

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, May 3, 1990 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 90/05/03

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have three reports I would like to table with this Legislature. The first is the 1988-1989 annual review of the energy conservation and renewable energy research development and demonstration program. The second is the annual review, 1988-89, for the Alberta/Canada Energy Resources Research Fund, and finally, the annual review, 1988-89, for the Alberta Office of Coal Research & Technology.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file copies of the response to Written Question 234, asked by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file four copies of an article from *Pulp and Paper Canada* regarding Crestbrook Forest Industries, the other pulp mill operated by the owners of Al-Pac. It's a story that every Albertan and everybody involved in this should read.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. We just file them; we don't comment about them.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted today to be able to introduce some Medicine Hat folks who are here. It's not often I get that opportunity in view of the distance of Medicine Hat from Edmonton. But today in the members' and public galleries we have 73 students, teachers, and parents from Crestwood school, located in my constituency. The teachers are Doug Lamarche, Shelly Reisdorf, Bev Slater, Wade Lawson, and David George. They're accompanied by parents Marilyn Sigmund, Wendy Smid, Molly Porter, Debby Sehn, and Judy Federkeil. I'd ask them all to rise now and receive the warm welcome of members of this Assembly.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce 12 students from Jasper Place composite high school. This is an achievement class. These are very bright students who are here to find out what we'll make of the world that they'll inherit. They're accompanied by their teacher Elaine Unterschute.

They're in public gallery. I'd like them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and the members of the Assembly this afternoon a group of professional social workers, members of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, who are here studying the workings of our government. I'd ask them to stand now and receive the warm welcome of the members.

MR. SPEAKER: Rocky Mountain House.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have great pleasure today to introduce to you three people from the Rocky constituency that mean a very great deal to me. I would ask them to stand as I introduce them: Shirley King and Pat Storm, my two secretaries for my Rocky office, and my mother, Elizabeth Lund.

head: **Oral Question Period**

Social Workers' Strike

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Family and Social Services. This morning the government announced its intention to seek an injunction against the Alberta Union of Public Employees, trying to force them to go back and trying to force them to stop picketing. First the government enacts unfair labour laws that, frankly, belong in another century, and now it's trying to hide behind those laws instead of resolving the legitimate issues that the workers have raised.

[Interjections by strangers in the public gallery]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: There'll be no audience participation in the galleries, thank you very much.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the government's even trying to muzzle the workers' rights to freedom of speech by asking the courts to stop picketing. That means employees can't even hand out information about their demands on their own time. I say to this minister and this government: in the long run, bullying tactics do not work. Now, my question is: why has the minister chosen unfair laws and court injunctions instead of negotiating with the people that he calls valued employees to try to resolve this dispute? [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Let's get the answer started.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I think we've made our position very clear: that we are sitting at the negotiating table waiting for them to put an end to an illegal strike and to come back and participate in some meaningful discussions. We are anxious to resolve these challenges, but we can't do it at the negotiating table by ourselves.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's absolute nonsense. This minister should be aware, and I'm sure he is aware, that the government's official position on this whole issue is that there is nothing on the table on caseloads, there is nothing on wage parity. There's nothing from nothing from this government. I want to ask this minister: how can this minister justify and say

that they're bargaining in good faith? How could he justify this position?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, as is so often the case, once again the Leader of the Official Opposition is right out to lunch. His facts are wrong.

MR. MARTIN: I want to say to this minister, then – and remember, he cannot lie in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker – what is the position of the government? Is it not true that they have not put together a bargaining position? That is the fact, that there's nothing on the table from government. I want him to think about this before he talks, and ask him again how he can justify this position, how he can now justify bringing the law in when they're not even negotiating in good faith.

MR. OLDRING: Well, Mr. Speaker, one thing this minister and this government never have to worry about is lying in the Legislative Assembly. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I don't have to worry about it in the Legislative Assembly or anywhere else that I speak in this province as a minister.

This member might think that he speaks on behalf of social workers. I'd want him to know two things. We speak on behalf of social workers as well. We are anxious to see this situation resolved. But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, we also speak on behalf of Albertans, on behalf of Albertans that are at risk, on behalf of Albertans that need these essential services, on behalf of those young people in facilities like Yellowhead Youth Centre, on behalf of senior citizens, on behalf of the handicapped, on behalf of families that are facing crises, on behalf of families involved in family violence. Mr. Speaker, that's who we represent, and we're concerned. We are concerned for those Albertans. We want to make sure that this situation doesn't reach a crisis, and that's why we have the legislation we have: we recognize that these are essential services. The situation has become intolerable. This government intends to move in and do something about it.

