on something or other. So I hope the Liberals will get tired of this business of asking for emergency debates every day. I know I am.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Provincial Treasurer.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the order to adjourn the House because of emergency on this matter of the impending sale of GSR. I think that the *Beauchesne* citation is very clear. This certainly is before the courts, and therefore the sub judice conventions must apply: section 506.

MR. McEACHERN: The decision's been made [inaudible].

MR. JOHNSTON: If the member from wherever it is would be quiet, he'll hear what's actually happening.

Mr. Speaker, although the court application was made on behalf of the receiver late last week, Her Honour Madam Justice Trussler has reviewed the documentation but has not yet, at this point, written the order, and the lawyers are now in the process of preparing that. Therefore, clearly until that order has come down, any debate here may, in fact, prejudice the discussion or the decision of that judge. Therefore, I think the question of emergency is not applicable. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, this issue has been before us for at least a month and could have been raised at any time.

As to the issue of budgetary debate, there'll be a lot of time from now on, Mr. Speaker, to debate questions before the House with respect to the fiscal plan of the government.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

First, the Chair appreciates the fact that notice was given by the Member for Calgary-North West so some additional research could take place.

The urgent matter identified by the hon. member has two parts; it's not just simply one. One is the sale of General Systems Research Inc., and the other is the \$31 million. The Table officers were able to check over the noon hour: the sale is being dealt with in the courts; an order has been made. In any event, the receivership is not a matter that is within government or Legislature jurisdiction. If the debate were to go forward and if the debate were to reflect on the court process or the decision of the learned justice, it would be quite inappropriate and unparliamentary.

As to the \$31 million, the Chair does not view debate on this as a matter of immediate urgency that would justify putting aside the other business of the House. Rather, there will be indeed ample opportunity to debate policy towards industry during the

budget debate and the estimates not only of the Treasurer but also perhaps the portfolio of Economic Development and Trade, perhaps Technology, Research and Telecommunications.

Therefore, under Standing Order 30(2), the Chair rejects the question of urgency.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Written Questions**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the government accepts written questions 185, 186, 187, 188, 196, 197, 198, and 199. I would further move, Mr. Speaker, that the following written questions stand and retain their place on the Order Paper: 175, 176, 177, 189, 192, 193, and 203.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

In order to help facilitate members' notations, the following written questions stand and retain their place on the Order Paper: 175, 176, 177, 189, 192, 193, and 203.

[Motion carried]

CLERK: Question 178, Mr. Decore.

MR. SPEAKER: No, we're now onto Motions for Returns, are we not? [interjection] Oh, yes. Thank you very much. We're with the questions. Yes; thank you. [interjection] They accepted them. The other questions were accepted.

MR. GOGO: The other questions are rejected, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The others are rejected? I see. Okay.

MR. McEACHERN: If I understood right, I thought he stood up and said that all those questions were accepted except those that he asked to stand. Has he now changed his mind? Or did I just not hear him right?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest the hon. member is not hearing right.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, what has transpired is that the Deputy Government House Leader said that the following were accepted, the following numbers: 185, 186, 187, 188, 196 – still with us? – 197, 198, and 199. Those were accepted. [interjection] Now, just a minute. Then you take your list as was read just a few moments ago by the Chair of those that retained their place on the Order Paper. The difference are those that are rejected.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, a question of procedure. Is it not common for those that are accepted to be accepted by the minister individually, stated so?

MR. SPEAKER: No. No, the procedure is indeed correct. The Government House Leader or the Deputy Government House Leader does as has been done today. Thank you.

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, today is somewhat of an unusual day in that many of the motions for returns are indeed to the

Provincial Treasurer who, I'm sure members would agree, is somewhat preoccupied. I would therefore move that all motions for returns except for the following numbers, 169, 173 . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Slowly, please.

MR. GOGO: There are only three, Mr. Speaker. . . . except for motions for returns 169, 173, and 200 stand and retain their precedence on the Order Paper.

AN HON. MEMBER: What happens to those ones?

MR. SPEAKER: Just wait and find out. Having heard the motion . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak to the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Treasurer may be tied up, but that's not a very good excuse, since many of the motions for returns call for documents that are already prepared. I pointed this out the other day. Just a couple of them off the top of my head; the Alexander report about the privatization of AGT, for example. That report has been around for a long time and doesn't require any work on the part of the Treasurer, so there is no excuse for putting it off and saying, "We'll have to deal with it another time." We're expecting in the budget tonight some indication that they intend to privatize AGT. We should have that report in our hands before that occurs. [interjection] Well, so it's a good reason to have that motion dealt with today, Mr. Speaker.

Also the Olympia & York licence agreement – that has been in place for several years, in fact – a process in which this government rented some 400,000 square feet at an exorbitant price so that Olympia & York would come here and build a building that was unnecessary when there was lots of space downtown already. Just because a former – well, I'm not sure whether it was just because, but certainly a former co-chairman of the Premier's leadership campaign gets to make the deal. There was no excuse whatsoever for that deal in the *first* place. We should be able to see what's in it, and the government consistently refuses to give it to us. That would not take one bit of work on the part of the Treasurer today. The deal is already in place.

But I stand up to object mainly to Motion 157 for the moment. The Treasurer thinks that he has answered, I suppose, my request on Motion 157 asking for the financial statement for 354713 Alberta Ltd., commonly called Softco. He passed out a document the other day, so he thinks, I suppose, that he's answered the questions in here. What kind of a financial statement, Mr. Speaker, does not list who the board of directors are in any way that you can see who they are and what their addresses and phone numbers are so that you could get in touch? What kind of financial statement does not have a list of the officers of the organization so that, again, you could see their names, addresses, and phone numbers and get in touch with them if you wished? Why is it that we've got a company here wholly owned by the government? Well, they've got one share of no value given to one Mr. Karvellas, who *is* supposedly the only director. Then the Auditor General audits this, but he does not put his signature on it to say that it is properly audited.

Only Touche Ross's name is on here. Only their address and phone number are on here, and they wouldn't tell anybody anything about this company. The Treasurer is wholly responsible for this company, and this is the shoddy way he does business.

Mr. Speaker, in here the indication is that we're down to \$20 million left out of the \$277 million that they conned out of CDIC to cover up the North West Trust fiasco. We know that the Treasurer is the one that's in control, but the Treasury Branches supposedly also own some of the shares of this company. There is no place in here to indicate how much. Now, what kind of a financial statement is that, when the Treasury Branches of this province still have an investment in Softco after all these years because they had loaned over half a billion dollars to North West Trust and a lot of those properties have been pushed into Softco? They got \$153 million at the time of the takeover, but they still . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order please. Take your place please, hon. member. I'm sorry the member is feeling a tad out of sorts today. [interjections] Order please. Order. Order in the whole House, please.

The Chair was rising to make intervention, to make comment to the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway that two or three examples in trying to speak against the motion that is before us is one thing, but the Chair is not about to allow debate or excessive comment on any one of these motions for returns not being dealt with today to be brought in under this flimsy excuse.

Are your comments complete, or are you in a wrap-up condition?

MR. McEACHERN: No, I . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Is there a call for the question on the motion before the House?

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion before the House, as moved by the Deputy Government House Leader, is that all motions for returns except for 169, 173, and 200 stand and retain their place on the Order Paper. All those members in favour of that motion, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: In the opinion of the Chair the motion carries.

169. Mr. McInnis moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all guidelines or criteria used by the Minister of the Environment to determine whether an environmental impact assessment shall be required in respect of a development project.

MR. McINNIS: In moving this motion, I would like to refer members of the Assembly to the Land Surface Conservation and Reclamation Act under which all environmental impact assessments in the province of Alberta are presently conducted. The

gist of that section is essentially that the minister has discretion on whether an environmental impact assessment shall be required on any given project, and considerable latitude in defining the terms under which such an assessment takes place.

Well, in the province of Alberta a great many different types of activities have passed under the name of environmental impact assessment because of that broad latitude, and that's a subject which has been debated in small part so far this session. I think it will be debated in much greater detail, particularly if, as, and when the minister comes forward with new legislation in this area. But the purpose of this order is so that Albertans can find out what criteria are in place presently as a screening mechanism to determine whether or not an environmental impact assessment of any sort will be held on a given project. So that the members can be aware of the necessity of this, I would like to refer to three specific cases, recent ones which are presently undergoing this type of screening or have undergone this type of screening in sometimes bewildering fashion.

The first I'd like to refer to is a permit which was issued by the Department of the Environment under the Clean Water Act to construct a chlorine dioxide generator for the Procter & Gamble pulp mill south of Grande Prairie on the Wapiti River. That particular permit to construct was issued without any sort of environmental impact assessment whatever. Now, the minister might want to argue: well, there oughtn't to be one, because chlorine dioxide is good for the environment as opposed to some other substance that might be used for bleaching. Somebody else might argue: well, we'd be better off if you had no chlorine in those plants at all. This is a matter of opinion: whether this type of operation has a sum total good effect on the environment or a bad effect on the environment.

Well, there was no environmental impact assessment. One day the department just issued the permit to Procter & Gamble and they went ahead and started constructing it, and people in the area simply found out about it by reading the newspaper. Now, the significance of that is that that's a very big part of this so-called action plan that Procter & Gamble has touted as the means to get themselves a new Clean Water Act permit. Now, the Department of the Environment has sat on the question of issuing a new permit to Procter & Gamble for the past four and a half months now. Three times they have extended the old Clean Water Act licence, the third time being last Friday; it was extended for another six weeks until the end of April. Meanwhile, the department issues a permit to go ahead and construct a key component in the plan that Procter & Gamble has put forward on how they want to operate their pulp mill for the next couple of years. Obviously, people have concerns about that, feel that there should be some type of environmental impact assessment, but there was none. And there is no explanation, that I can determine, why Procter & Gamble is allowed to construct a chlorine dioxide generator without any type of an environmental impact assessment.

Now, of course, the other shoe is dropping. They want to build a factory on the same site to make the sodium chlorate, which is a substance used to generate chlorine dioxide in the mill. Having already approved the chlorine dioxide generator, I suppose the company would feel it has a foot in the door in relation to the other project. Who knows whether we'll get an environmental impact assessment on the sodium chlorate plant or not, but obviously there are concerns about that, because you have things like sodium dichromate, which is often spilled on Alberta highways and is thought to be a highly toxic or at least an abrasive and caustic type of material. That's one case.

Another one which I'm particularly concerned about is the tire incinerator at Trochu. In that particular operation, the proponents . . . [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: Continue, please, hon. member. I'm sure the other members can stand up and speak for themselves.

MR. McINNIS: Certainly. In that particular case the proponents have been told by Alberta Environment – at least the public has been told that Alberta Environment is not going to order an environmental impact assessment because of the jurisdiction of another agency, the Energy Resources Conservation Board. Now, that doesn't necessarily assure that an environmental impact assessment will be done; certainly not of the type that I think is required.

The third case is the Sunpine sawmill proposed for the Rocky Mountain House area, which the minister's executive assistant told the news media there would be no environmental impact assessment on. Now, the minister later told the House that that matter is still under consideration, so I presume the minister is definitive in this case and not the executive assistant. But, again, people don't know, so that's why I'm moving this particular motion.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what all the concern is about. I plan to accept the motion, and just to debate it very briefly, I really can't understand the hon. member's concern over a licence to process sodium chlorate, because this is a process that will serve to significantly reduce the chlorinated organics at that particular mill. With respect to an extension of that permit, this is to accommodate exactly what the hon. member asked for in the first place, and that is more public involvement and public input into the process. He ought to understand that.

With respect to the Trochu situation, I know it's the nature of the New Democratic Party to delay, to delay, to duplicate. Why put in place a process that has an equivalent process and a process that will serve to accomplish the same thing? The hon. member referred to it, and that is the Energy Resources Conservation Board. Under that process Alberta Environment does an evaluation of the environmental worthiness, the environmental acceptability of a situation and, in effect, becomes an intervenor in the process before the Energy Resources Conservation Board. So there is no reason to duplicate.

The hon. member is absolutely right with respect to the sawmill about 60 kilometres, I believe, west of Rocky Mountain House: the whole issue of an environmental impact assessment as it relates to the introduction of the natural resources conservation board, the new process as it relates to that. Mr. Speaker, that situation now is under review, and in fact it may very well undergo a formal environmental impact assessment public hearing under the new rules.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to support Motion 169 and congratulate the minister on what appears to be a positive response. I would just like to ensure that in responding to this motion for a return, he is very, very careful to release sufficient documents with sufficient detail that we could answer several very important questions.

One of them, for example, is: how were criteria applied in the decision to do a full, open, public review of the Al-Pac project? And given that that was done the way it was done, why is it that similar criteria were not applied or that the same

criteria were applied differently in the cases of Daishowa, Alberta Energy Company, Weldwood? It is very, very difficult to understand how the minister can on the one hand brag about the process that he implemented in the case of Al-Pac, and on the other hand resist answering clearly and pointedly the question: if that one was so good, why haven't we done one for Daishowa, for Weldwood, for Alberta Energy Company? He will say, "Well, some of those are under way." That's hardly a reason not to stop and rethink. But in the case of Alberta Energy Company, even that argument doesn't specifically apply. The fact is that Alberta Energy Company was allowed to proceed on August 17, fully two months after the decision for open, public hearings processes was authorized and implemented for the Al-Pac project.

I would also like to ensure that whatever documents are returned are sufficiently detailed and clear so we would be able to understand why it is that the minister has undertaken to move the teepee burner in Millar Western's Whitecourt plant without having undertaken an environmental impact assessment of the site to which the company has proposed to move the teepee burner.

I share my colleague from Edmonton-Jasper Place's concern with respect to the Sunpine project, and I trust that the minister will, in fact, apply whatever criteria he has in a way that will allow for, and in fact require, open, public hearings into that project.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Edmonton-Jasper Place, concluding? Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

[Motion carried]

173. Mr. McInnis moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a detailed breakdown of the expenditures provided for under each of the following special warrants indicating to whom the funds are paid:

- | | |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 42/90 | \$850,000 to investigate, assess, and provide emergency containment in and along the Bow River, |
| 43/90 | \$630,000 to ensure appropriate public consultation on the government's environmental principles and policies, and |
| 46/90 | \$150,000 additional funds referred to develop a comprehensive recycling program. |

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to accept the motion with one amendment. The amendment is: to exclude the words "indicating to whom the funds are paid."