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

MR. MARTIN: To the same minister. I've never heard such claptrap in all my life. I want to say to this minister that if he's speaking for the social workers and he's speaking for the poor and he's speaking for Albertans, stop speaking. They're all demanding it, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I want to ask the minister – just to come back to the laws that he's so proud of, Mr. Speaker, and I want him to think about this, because he's insinuated that you need these laws to deal with essential services. My question to the minister: how do other provinces that don't have these draconian laws established work with their people? Are you saying that they do worse than Alberta in this area?

MR. OLDRING: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member raises a very good point, and I'm sure the Minister of Labour will want to supplement my answer. But he's quite right. We do have a very good track record in this province. I'm sure that, as I say, the Minister of Labour will want to supplement my response.

MR. MARTIN: I'm sure somebody should supplement it, Mr. Speaker, but I don't see anybody jumping up. They're going to leave you to hang out there.

I want to come back to this minister and ask this question: how can you justify bringing in injunctions not even allowing handing out information packets and say somehow that this is fair and just? Why don't you sit down with the people, put an offer on the table? You haven't done that yet. Why don't you do that? This dispute would come to an end.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if his photocopier is jammed, but he seems to be repeating the same questions and the same rhetoric. I think we've answered that. We have put an offer on the table. We are wanting to negotiate in good faith. We've invited them to participate along with a mediator, a third party that can attest to the offer and the goodwill that we're bringing to the bargaining table. Again, I can only say that I am anxious to see cooler heads than that member would know anything about prevail. Meaningful discussion, meaningful solutions: we want to be a part of that, and we are inviting social workers to be a part of that as well.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, what we need is some heads with some brains over on the other side.

Now, the minister is just not giving us the facts here in the Legislature. I have a letter in front of me that was sent by the president of AUPE to Mr. Dixon – maybe he's not aware of it – where it says very clearly that "the employer has not been willing to negotiate case load issues." That's what it's all about. You're not prepared to negotiate it. Then they say, "Well, let's go to mediation," and they don't even have a proposal. What's the point of mediation? That's the point, Mr. Speaker. I want to come back. Will the minister, then, in this Assembly today sit down and table what that offer will be? We'll get it back to the social workers, and maybe this dispute can . . .

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, if I heard the leader of the ND Party correctly, he's saying that this is the process, this is the place for negotiations? I don't think so, particularly if we have to deal with hotheaded rhetoric being brought forward by the Leader of the NDs. We are anxious, and I've said it time and time again, we are anxious to see social workers put an end to this illegal strike. We are anxious to see social workers come back to the bargaining table to work with us in a meaningful way. We have put forward our position. We've put forward our position very clearly. We've invited them to put forward their position. We've invited them to sit down with a moderator. I don't know what more we can do. In fact, I know that there is nothing more we can do until they put an end to that illegal strike. That's why I'm anxious to see it behind us: so that we can get on with some real progress and start putting these things behind us.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, Albertans believe in fairness and equity. We also believe in the free market system. That free market system demands fairness and equity. It demands fairness in collective bargaining. It demands that when fairness exists in collective bargaining, a strike is a strike and a lockout is a lockout in the purest sense of those words. When you monkey with that principle, then you get a very bad situation, and that's what Alberta is facing now. You get a fake and phoney system when you skew legislation in favour of one side or the other in collective bargaining, and that's what's happened with this

legislation. The public service legislation is not fair. It skews in favour of the government. My first question is to the Premier. Given that we've had the sour taste in Alberta of a nurses' strike, a strike that the majority of Albertans supported the nurses on, and now the taste of a social workers' strike, social workers driven because of desperation and frustration and conscience to strike and, also, supported by the majority of Albertans, will the Premier agree to get rid of this highly unfair legislation that skews in favour of the government and gets away from fairness and equity that should exist in this whole process?

MR. GETTY: First of all, Mr. Speaker, the legislation was passed by the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, which is the democratic means of having laws created and passed. So let's also realize that this legislation deals with people who are in the public service, the people of Alberta, and that this legislation deals in an area of essential services. So also, when you do have that kind of situation, you must build in some protection for the public service, and it is there with negotiations and bargaining, with mediation, and then with arbitration. The wrong advice is to say that we will come, we'll negotiate only a little bit, not really meaningful – because we are there and waiting to deal with them, and they left the table. They left the table. They turned down mediation, and they're still . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, there is even arbitration within the legislation, fair arbitration. Now, these series of events are all possible. The one way to stop them all is to break the law and go on an illegal strike, and that is the problem facing the social workers now. We say: "Come back; come back to meaningful negotiations. Don't believe these who would encourage you to break the law." They are wrong and wrong in doing it.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Edmonton-Glengarry.