Just to speak briefly to the amendment, Mr. Speaker. It is deemed to be inappropriate, in terms of dealing with individuals, to have it spread all over in every instance – and what I'm saying here is that we may be establishing a precedent – contracts that are signed by individuals who want to perform work for the government of Alberta. On the basis that this would establish a somewhat dangerous precedent, I am asking for support of this amendment, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Speaking to the amendment, Edmonton-

Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would speak against the amendment. I simply believe that these are public funds, that they should have been allocated by open public tender, that we in the Legislature and the people of Alberta have a right to know who it is that is receiving those funds, and specifically, that they have a right to know. We all have a right to know, because the people who are undertaking to do these kinds of initiatives, the kinds of initiatives that are provided for under these special warrants, may or may not be subject to some bias. It is an important right to know what their biases might be, what their qualifications might be, so that we can properly evaluate the results of whatever it is they are working on.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place on the amendment.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe now I have heard everything. We're now dealing with an amendment which, if it's passed, would hide from the public who receives the money to prepare and distribute the watercolour dreamscape that was sent to 25,000 Albertans, which is the larger part of the \$63,000 special warrant dealing with public consultation, dealing with who gets the money to draft the recycling program which we've been hearing about since the minister was first appointed last year. In fact, it seems to me that every time I inquire as to the status of that recycling strategy, it's going to be about a couple of months away. I wouldn't be surprised if today the minister wouldn't say, if you asked him, "It's a couple of months away."

Mr. Speaker, have you ever noticed how some people when they criticize others tend to talk about things that really mean them? They're really talking about themselves. I think we have that in spades here with the hon. Minister of the Environment, who likes to talk about other people's political agenda. This guy's got a political agenda if there ever was one, and you don't find it anywhere more so . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, we refer to hon. members; we refer to the minister. We do not say "this guy" or "this gal." Thank you.

AN HON. MEMBER: Should have told the Treasurer that earlier.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm going to tell all of you that, and I'm sure you'll all read *Hansard* very diligently and follow through.

Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker.

The hon. Minister of the Environment typifies a political agenda if there ever was one, on the environmental issue. This is one individual who will take the hopes and aspirations of Albertans for a healthy and clean environment in the future in an attempt to ride that right to the head of the train, right to the chair in the middle of the front bench. Well, I think it's time that we find out who's on the train with him, and that's why I want to know who's doing the work on this massive PR initiative, the \$630,000 campaign which was written up so well in the communication strategy on the environment prepared by the Public Affairs Bureau, propaganda central for the Tory administration, which said that the objective of the government is to trick people into buying into broad objectives through all

kinds of processes and dialogues and things which are supposed to get them to buy in to the government's notion on what's to be done about the environment.

Well, the buying-in has begun. The train has left the station, and we'd like to know who the passengers are. Who gets the \$630,000 that's being spent on preparing watercolour dreamscapes and sending out recycled paper? There isn't a minister here that doesn't send out announcements today on recycled paper. You have to wonder. If they don't support the bleached kraft pulp industry, who do they think is going to buy the bleached kraft from all of these northern pulp mills that they're investing in? I'd like to know that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KLEIN: All the ones in B.C. that you administer.

MR. McINNIS: The Minister of the Environment loves to talk about when I was in the government of British Columbia. You know, he asked me about that last year. I explained to him that I went to work in British Columbia approximately six years after the New Democrat administration left office. I don't know where he gets off saying that I built pulp mills and I did this when I was in government and I did that when I was in government.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I'm sure the hon. member would like to make similar comments, and I'm sure there's another time for that to occur. But at the moment we are dealing with the specificity of the amendment, which is to delete the words in Motion for a Return 173: "indicating to whom the funds are paid." Let us keep to that on this amendment, please.

MR. McINNIS: Well, a lot of people are wondering why, under Order in Council 42/90, it costs \$850,000 to investigate, assess, and provide emergency containment in and along the Bow River. The presumption is that this has something to do with the former Canada creosote plant, although we don't really know that, because that information hasn't been available to this point in time. So far as I'm aware, that situation has not been cleaned up as of yet. The \$850,000 is a study, and an emergency, temporary kind of a situation. Why does that cost \$850,000? It's certainly an expenditure that goes a little bit beyond the nature of the work that's been done, according to most people's understandings.

Now, I see some members in the House have the public accounts. If you look at the public accounts at the end of the year, you don't get to find out which sum of money goes with what particular project. If it's necessary to spend money over and above the funds that are asked for and received from the Legislative Assembly in the budget, then somewhere somebody's got to account for it. Now, I suggest, Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, that that place is here and that time is today, because these orders in council have been passed. We're very near the stage, the date on the calendar by which these funds will have been spent, so it's not as if there's no ability to provide this information. Some people in the Calgary area and elsewhere want to know why fish are showing up dead in the Bow River. I suppose when we find out – or if we find out – who the minister gave \$850,000 to to investigate what's going on in the Bow River, we might begin to have some answers on that.

Order in Council 43/90, \$630,000 on public consultation. This is where the political agenda comes in. I really think that if you're going to spend that kind of money on what is essentially a public relations exercise and a political agenda to make the

minister look good in the eyes of some people, the very least he can do, if he's going to take the money and spend it, is come back here and tell us who he gave it to. Now, I think that's the very least he can do. I think that if he's going to spend that kind of money on a political agenda, then he should come here and seek authority for the funds in the first place. Well, he didn't do that, and the law says that he doesn't have to do that; he can go to his cabinet colleagues and ask them for the money. But there is the inconvenience for the government of a Legislative Assembly in this province. We do have a right to ask questions, and I really think, on a matter like this, that the minister should be prepared to come clean.

He's going to say, "Well, you know, this is a public consultation, and why is the member opposed to public consultation?" The reality is: we're not. We've explained in speeches and legislation and in other ways that there is a way to consult the public that shows that you respect them. There's a way to consult the public that shows you want a road show, and you want publicity. Well, what we've had so far are road shows and publicities. What we've not had is serious research to lay out questions in a way that will assist people to understand what they mean. We've not had the kinds of forums which give people the opportunity to have a clear voice and effect to their concerns. Instead, what we have are blank sheets of paper which the minister said in debate the other day he hadn't even read. He said he'd had 8,000 of them received in the mail, and he hadn't – I don't know if he gave a number, but he said basically that they were sent to somebody in the department who prepares a computer summary, and he gets a computer summary every week. Well, how do they code this public input? Do they read through, one at a time? Do they say, "Well, this one must be from the New Democrats so we'll code that, you know, number five"?

MR. KLEIN: Those are the ones that go in the garbage.

MR. McINNIS: The minister says those are the ones that go in the garbage, and he has the gall to talk about a political agenda on some other person's part. That's cheap politics of the cheapest kind. New Democrats have as much right to public input about the environment as anybody else in this province, especially Tory . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Order. [interjections] Order. Order. Order.

For the second but the last time, hon. member, the amendment.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, the amendment seeks to deny access to information about who receives the funds on this \$630,000 PR scam which the minister has brought forward. He sits here today and says that he throws letters from New Democrats in the garbage. I say that that indicates more clearly than anything that could be said by a member of this House that he's on a political agenda and a political campaign. He's after the Premier's job, and he wants the taxpayers to pay for it. The evidence comes out of his own mouth. He doesn't want to spread all over the place who he's paying the money with. Well, I want to know who's on the Ralph Klein campaign team for Premier. Who's getting the \$630,000 to assure appropriate public consultation? Who defines what's appropriate public consultation? He throws letters from New Democrats in the garbage. I say that's not appropriate consultation. I say that's

a PR sham. I say it's expenditure that we have a right to probe in this Legislature, and I say that when we ask for information about to whom the funds are paid, that information should be forthcoming from the government.

On to the question of recycling. There's an order in council: 46/90. During the time that this minister has been talking about a recycling strategy in Alberta, we lost the Medicine Hat glass works which has been recycling glass in this province for more decades than I can remember; we lost the Applied Polymer Research company which was successfully processing pop bottles. They bought plastic pop bottles from the beverage container system for cash in order to recycle them in the province of Alberta. We lost that outfit. There was no help or assistance forthcoming from the government. I'm afraid the longer we delay in this, there may be nobody doing any recycling left in the province of Alberta. The minister talked just a few moments ago about the incineration of tires at Trochu in Alberta. That's not a recycling project, not at all. In fact, at the very best it's an energy recovery project based on burning something which might very well be recycled in the province of Alberta. So I would like to know – and I suspect a lot of other Albertans would like to know – to whom he's paying \$150,000 to develop a comprehensive recycling program which keeps getting delayed in 60-day stretches, and during which delay period we keep losing more and more recycling industries from the province of Alberta.

You know, my city, the city of Edmonton, pays out of tax revenue \$500,000 a month to operate a blue box program. That's a very substantial subsidy and a very substantial commitment toward recycling industries, but they have very little support and help from the provincial government. From what I know about it, the provincial government paid for a public opinion survey – which I suppose shouldn't surprise us under these circumstances – but they have not assisted with the development of that program at all. There has been no assistance when it comes to the processing of material coming out of there, the other half of the cycle.

So I'm hoping, Mr. Speaker, that all members of this Assembly will vote against this amendment in the interests of public access to information which, in the submission of people I talk to, is probably the most important environmental issue in the province today. Because we have a right to know who's on the political train, who's on the political agenda with this Minister of the Environment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of the Environment on the amendment? No?

No right to reply on the amendment, hon. minister.

There's a call for the question with respect to the amendment. All those in favour of the amendment which would delete certain words, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The amendment carries.

Speaking to the main motion as amended . . .

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell

was rung]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The proposition before the House relates to Motion for a Return 173. The motion before the House is an amendment as proposed by the Minister of the Environment which would delete certain words from Motion for a Return 173. The words are: to delete "indicating to whom the funds are paid." Those members in favour of the amendment, please rise.

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Adair	Fowler	Osterman
Ady	Gogo	Paszkowski
Anderson	Horsman	Payne
Betkowski	Hyland	Rostad
Black	Isley	Schumacher
Bogle	Jonson	Severtson
Bradley	Klein	Shrake
Brassard	Kowalski	Speaker, R.
Cardinal	Laing, B.	Stewart
Cherry	Lund	Tannas
Day	Main	Thurber
Drobot	McClellan	Trynchy
Elliott	Mirosh	Weiss
Fischer	Moore	Zarusky
Fjordbotten	Nelson	

Against the motion:

Bruseker	Laing, M.	Pashak
Decore	Martin	Roberts
Doyle	McEachern	Sigurdson
Ewasiuk	McInnis	Taylor
Fox	Mitchell	Woloshyn
Gibeault	Mjolsness	Wright
Hawkesworth		

Totals: Ayes – 44 Noes – 19

[Motion on amendment carried]

MR. SPEAKER: Before the House moves on to the next order of business, the Chair needs to point out for the benefit of all members that since this is the first occasion we've had an amendment introduced to the House at this current sitting, in future all amendments must be either handwritten in a legible form or typewritten so that we might have copies for the Chair to view and for other members who wish to participate in debate.

CLERK: Public Bills and Orders Other Than Government Bills and Orders. Bill 202, Mr. Decore.

MR. HORSMAN: Is it not necessary now to vote on the motion as amended?

MR. SPEAKER: No. There is still debate on the amended . . . [interjections] No. Our Thursday venue says that at 4:30 we must go to the other matter, and we were just completing the process with respect to the amendment. There was still time and speakers available to speak to the motion for a return itself. So we now go to the Bill. [interjections] Order please.

head: **Public Bills and Orders
Other Than
Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading**

**Bill 202
Recycling Act**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to second reading of Bill 202, an Act entitled the Recycling Act.

Perhaps I could start, Mr. Speaker, by giving some statistics on waste, garbage that exists in our province and how this compares with other places in Canada and the United States. The figures for Alberta are that some 1.8 million tonnes of garbage is generated yearly by Albertans, or 800 kilograms per person per year. It is a fact that the average cost to deal with this waste in Alberta is some \$50 per tonne per Albertan. By way of comparison, to deal with waste in Toronto, it costs Torontonians \$100 per tonne. In Vancouver they're still hurrying and scurrying in an attempt to find appropriate landfill sites because nobody in the vicinity near the Vancouver area wishes the garbage from the city of Vancouver. We all know the story about the barge that traveled from here and there and everywhere and eventually had to go back to New York because nobody wanted to take New York's garbage. Today, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that Canadians generate 50 percent more garbage, more waste, than they did some 25 years ago, but most environmentalists believe that we could easily reduce waste by 50 percent. I'm pleased to note that provincial environment ministers have targeted a 50 percent reduction in waste over the next 10 years.

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

Now, one of the plans that has been exceedingly successful in Alberta is the blue box program in Edmonton. That program has 90 percent participation. When Edmonton started looking for a landfill site, farmers quite rightly became enraged, angered by the fact that good farmland was likely to be taken up by a landfill site. They objected. Then other Edmontonians whose homes were near a prospective landfill site became angered and spoke out. Edmonton started on a program of looking for alternatives to deal with waste, and the obvious became a necessity; that is, to implement waste reduction programs using the blue box recycling program. Three communities in the Edmonton area were put to the test as pilot projects, and for six months those communities were monitored. It turned out that the success ratio in those communities was extremely high, but 90 percent overall in Edmonton is extraordinary. You heard the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place talk about this earlier, that there is a cost that goes with the blue box recycling program. It is \$2 per household per month. It is expensive, but it is clear that Edmontonians want this program, are prepared to participate, and want it continued.

It is interesting, I think, to tell the members of the Assembly, for the record, what goes into these landfill sites in Alberta now. On average 43 percent of everything that goes into a landfill is made up of what we call organics. Paper – this is astonishing – makes up 23 percent of everything that goes into a landfill, plastics 5 percent, inerts 19 percent, metals 5 percent, textiles 1 percent, and glass 1 percent.