MR. TAYLOR: Storm trooper.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Glengarry, not Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, it is a given that legislation that was passed in this Assembly under the Social Workers Act, under the Child Welfare Act requires social workers to do a proper investigation. Here are five reports that the government commissioned themselves in the '70s and the '80s that document, that chronicle the mismanagement in the Social Services department. It says that the government is at fault in terms of the high caseloads that these social workers must carry, that the work isn't being properly done. How, Mr. Premier, when the fault is all on the government side, can you slap an injunction against these people for not being able to do their work?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, in fact the hon. member is completely wrong. These social workers have done their work, and they've done it very well. The people of Alberta are well served. Unfortunately, they have been given bad advice. The social workers have been given bad advice. Because we were in a process. They were invited into a process to deal with the matter of caseloads: two members representing the management, two members representing the social workers, and a fifth, or chairman, who would be impartial – and they would choose him – and they would then deal with the matter. Now, that is

fair. That enables them to deal with the issue. But you cannot deal with the issue in the streets. You cannot deal with laws in the streets. The laws of Alberta will not be made in the streets, nor will they be made by individuals like the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry or the Member for Edmonton-Norwood who say to break the law and condone it. If there are school-children here today or if there are people watching, let's recall what's happening here: members of this Assembly condoning breaking the law.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, two days ago approximately 250 social workers were at the front steps of this Assembly. Yesterday they were here. Today they're here. In three days I've talked to a number of social workers, and I'm convinced that if the Premier or the minister simply sat down and addressed the issue of overwork, of caseloads with them, we could solve this strike.

MR. SPEAKER: Question please.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is this: before calling in policemen, before putting people in jail or slapping fines on people, before using the courts to hammer Albertans, will the Premier agree to – you don't have to go out into the street – allow these people to come into your office for half an hour today to talk about this . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member.

MR. GETTY: First of all, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is wrong in his lead-up to his question. The government was in fact negotiating with them and dealing with the matter of caseloads. I've just discussed how they were putting together a fair committee.

Now, I'm going to say to the hon. leader of the Liberal Party: there is no way that by breaking the law in this province you somehow then benefit from it. I mean, how can you encourage people to do that? Certainly, Mr. Speaker, there is one way to solve this, and that is to go back to work, stop breaking the law, and negotiate. I think it's all there, and with good advice I think the social workers, who are valued employees, will follow that path, because I believe the social workers are better in their feeling about the laws than these two are.

MR. SPEAKER: Lloydminster.

Grain Prices

MR. CHERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, changing the subject to Agriculture, prices for Canadian grain are tied to world markets. The Hon. Charlie Mayer has announced the initial prices for grain in this coming year. Spring wheat prices are down \$20 to \$25 per tonne. To the Minister of Agriculture: what is your reaction to his statement when input costs to farmers are escalating steadily?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think what the hon. member has identified is the problem we've been talking about in this House and at other meetings, and that is the depressed world prices – because wheat, as he's mentioned, is the one that is impacted by going down – which are being primarily caused by the trade wars between the European common community and the United States of America. It's hopefully those problems that we may

get addressed through this round of GATT discussions. If we don't, as has been indicated before, there are some tough times ahead for export grains and oilseeds.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Lloydminster.

MR. CHERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary. The Hon. Don Mazankowski, federal Minister of Agriculture, has offered to co-operate in a joint venture with Alberta to help the grain and oilseed producers by matching an \$80 million package. My constituents are concerned by your stonewalling. Will you take another look and see what you can do in this situation?

MR. TAYLOR: Good for you. We've got a seat over here for you. If you get tired of looking at fatheads, come over here.

MRS. HEWES: Go get 'em, Doug.

MR. FOX: You should let me write your questions more often.

MR. ISLEY: When the speeches from the experts over there are finished, I will respond.