Mr. Speaker, the blue box program in Edmonton has reduced residential waste by 14 percent; it has reduced overall waste in

the city of Edmonton by 4 percent. You can see that of the makeup of the components that go into a landfill, one-third is household waste, a third commercial, 9 percent industrial, and 26 percent construction materials. You can see that with 90 percent participation in the household area, a 14 percent reduction in waste is truly incredible and, I believe, worth seeing other communities in Alberta emulate.

The next project for the city of Edmonton, in addition to recycling plastics and metals and glass and paper, is to get into the composting area to deal with the organic materials. So Edmonton is well on the way, Mr. Speaker, to the reduction of waste to that 50 percent level.

If we look at what is happening in other provinces and states, we find that we're lagging behind; we're not leading in this area. There are some 26 states in the United States that have comprehensive recycling laws. The province of Ontario has initiated municipal recycling programs, and 110 municipalities are now involved in those programs. The province of Quebec has committed itself to a complete blue box program for every household in Quebec over the next seven years.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that we think is so important. We talked about it during the last election. We think it needs to be pushed, and this is why this particular Bill is our priority Bill. We have costed out a blue box program for all Albertans. That program we estimate would cost some 20 and a half million dollars. The costs would involve \$15.5 million for a blue box program for every community of 200 people and above and an additional \$5 million for a Toxic Roundup program. The city of Edmonton initiated this program. This is where you take your hairspray cans and your Lysol and whatever you have left in bottles. You don't want to throw it down a drain; you take it to fire stations or Toxic Roundup stations in the city of Edmonton. The response Edmonton saw in people bringing those toxic materials to be destroyed in a proper manner was incredible. If Alberta initiated this environmental program of recycling, if we put into place this 20 and a half million dollar program, 420 new jobs would be created in the province of Alberta.

Now, some concepts, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Act. The Act is intended to deal with three areas: first of all, to reduce waste; secondly, to set up a provincewide recycling program; and thirdly, to stimulate markets for recycled materials. The first concept that is put forward in the Bill is the establishment of an environmental task force that would recommend to the Minister of the Environment certain actions the minister should take or would take with respect to the reduction of waste, recycling, and setting up markets for recycled material.

Why do you need such a task force? Well, one example: a report from the media just very recently indicates that the four large newspapers in Alberta have established a committee. That committee is attempting to deal with government, wants to deal with government to have a greater amount of recycled paper used in the newspaper of the dailies in Calgary and Edmonton. The requirement, according to the publishers, is that 40 percent of the newsprint could be recycled fibre; 60 percent would have to continue to be new fibre. The problem that has been explained to me by one of the members of the publishers' group is that there isn't enough recycled fibre available. The *Edmonton Sun*, to their great credit, ran two newspapers – the first day, the next day – on recycled paper, but the publisher informed me that there is difficulty in getting recycled fibre. There is only one plant in the whole of Canada that provides that paper. It was his observation that some sort of impetus would have to be provided, that these recycling plants would have to be es-

tablished somehow, perhaps by way of initiatives taken by government. This had to be put into place before any kind of recycling in the newsprint area could be initiated. Roughly 25 percent of everything that goes into a landfill is paper, so this is an area we could easily reduce waste in. That task force would make recommendations to the minister and could give the minister information like this information on recycling. Even though there's a target for newspapers, if the availability of newsprint isn't there, they would inform the minister accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, the second concept of the Bill is to provide for this recycling in communities that are 200 people or more. I've indicated the cost. I don't think that is a great cost for us to start to take resources that we have perhaps squandered to some extent and put them back into the stream of things and use them again.

The Act we're proposing also would make it possible for the minister to set up certain initiatives, take certain initiatives, to establish the markets for recycled materials. It should be noticed that the United States government since June of 1989 has indicated that they will give preference to those companies that deal with the government, all governments, and provide recycled paper. Some 5 percent of all the paper used in the United States is used by government. I was surprised it was so low, because I thought it would be at least 25 percent for Alberta alone. But there is an area, Mr. Speaker, where we could certainly save by using recycled material, and many of the members of this Assembly are now using recycled material on their own letterhead. Thirty states in the United States have established procurement policies using recycled material and encouraging recycled material. The United States Senate has just started to examine legislation requiring newspapers to use recycled paper. The initiatives are there by government in Canada and in the United States. This Act would allow Alberta to show some initiative.

Another concept set out in the Act, Mr. Speaker, is that of educating the public. It's my belief that although all Albertans are pretty much informed on the need and the desire for recycling, perhaps the strength of that concern is lesser in some areas than in others. I talked about Edmonton earlier. The need was there and the necessity was there, and that prompted the recycling initiative. It seems to me that when landfill costs are cheap, perhaps some communities don't see the same kind of concern that came home to bear in the Edmonton area. It is a fact that many of the municipalities of the greater metropolitan Edmonton area are now running out of landfill space and don't have landfill available to them. We have to move in this direction. All the polls taken now show the environment as the number one issue of concern for Albertans and for Canadians. You need only examine the questions that are put daily in this Legislative Assembly to the Minister of the Environment to see the concern over environment. It is, in fact, day after day after day that members of this Assembly put questions to the minister on all aspects of environment, and that's the best evidence to show it is a matter of great concern.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta was a great leader in environmental initiatives. One of the former ministers of the environment, who still works for the public service in our province, did an excellent job in providing legislation that dealt with container recycling and other aspects of environmental concern, but it seems to me that we've fallen behind in this area. We're now falling behind what the public wants, and new initiatives need to be taken. I was pleased to note that the Minister of the Environment is bringing forward new legislation. I was pleased to note that the

throne speech talked about environmental concern and new legislation. It seems to me that this is an area that needs particular attention and quickly. I'm pleased to be able to seek the support of all members of this Assembly in having this legislation put forward as quickly as possible.

Thank you.

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

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly my privilege and pleasure to get up to speak to Bill 202. It's essentially a good Bill. It recognizes that recycling is more than just collecting recyclable waste from consumers. It accepts that markets must be created to stimulate the recycling of collected waste and consumers must be educated in buying recycled products. In fact, the average Canadian throws away 495 kilograms of garbage each year at home, and \$1.5 billion is spent each year in disposing of this waste. Between 35 and 45 percent of our waste is comprised of paper. Of course, once garbage is landfilled, the materials are then just left there and are not reusable.

Our government has already committed to goals in aggressively pursuing recycling and waste management policies. We've undertaken major goals in setting out this Bill already. As a matter of fact, just this month the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services and Public Safety Services, the Public Affairs Bureau has announced that the use of recycled paper products will be initiated in government and specifically a tender for 46,000 packages of general proposed recycled paper has been issued. A first year target of 10 percent recycled paper use has been set, and printed paper products like letterheads, notepads, and business cards have a postconsumer waste content that will be made available and are already available to all MLAs. The use of the products noted above has been made mandatory in the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services, the Public Affairs Bureau, the Wild Rose Foundation, and lotteries, and a target of 30 percent of printing services from the central duplication plant will be on recycled paper this year. A study utilizing paper towels from recycled paper is also in progress in several government buildings.

All vehicles serviced in a central government garage and a further 50 which are from the Department of the Environment will use re-refined oil, and tender has been issued for this product. Wherever possible, recycled products are purchased for government use. Glass beads, \$1 million per annum, from waste glass are used in highway paint; grader blades from recycled steel; large-dimension tires, recapped or regrooved. Refilling toner cartridges for laser printers rather than replacing them is encouraged. A comprehensive furniture recycling program has been implemented. Used paper collection programs have been introduced. Paper Chase has been introduced in approximately 70 percent of the government departments in Edmonton. Approximately 1,200 tonnes of obsolete government records are pulped annually and used in the manufacture of building products. Collection programs for used oil and hazardous wastes are in place in government operations managed by Public Works, Supply and Services. Foam cups and plates will not be purchased or warehoused by Public Works, Supply and Services, and use of these products in contracted cafeteria operations will be discouraged.

Further to that, Mr. Speaker, other existing policies. The Department of the Environment currently runs a capital grant

program aimed at promoting recycling. The resource recovery grant program was established to facilitate recycling projects which would serve the public where such a service was not already provided by private enterprise. Grants are already available to local governments and any nonprofit organization. Capital funding is provided as seed money for these projects.

Again, there's the Beverage Container Act, which requires the consumer to pay a deposit on beverage containers which they can later get back from one of the 210 licensed bottle depots when they return the empty bottle or can, and the legislation is designed to increase the recovery of these containers. Since its inception it has been expanded from soft drink bottles; it now includes different types of aluminum cans, bimetal cans, glass, and plastic bottles. Currently over 95 percent of all refillable bottles, over 70 percent of all wine and liquor bottles, and 40 percent of cans are now returned by Albertans. Alberta is the only province to implement such legislation.

Other existing recycling initiatives include the creation of the recycling branch within the Department of the Environment in 1988. This branch has the responsibility for promoting recycling activities. It works with municipalities and nonprofit agencies to stimulate recycling projects. It also has assisted in developing the comprehensive waste management and recycling plan and policies that are now being promoted. Responsibility for waste management and recycling rests within the Department of the Environment. So several initiatives have already begun.

Currently the Department of the Environment is preparing a comprehensive waste management program. This program will be based on the four Rs of waste management. The first R is to reuse, to use a product over and over without changing it, such as refilling shampoo bottles or buying goods you can use more than once and don't have to throw away. The second R is to recover, to salvage something of value from some form of waste such as compost. The third one is to reduce how much waste we produce by methods of less packaging for products and not buying unnecessary or overpackaged products, and encouraging the consumer to buy in bulk. The fourth one, of course, is recycle, to process waste materials into something useful, using waste for other forms. Another education process I think we have with consumers is exercising responsibility. It's the responsibility of each individual to manage their waste effectively and to conserve our resources and protect our environment.

The program of the Department of the Environment, the comprehensive waste management program, will affect materials such as paper. Only 25 percent of paper is currently being recycled, and certainly more can be recycled for insulation of buildings and paperboard, et cetera. Also, we can recycle oil, plastics, glass, tires, and metal. Public awareness and education are anticipated components of this program, as it is the government procurement policy. The program will work with business, industry, communities, municipalities, and individuals in starting these recycling programs.

It is expected that existing legislation affecting recycling, when combined in the proposed Alberta environment enhancement and protection Act, will be altered to reflect these recycling goals. The proposed Alberta environment enhancement and protection Act will combine several pieces of legislation dealing with the environment, all the environment, into one Act. The program is expected to carry a significant price tag, including funding for research to develop recycling technology, to help create markets for the export of Alberta recycled products, incentives to industry to recycle, and funding for municipalities for the collection programs, as the hon. leader opposite has

already alluded to.

The Department of the Environment has issued a vision statement for feedback from the public on issues which will affect the comprehensive waste management program as well as the Alberta enhancement and protection Act. Some 25,000 copies of the department's vision statement were mailed out this spring for review and suggestions from Albertans. Currently there have been something like 8,000 to 10,000 responses.

Another area of responsibility the government is undertaking is in toxic wastes. Alberta produces approximately 92,000 tonnes of special waste, waste which because of its composition requires careful management every year. That is approximately 37 kilograms for every man, woman, and child in this province. The first priority of the government in waste management is toxic waste disposal, because toxic waste is also a public health issue. The government has in place the Alberta special waste management system, which undertakes the identification, receipt, movement, treatment, and safe disposal of most hazardous materials in Alberta, such as explosives. Radioactive waste materials are not included. The system began as the result of a comprehensive study done by the government in the late 1970s. The study surveyed waste levels and disposal practices within the province. The study set out three priorities in toxic waste management. The first was to establish the Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre, which opened a year and a half ago. The Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre is one of the most advanced facilities of its kind in the world. It is of course located in Swan Hills, and it neutralizes any toxic waste created within the province. No other province has such a system in place as yet.

The second priority was to develop legislation to govern the handling of the hazardous waste. This was accomplished with the passing of the Hazardous Chemicals Act in February of 1988.

The third priority, which is the present focus of our government policy, is to concentrate on institutions such as hospitals, to build transfer stations for industrial waste, such as those already built in Calgary and in Nisku, and to extend the system to deal with household toxic wastes.

Consumers are being reached with the department's growing Toxic Roundup, which involves mobile collection units traveling throughout Alberta and collecting toxic waste from participating municipalities. The roundup runs on Saturdays from April to October and had a budget of approximately \$800,000 in 1989. Some 100 municipalities are expected to participate in 1990, up from eight when the program was piloted in 1988. This year there will be a roundup within 10 or 15 minutes of almost every municipality in the province of Alberta.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, would delay many policies that are already urgently needed. The greatest difficulty I have with this Bill is not its redundancies, but it is that the Bill would delay the implementation of waste management policies that Albertans want and need now. If we had to pass legislation to make it happen, we could wait a year. If we had to pass this particular legislation, we could wait even longer, because it calls for the repetition of steps that have already been taken.

Bill 202 calls for a task force on waste management. This was such a good idea about a year and a half ago, and that's when the Minister of the Environment asked his department to work with other departments to develop a comprehensive waste management and recycling plan, which will be ready in the next few months. The plan involved extensive, direct public involvement and, as I already mentioned, included a mail-out to 25,000 Albertans with the vision statement. Again, we have, and I'll

repeat, the Alberta environment enhancement and protection Act, which will be introduced this spring.

If this Bill is intended to be comprehensive – and I believe it is – then I have some grave concerns about missing elements. Bill 202 fails to recognize that markets must be created before waste is collected. This Bill calls for the creation of markets and large-scale collection efforts on an ongoing basis. In doing so, the collection of waste is going to surpass the development of markets, and substantial storage space will be required. Even if we can assume that the space can be found, we must consider that these stockpiles pose serious health hazards. Look what happened in Ontario, where thousands of neatly collected and stacked tires went up in flames just this past month.