I think it's fair to say to the hon. member that this minister is not stonewalling. I'm attempting to point out very clearly in this House, in our meetings in Ottawa, and in meetings across this province, to our farming community, that the Alberta government has responded in a very significant way to some of the problems being faced by our producers; that when it comes to areas of trade, that is a federal responsibility; when it comes to areas of interest rate policy setting, that is a federal responsibility. We're still encouraging the Hon. Don Mazankowski to pay out the commitment that he has made to the western Canadian grain and oilseed producers.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Environmental Assessments of Pulp Mills

MR. McINNIS: When Procter & Gamble violates the law 36 times in two years, they get hugs and kisses from the Environment department. We'll all be waiting to see how the social workers are treated by the government.

It's now been six weeks since the new Al-Pac proposal was discussed in the Premier's office. During that time the communities affected have been given no information by the provincial government. The only information that's been available is what's leaked out, and there's more of it in the news media today. Al-Pac is owned by Crestbrook Forest Industries, in turn owned by Honshu Paper and the Mitsubishi Corporation. Crestbrook operates a pulp mill at Skookumchuck in British Columbia. It's more than interesting that that mill began with a new, innovative bleaching process that didn't work, and in 1976 the government gave them permission to go back to the chlorine bleaching process, back to the stinking, filthy, polluting pulp mills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question. Is there a question?

MR. McINNIS: Well, hey, I think we should take a picture of this one, you know. They start off with innovative bleaching, and then they go to chlorine bleaching. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order, order. Now the question.

MR. McINNIS: The question to the Minister of the Environment is: what kind of guarantee can he give that this government isn't going to allow Al-Pac to go back to chlorine bleaching when the new process doesn't work?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, what we have in the form of a question is an opportunity, I guess, for this minister to speculate, and I'm not going to speculate. I'm not in the business of speculation. I'm in the business of getting the facts, of doing proper assessments of a situation. I'm in the business of getting honest, straightforward information so I can present that information to my colleagues in government and so we can make sound, intelligent decisions.

MR. SPEAKER: Not a hypothetical this time, please.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment has shown where he's at by issuing licences to pulp mills without consulting Albertans, allowing millions of kilograms of chlorinated organic sludge to be dumped in the river. He's shown where he's at. How can we believe that he won't do the same thing with this Al-Pac project: giving them a permit to dump a few additional millions of kilograms of organic sludge into the river system? Why should we believe him this time when he says it's going to be different?

MR. KLEIN: Well. . .

MR. FOX: I mean, your record's not good.

MR. KLEIN: Are you finished?

MR. FOX: Your record's broken.

AN HON. MEMBER: Neither is yours. It replays often.

MR. McINNIS: Jaakko Pöyry . . .

MR. KLEIN: Are you finished? Any more questions over there? Right. Okay. Fine.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, to address the allegation that there wasn't public input into the Weldwood situation and to the Procter & Gamble situation at Grande Prairie is absolutely false. Very basically, with respect to the Hinton process, there were documents submitted. Those documents were open for viewing by the public at a number of open houses. There was an extensive deficiency review of those particular documents by the department, taking into account the public's input. Those deficiencies were passed on back to the company, and on the basis of those rules that existed then relative to environmental impact assessments, a licence was issued. It was issued to probably one of the cleanest bleached kraft mills in the world today.

With respect to Procter & Gamble, we put in a process that has never existed before relative to a public review: a public review and ongoing monitoring by the public of the licence renewal process. So I don't know what this member is talking about when he stands up there and misleads this House by saying that there was no public involvement. That, Mr. Speaker, to quote the hon. Leader of the Opposition, is claptrap.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by Red Deer-North.

Social Workers' Strike

(continued)

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Most of us in this House are parents or grandparents or both. Most Alberta parents know all too well the . . . [interjections] Speak for yourself?

Mr. Speaker, most Alberta parents know all too well the responsibility that's charged to them to ensure their children are raised in a secure and warm and healthy environment. We worry when they're having trouble in school or when they're out late, and worse, we get a little bit frantic when they don't come home. This week my constituency office and, I'm sure, the offices of all MLAs have been getting calls from people wanting to know where the minister's children are, those children who've been placed in his care. They want to know why, as the children's surrogate parent, he's neglecting them.

MR. SPEAKER: Let's have the question.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, the question is: does the minister know where all his children are, particularly those who were placed . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you. That's long enough, hon. member. [interjections] No. Thank you. The minister, please. [interjections] Order please. Order. Let's get on with it.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, a rather peculiar question. I think that member has a lot of gall even asking that question, because on one hand they sit over there and tell social workers to go out on an illegal strike and then they turn around and on the other hand say, "How can you allow those children to be at risk?" Well those children are at risk because those social workers are on strike. I think you have a lot of nerve.

MRS. HEWES: You have to have a lot of nerve, Mr. Minister, to look after vulnerable children. I wish you had it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister: will there be any police action taken against the children who left the centre, many of whom left because they're terrified, they have no one to turn to? Are you going to arrest them?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, this government is concerned for those children, and this government shows its concern through the legislation we have in place. We recognize how vulnerable those children are. We recognize that we're dealing with troubled young people. We're recognizing that we're dealing with very fragile individuals. I went in there and talked with some of them. I know the concerns they're going through. I know how hard this strike has been on those young people. I know how disruptive it is to the limited progress they had begun to make, and that, Mr. Speaker, is exactly why we've taken the action we have taken. We want those children cared for. We want social workers back to work. We want social workers back at the negotiating table so we can sit down with them and address the outstanding issues and get them resolved so those children are provided for.

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North.

Red Deer College Funding

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Advanced Education. Red Deer College is presently experiencing some fiscal challenges related to their deficit, and part of their suggested solution involves a reallocation of program money in order to preserve dollars, some of which would be operating dollars. In response to questions I'm receiving from constituents, I wonder if the minister could indicate to us whether the college needs prior approval of the minister before they reallocate program dollars.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, as a self-governed institution under the Colleges Act, the Red Deer College board of governors has quite a degree of latitude. In most cases where dollars are appropriated for specific programs, obviously permission of the minister would have to be given to reallocate those dollars. However, there have been programs in the past where the minister has requested the co-operation of the college to respond to a given need. So I can't answer the question in a very definitive way. That's up the board of governors of the college, but I would assume the board would ask the minister if indeed they plan to reallocate any funds.

MR. DAY: In addition to the area of program dollars, Mr. Speaker, there's some question of operation dollars for the arts centre which is associated with the college. I wonder if the minister could respond to the question: can dollars that have been designated to the college for the operation of the centre be reallocated to other areas of the college, again without approval of the minister?

MR. GOGO: Well, Mr. Speaker, the department, with funds appropriated by this House, provides lights-on operating costs for all parts of an institution. The theatre centre that was constructed with the contribution, I might add, from Red Deer city is provided with operating funds to operate the physical plant. There are program funds allocated, as part of their fine arts program and so on, for programs carried on within there. One would only expect that with good governing by the institution, the institution would maintain that facility in such a manner that they could carry out their programs. How it would be funded to operate for the benefit of the community I think would simply be a matter between the community and Red Deer College and not, frankly, a matter of this minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn.

Oilfield Training in Southeast Asia

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology announced that they're pulling out of their Batam project. A partner in this project has received a loan guarantee of four and a half million dollars from this province to build a barge. The government has never given Albertans any understanding or any details of this particular loan guarantee. Now, I understand that SAIT is using its operating funds to pay the interest on this loan. So my question is to the Minister of Advanced Education. In light of SAIT's difficult financial situation, why does the minister allow SAIT to use its operating funds in this way?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology is, again, a board-governed institution. SAIT is not using its operating funds to pay interest on anything, based on the comments of the board of governors to me as their minister. They've been using reserves and accumulated reserves to maintain any ongoing operation of the Batam international training project located near Singapore.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd hope the minister would check into that.

My supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Treasurer, who's supposed to be responsible for protecting the public interest when loan guarantees are made by the province. What action is the Treasurer taking to make sure Alberta taxpayers do not experience yet another loss through government mismanagement in the case of this Alert Disaster Control loan?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, as I have said repeatedly in this House, any time the government offers a guarantee as part of an initiative or part of a package, we take full security against that position and do it for a variety of reasons, reasons which will allow our expertise to be exported into other markets, allow new investment to take place here, allow new companies in this province to expand, allow new jobs to be developed here, allow the private sector to prosper here. There's a long list of reasons why we put guarantees, and I appreciate the opportunity confirming that we like the idea. We have done it successfully in terms of economic expansion, and it is working.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder, followed by Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Social Workers' Strike (continued)

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. This minister is trying to get us to believe that he cares about social workers and all those people in Alberta who are in need of help. Well, he might care now that there's a strike on, but he certainly hasn't cared in the past, because the fact is that we have 29 food banks throughout this province. Three have just opened up in the last two months, and this minister is responsible for that. I'd like to ask the minister: if he cares so much, why does he continue to sit back and do nothing while more and more people are forced to use our food banks?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I don't know where that member's been, to suggest that we're sitting back and doing nothing. I know that she was here when we brought forward our budget with the 3.1 percent increase. I know that she's heard me talk about social reform in this Legislative Assembly on numerous occasions. I know that she's heard me talk about the visits I've had throughout this province to our offices located from northwest to southeast. I know that she's been here when I've talked about some of the new initiatives we've announced in co-operation with some of my ministerial colleagues, the Minister of Career Development and Employment. I know that she's heard about our government's efforts as they relate to secondary education and advanced education. I know that she's

heard a lot of the things we've said. So I can't understand why she'd even ask that question.