This Bill also misses out on the need to create recycling technology. We can collect tires and we can store them. But then what? We can burn them and we can create electricity. But that poses some other potentially serious environmental hazards. We can make rubber mats out of them. But who wants rubber mats these days? We can develop marketable ideas, but it is really the technology that makes it happen.

Aside from these gaps in comprehensiveness, I'm also concerned about two serious implications of this Bill. Firstly, sections 5(3) to 5(7) govern the collection of toxic wastes. Under these provisions all municipalities with sewage treatment facilities, which by law include all urban municipalities, would be required to store all these toxic wastes. Right now they aren't equipped for it. These facilities will all have to be upgraded to meet the standards for safe storage set out in the Hazardous Chemicals Act. A one-day roundup, like the existing Toxic Roundup, sidesteps this problem by picking up the items the day they're delivered and taking them for disposal. The expense is avoided, and we don't have dozens of sewage treatment facilities around the province to store these dangerous toxic wastes.

Secondly, an even more serious implication is the fact that section 5 requires the provincial government to become involved in the collection of waste. Collection of waste under section 199 of the Municipal Government Act is a municipal responsibility. Where the province has tread on its territory, and I'm talking about the Toxic Roundup again, it operates on the assumption that municipalities will eventually assume these responsibilities. There is no assumption underlying this section, and this also concerns me.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support this Bill. I'd like to say that this Bill has vision, but I'm afraid it more closely resembles hindsight. The Bill sets out to do what this government has already committed to do and adds at least another year of time to the frame it would take to accomplish what this government is doing. I'm pleased to see that the Liberal caucus supports government policies in these areas of recycling and waste management. It's time they caught up to us.

The Member for Edmonton-Glengarry has outlined several positive goals for recycling and waste reduction in Bill 202 but has not backed up these goals with a plan outlining how to achieve them. An example: 3(1) on waste reduction calls for a 10 percent reduction of solid waste in the province by 1995 but offers no suggestions on how this goal should be achieved. Another example is section 4(2), on waste management, which requires the ministers of Environment and Municipal Affairs to ascertain the conditions necessary to operate municipal waste management systems on a recovery basis. However, he does not provide any ideas on how to accomplish this, and there's no proposed structure for such a system in place. Another example

is section 5(8). He says that the Minister of the Environment should issue regulations by January 1991 governing the recycling of numerous materials, but it does not say what purpose these regulations are for or what they are supposed to achieve.

I would like to commend the Liberals on their ideas concerning the implementation of recycled paper and levels in newspapers; it sounds like an idea worth exploring. However, their plan to establish a newsprint recycling task force seems rather redundant in light of the predetermining of the minimal levels of recycled newsprint as outlined in section 6(2). What kind of recommendations would be left to make to the newspaper publishers?

Again, section 5(4) of the Bill proposes that the provincial government become involved in all aspects of the collection of household toxic wastes. I'm very surprised that no thought has been given to the possibility of the industrial sector becoming involved. In 1987 the Environment Council of Alberta reported on waste reduction, and the council notes that private haulers can often provide collection services for two-thirds of the cost of some of the municipalities' systems. Before the government assumes all the responsibility, we should consider allowing the private sector to become more involved and more cost efficient.

Another example is the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association, which conducts their drug roundup across the province every year in May. Not only do they dispose of the old drugs they collect, but they also provide information and contribute to public awareness in the area of drug disposal.

The cost of this Bill would be astronomical. The Bill would establish two task forces, recyclable waste services in every community of more than 200 people. Staff and facilities for sorting depots across the province would be necessary. Staff for toxic waste collection in every municipality with a sewage treatment facility would be expensive. The upgrading of municipal sewage treatment facilities to enable them to store toxic waste material under the Hazardous Chemicals Act is not feasible economically. They would also need staff and equipment for the weekend toxic waste roundups, and of course transportation of the toxic materials collected in the roundup to the treatment centre in Swan Hills would be necessary. Furthermore, the cost might be increased by any necessary training programs. Operating grants to municipalities with waste reduction policies and start-up loans to businesses becoming involved in the waste reduction programs would have to be involved. The 1987 Environment Council of Alberta report on waste reduction noted that it cost an estimated \$86 million to dispose of all solid wastes in Alberta in 1984. Our current Toxic Roundup system, operating on Saturdays only from, as I mentioned, April to October, has cost taxpayers \$800,000 in this past year. That gives my colleagues an idea of the size of the receipt there would be in dealing with this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe it would be fiscally responsible for this government to undertake such a costly initiative prior to hearing about the comprehensive waste management and recycling plan that the Minister of the Environment has already introduced.

Thank you very much.

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

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to enter the debate on Bill 202, the Recycling Act. I think there are a number of important ideas in this Bill, and I think they're ideas

that deserve the attention of Members of the Legislative Assembly and people throughout the province of Alberta. I want to congratulate the Liberal Party for putting this initiative at the top of their agenda for this particular session, because I think it shows they're particularly good students and they're particularly good at finding out where people are at on issues like this. I really feel that moving in some of the directions of this Bill is an absolute necessity for the province of Alberta. I'd like to expand on those ideas and perhaps throw in a few more that I think are worthy of consideration in this debate as well.

The Bill brings forward the idea of waste reduction in relation to this whole problem of what we do with the waste that's generated by our society, and I think that's a very important idea. Recycling doesn't by itself reduce the volume of waste. I was interested in this version of the history of the landfill situation in the city of Edmonton as it relates to the establishment of the blue box program in Edmonton. There was a notion put forward that one of the reasons Edmonton established the blue box program was an attempt to reduce the volume of waste, presumably in the landfill. I think blue box programs have the effect of reducing the amount of waste generated period, not just the amount that's recycled – I think there's a small factor of 4 or 5 percent that's been the experience of Edmonton – because it makes people more conscious of the waste generated from their households.

I, think there were some quite interesting figures brought to bear by the Member for Calgary-Glenmore dealing with the total volume of waste that comes out of people's households. Until recently a lot of people hadn't thought about how much waste comes out, goes into a green plastic bag or a can, and once a week somebody comes by and takes it away: out of sight, out of mind. When you start sorting the material into containers, into recyclable paper then you start to become aware of how much waste is generated. I would like to encourage every municipality to try to get started on the blue box programs on whatever basis they can for the time being in order to help with that education process. The solution to almost any problem begins with the awareness of exactly what it is we have to deal with.

I recall that last fall in the civic election campaigns in just about every municipality, in the traveling that I did, recycling and garbage was an issue, even if they weren't up against it as far as landfills were concerned. There was a great deal of pressure being put on candidates for civic office: what are you prepared to do about recycling; what are you prepared to do to try to help prevent the amount of material that's currently being disposed of in landfills? I believe that most candidates said good things about the idea of recycling, and they undertook to do something or other, even if it was only to set up another one of these task forces or committees to study the problem.

The enthusiasm has waned considerably in a lot of municipalities since then. The city of Calgary, for example, has looked at the matter; they've looked at the costs. I believe the Member for Edmonton-Glenarry referred to \$2 a month per household. I think it's now more than \$3 that they're paying the two operators in the city of Edmonton. They look at that cost. They look at the situation in Ontario, where they have a blue box program heavily financed by the provincial government, and they look at the absolute mountains of recyclable material that's building up in storage centres, the depressed prices for products, for at least the recyclable material, the raw material, and they get scared. They see costs rising. They see no income. They see a very substantial burden on their taxpayers on an ongoing

basis, so they back off.