MS MJOLSNESS: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. That fact is that three new food banks have opened up in this province, and that's nothing the minister should be proud of. I would ask the minister then . . . People in this province who need help – and we're talking about a lot of children – are being placed at risk by this minister and this government because their basic needs are not being met and social workers cannot spend enough time with their clients to help them improve their situations. If this minister truly is concerned about the welfare of people in this province, will he prove it by immediately raising social assistance rates and reducing caseloads for income security workers?

MR. SPEAKER: That's a long way from food banks, hon. member. [interjections] Let's get on with an answer. Give it a try.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to be able to respond to that. [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: Forgive me. There'll be comments up here, if the Chair wishes to make them, without direction from you, Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Park it. Hon. minister, with your answer.

MR. MARTIN: Without editorializing it.

MR. SPEAKER: Without your editorializing, sir. Without yours.

MR. MARTIN: You have no right to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much, hon. member. Thank you very much. [interjection] Hon. member. Minister.

MR. OLDRING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the member raises some questions as it relates to caseloads. As I've indicated on many occasions, we are anxious to see caseloads reduced. We recognize that there are a number of ways we can do that. One of the most obvious – and I know it escapes the member opposite – is to see the caseload size itself going down. I know the member was here when I shared some of that information with the Assembly, that we are down some 3,000 cases from this time last year. Now, I know the member described that as insignificant statistics, but those are 3,000 cases, 3,000 families, and they are very significant numbers to those particular individuals. I'm very pleased to see that some of our initiatives are starting to take hold. I'm very pleased to see this downward trend of size in our caseload.

I know that through the initiatives of this government, through the initiatives of my colleagues as it relates to economic initiatives – the job opportunities we are creating in this province at a record rate – again through the initiatives of the Minister of Career Development and Employment, who I work very closely with, we'll continue to see that caseload go down. The other thing I've made very clear is that we are going to

continue to bring forward new social reforms, that I'm anxious to again work with our caseload, putting an emphasis on independence and helping them get out into the mainstream of society in a meaningful way.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Alberta-Pacific Project

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has attempted to discredit the Al-Pac review panel process by calling it biased, one-sided, and unbalanced. We can only wonder why, if that's the case, Al-Pac itself would take the message of that review panel to heart and respond by coming forward with a second proposal that will reduce organochlorine output by 80 percent, a significant environmental improvement over the first proposal. Will the Premier please admit that this is clear proof that open public environmental impact assessments work and they should be applied to each of the northern pulp mill projects in question, their FMAs – forestry management agreements – and in fact the second Al-Pac proposal?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is speculating about something, I guess – certainly not anything that has come to our cabinet. I'd also like to refresh his memory on what I said about the review process. I congratulated the members of the panel. I thanked them on behalf of all Albertans. They were doing something that's never been done before, and they ended up doing as good a job as they possibly could under the conditions. Then I said we can all learn from this; we can make sure that we can do it better in the future. Now, that isn't putting down the panel, and those quotes he made are completely false. He surely has an obligation to review *Hansard* and see what I said and not try and distort that way. Normally he is above that, but today I'm afraid he's falling into the trap of his new leader.

AN HON. MEMBER: Quit rewriting history.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah, exactly.

So you admit it. The company's ripe for coming back, and the process does work.

Could the Premier please comment on this: the new Al-Pac proposal combines hydrogen peroxide with chlorine dioxide, a process which can be improved significantly by doing away with the chlorine dioxide, with very little sacrifice in terms of the brightness of the end product, the paper. Will the Premier please push Al-Pac one step further to take chlorine dioxide out of their hydrogen peroxide process rather than sacrificing the integrity of the environment for nondetectable levels of brightness in this paper?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of the Environment may want to comment on the so-called proposal the hon. member's talking about. It certainly hasn't come to our cabinet. It may be in the Department of the Environment being assessed, as the minister has said, and that's where the assessment's being done. Now, if the hon. member has something that he's read in a newspaper or something, that's a different matter. The Minister of the Environment may want to add something to my reply.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out earlier, this matter is being assessed by our Department of the Environment and by

the federal Department of the Environment. We're looking at the process that has been proposed very carefully. If the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark wants to suggest to the company that this might be a way to even better ameliorate the environmental impacts of the proposal, then perhaps he can pass that suggestion on to the company. If indeed our officials find that this is a logical proposal and will work within the context of the overall proposal, I'm sure they will make recommendations accordingly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

Juror and Witness Compensation Rates

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Attorney General. Recently I was contacted by a constituent who served three days of jury duty and, as is the case for witnesses, received \$10 a day for a total of \$30, plus \$7 for bus fare. She advised me that she runs an office in a family business and stated that the pittance she received hardly compensated for her absence and the lost business that may have resulted from her absence. My question is to the Attorney General. When will the minister abandon the rhetoric of duty and privilege, increase the jury per diem to a respectable level, and recognize the value of the work being done?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the justice system and the jury part of that justice system is predicated on being judged by your peers. That is one of the responsibilities and duties we all have in servicing this justice system. I'm not sure of the dollar figures, but from one jurisdiction to another there's very, very little variation. We are working to ensure that any out-of-pocket expenses people incur are paid for, and there is a small – and I will readily admit "small" – recompense for the time, but that's based on the judicial system tradition of serving to judge your peers.

MS M. LAING: Well, Mr. Speaker, this unhelpful attitude hurts three segments of society. It hurts the people who discharge their duty by serving as jurors or witnesses, often through lost wages; it hurts the businesspeople who must subsidize the costs of the legal system – in fact, they pay the wages – and, most importantly, it hurts each and every Albertan whose protection by the justice system is being jeopardized in order to save a few dollars. I would therefore ask the minister again: will he commit to a more equitable and fair recompense for the witnesses and jurors?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that serving on a jury from time to time, especially in cases that become elongated, can be a disadvantage. But again, as one of the duties of our citizenship and through our justice system, you sit in judgment of others; that is part of your duty. Again, in our justice system it would not also be right for a government to be paying for people to come and sit in judgment of others. That is a right of citizenship and an independence.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired. The Chair has received notice that another matter will not be raised.

At this point could we have unanimous consent to revert to the Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.
The Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

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

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to introduce to you and to the Members of the Legislative Assembly Dr. Ray Howard, an individual from High Prairie and an outstanding representative from the medical profession. He's sitting in the members' gallery. I'd ask him to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Legislative Assembly.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

MR. SPEAKER: Under Standing Order 40 from two days ago, Calgary-McCall.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to gain unanimous consent to move a motion. I don't think it needs a lot of debate, but I just ask unanimous consent.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Under Standing Order 40, those in favour of unanimous consent to proceed, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

Calgary-McCall, briefly.

Moved by Mr. Nelson:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly extend congratulations to the Calgary Canucks Hockey Club as 1990 Alberta Junior Hockey League champions.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, all members have a copy of the notice of motion.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Let the record show unanimously.

As a director of the Calgary Canucks, thank you very much.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Written Questions**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that all written questions appearing on the Order Paper except for the following: 193, 206, 207, 208, 244, 253, 254, 255, 261, 274, 276, 277, 286, 287, and 288, stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

[Motion carried]

193. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question:

- (1) What are the air emission standards for the Millar Western pulp mill at Whitecourt?
- (2) How many times have these standards been exceeded and by what amount since the plant started operating?
- (3) What is the cause of the high levels of fly ash from the plant?
- (4) How many samples of fly ash have been examined for heavy metals, dioxins, and potentially harmful substances, and what are the levels of each of the substances found?
- (5) What are the potential health effects of high levels of fly ash?
- (6) What measures are being taken to overcome the problems in the Millar Western pulp mill and teepee burner?
- (7) What measures are being taken to ensure that the same problems do not occur with other chemithermomechanical pulp mills being constructed in Alberta?

MR. GOGO: Reject.

206. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question:

- (1) How often does Procter & Gamble monitor its pulp mill at Grande Prairie and Weldwood monitor its pulp mill at Hinton for total organochlorines, dioxins, and furans in
 - (a) final liquid effluent,
 - (b) sludge in ponds, and
 - (c) air emissions?
- (2) How often does Alberta Environment monitor those two plants for the same pollutants, and on how many occasions and by what amount did their measurements differ from those taken by the plant?
- (3) If there is any discrepancy, what are the reasons for this?
- (4) How many times has Alberta Environment and/or Procter & Gamble taken measurements to monitor the groundwater for total organochlorines, dioxins, furans, or any other substances in the vicinity of the landfill in which sludge from the ponds has been dumped, and what levels of these substances were measured and, in particular, what levels have been recorded since January 1, 1988?