Now, I am hoping that the provincial government will tonight announce some help for local property tax payers who are now bearing the costs of the blue box program in Edmonton and will help to encourage other municipalities to get started, because it's very, very important to get that collection system in place. That's the beginning of the recycling circle, or the cycle if you like.

Now, at the very other end of the re-cycle is the consumption of recycled products. This Bill puts forward at least one very good idea on the consumption end which I support, and that is to require governments and newspapers to consume recycled paper products. There is no technical reason why that cannot be done, and this Bill does suggest, for example, a target of 15 percent annually that the provincial government should set initially for volume of recycled paper that's used. The Member for Calgary-Glenmore said that the government had already established a target of 10 percent, so the two parties are sort of within the same ballpark in terms of what percentage of the total they think is appropriate. I think both targets are way too low. Of the 30 million kilograms of paper that the provincial government uses, nearly all of it could be recycled. You know, the argument is often made, "You can't get this grade of paper in recycled products or that quality or this character." Well, a lot of the things in government don't have to be printed on the gloss and the flash and the type of expensive, high-impact, and often virgin fibre product that is *in* there. I think those totals could be increased quite dramatically.

In the case of newspapers there's a principle here, and I think I would be a little happier if the principle were established in the legislation rather than the end result. The principle in dealing with newspapers is that manufacturers should be required to reprocess some of their waste. Now, newspapers aren't in the business of reprocessing paper, but they're in the business of using paper to get messages and advertising and news and so forth out to people in the community. So I think it's quite reasonable to impose upon them an obligation to use some of their waste product in their production process. I think we would be on solid ground if we extended that principle to a great many more industries rather than simply singling out newspapers.

That gets to what I think is the major concern I have about the Bill. It's strong on the first side of the circle, which is the collection of material, and it has some points to make at the very bottom of the circle, when you reuse the product, but it's that second half, the processing part, that we have to move on in the province of Alberta if this type of program is to be successful. It's the type of initiative that I would like to see contained in this Bill. In other words, it's strong on the demand side of the equation but not on the supply side when it comes to actually producing and manufacturing those products.

The principle that a company that produces consumer products which become consumer waste should reprocess those materials is the principle that you should clean up your own mess. That's a principle that I would wager the mother of everybody in this Chamber taught them at one point or another in their childhood. It's one reason why I feel that perhaps we should have more mothers in government than we have at the present time. It makes very good sense that we clean up after ourselves in our personal lives and that we teach our children to do that and that we ask our manufacturing and processing industries that they become involved in doing exactly the same thing.

Look at the petrochemical industry, for example. The petrochemical industry makes all kinds of plastics which become containers of all kinds, tires, all of this sort of thing, and they operate on the assumption that once it leaves the plant gate, it's somebody else's problem. That problem is the problem of Hagersville in Ontario. It's the problem of landfills filling up in the city of Edmonton. It's the problem that this Bill is directed at addressing. I think it's time that we said to companies that make products that become consumer waste: you have to become involved yourselves in reprocessing that waste and making products. That's the principle that I would like to see extended, especially in the recycling area.

Secondly, I think we should ensure that the unfair advantage that now accrues to companies that exploit virgin resource products compared with companies that recycle is eliminated. You know, you look at the pulp and paper industry. They come to Alberta free of charge. They're given hundreds of thousands of square kilometres of forest land as theirs to manage as a pulpwood supply zone. The essence of a forest management agreement is that the ownership of those trees is transferred to a forest company. They pay nothing for the forest management agreement. They pay stumpage on the trees, but they pay nothing for the agreement, even though the agreement says that they can take it down to the bank and put it as collateral. It has an economic value. That's a subsidy. The Praxis report on the socioeconomic impact of Al-Pac states very clearly, and on the basis of what appears to me to be pretty good research, that the stumpage rates set are a subsidy to which you add the loan guarantees, which subsidize the cost of money, and the grants in respect of infrastructure, which obviously subsidize in a very tangible fashion.

Now, how in the world are the recycled paper industries supposed to compete with industries that receive that kind of public largess in the form of subsidies, concessions, grants, and so forth. It's very, very difficult. A level playing field doesn't even enter into it. They're in different stratospheres. So I think ending that unfair advantage that comes to companies that use virgin resource products in the production process has to end, and it's a principle I would like to see in comprehensive recycling legislation.

Thirdly, I think the government has to become involved directly in stimulating the processing of waste right here in the province of Alberta. You know, some of the arguments I hear about are: we can't make recycled paper because the market's not big enough; we can't possibly compete with the kind of paper mills they have in Cincinnati or eastern Canada or other places. Therefore, it doesn't seem like a good idea to make recycled paper in Alberta. Well, I think we could solve that problem. You know, if we put some minds and some research, some development teams, I think we could find a way to make perhaps a certain kind of paper, not 50 or 60 grades of paper

but we could find a way to make paper in relatively modest volumes to serve a market of two and a half million people in the province of Alberta: governments, educational institutions, hospitals, all the rest of it. I agree with the principle in this Bill that those institutions should be required to purchase paper, but I don't want to see it operate so that it creates jobs in Wisconsin and jobs in Oregon and jobs in California. I'd like to see the jobs right here in Alberta.

So let's say that we can develop an appropriate sized paper mill for our market. Maybe we could sell engineering work and management skills on paper mills like that elsewhere in the world, but we're not going to do it unless we get going at it almost right away. The Mennonite church, the Edmonton Recycling Society, has a proposal with government right now to recycle plastic from their waste stream. I would like to see us fund that kind of operation. They want to make plastic lumber out of a broad mix of plastic material that comes through there. I think that's an interesting idea. I think it should be supported. I also feel that industries like the glass works in Medicine Hat and Applied Polymer in Edmonton should be given a fairer access to our provincial markets in Alberta. We have to deal with the supply side of the equation as well as the demand side, which is dealt with in this particular Bill 202.

The Member for Calgary-Glenmore made comments dealing with initiatives in the government. I thought it was interesting that it was suggested that recycled paper towels were going to be brought into government offices. What's wrong with cloth towels? Cloth towels are reusable, and we have so much reusable technology. It's been replaced only in the last 20 years by disposables because of marketing and manufacturing situations by government.

Packaging: the 50 percent reduction is a really good idea. Look at the way the packaging industry works. You know, a lot of people I know would like to take their string bags to a grocery store and take unpackaged material home in the container they brought with them. Well, the retailers don't like that, and I think that's part of the key to why we're in this mess. It used to be that you'd go to a grocery store, you'd give somebody your order, and they'd bring you the material. Nowadays, for the convenience of industry, we go around the shelves, pick it up ourselves, and bring it to a checkout, where they run it through and throw it into a disposable container. So when you come home, you've got a bag full of garbage you don't want. You've got all this packaging; you've got all this material.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) the Assembly stands adjourned until 8 p.m.

[The House recessed at 5:30 p.m.]