MR. GOGO: We accept.

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

- (1) What are the air emission standards for the Millar Western teepee burner at Whitecourt, and were these standards established in Millar Western's licence to operate under the Clean Air Act?
- (2) What are the air emission standards for the Millar Western pulp mill at Whitecourt?
- (3) What are the facilities for monitoring the air emissions from the teepee burner and the pulp mill?
- (4) On what occasions and by how much were air emission standards in Whitecourt exceeded
 - (a) at the teepee burner since January 1, 1988,
 - (b) at the pulp mill since it started operation in 1988,
 - (c) at any monitoring location in the town of Whitecourt since January 1, 1988?

MR. GOGO: Accept.

208. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: Concerning the monitoring of the environmental impact of the Lake Wabamun operation of TransAlta,

- (1) How often are air emissions from the stacks measured each month, and what substances are measured?
- (2) How many times, if any, in the last 10 years did any of the substances measured exceed the limits set by the plant's licence to operate under the Clean Air Act?
- (3) What were the monitored values on those occasions in the last 10 years, if any, when the levels were in excess of the permitted level, and what were the emission standards permissible under the licence issued in accordance with the Clean Air Act?
- (4) How is possible contamination of Lake Wabamun being monitored?
- (5) How often are the sumps that collect the sulphuric acid used to clean the heating coils in the evaporating tanks checked?
- (6) How many times during the past 10 years have the sumps overflowed into Lake Wabamun?
- (7) What measures have been taken to prevent overflow from the sumps into the lake?

MR. GOGO: Reject.

244. Mr. McInnis asked the government the following question: As a consequence of the Department of the Environment's mission statement, "The costs of preventing and reclaiming environmental impacts will be borne by the polluter":

- (1) how much money was collected by the Department of the Environment for permits under the Clean Air Act during the fiscal year ended March 31, 1990,
- (2) how much money was collected by the Department of the Environment for permits under the Clean Water Act during the fiscal year ended March 31, 1990, and
- (3) how much money was collected from Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Ltd. as their share of the environmental impact assessment review board during the fiscal year ended March 31, 1990?

MR. GOGO: Accept.

253. Mr. Bruseker asked the government the following question:

- (1) How much did it cost to send two Soviet bureaucrats to attend a Banff School of Advanced Management session beginning February 4, 1990?
- (2) Why were these two bureaucrats sent?
- (3) What did we get in return for our dollars?

MR. GOGO: Accept.

254. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: What are the terms of reference for Jaakko Pöyry Consulting Inc. when examining the scientific data submitted to the Alberta-Pacific Environmental Impact Assessment Review Board?

MR. GOGO: Reject.

255. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question:

What amount, if any, has been paid by the government to Mr. Hugh Planche in respect of services rendered for the fiscal periods ended March 31, 1987, 1988, 1989, and 1990?

MR. GOGO: Reject.

261. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: What was the reason for the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife's payment of \$311,670 to Canadian Forest Products Ltd. in 1988-89? See page 536 of Supplementary Information to the Public Accounts, 1988-1989.

MR. GOGO: Accept.

274. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question:

- (1) What are the expenses incurred by the government in respect of the Code inquiry to date, specifying all payees who received over \$5,000, the amount of the payment to such payees, and the nature of the service rendered in respect of the expenses?
- (2) What are the other expenses incurred by the government from January 1, 1987, to date in respect of the financial problems relating to the Principal Group of Companies, specifying all payees who received over \$5,000 excluding certificate holders in First Investors and Associated Investors, the amount of the payment to such payees, and the nature of the service rendered in respect of the expense?

MR. GOGO: Reject.

276. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: What is the total revenue obtained from oil and gas exploration and extraction and related activities on Crown land by those holding grazing leases, and how many leaseholders received such revenues?

MR. GOGO: Reject.

277. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: How much does the government spend on subsidized parking, and how many parking spaces are subsidized in the downtown area of Edmonton; i.e., the area approximately defined between the north bank of the North Saskatchewan River and 104 Avenue and between 97 Street and 114 Street?

MR. GOGO: Reject.

286. Ms Barrett asked the government the following question: How much did the government spend on the special television message involving the Premier to which hon. Mr. Kowalski referred in the Assembly on April 26, 1990, and any other advertising message related to promoting Volunteer Week which may or may not have directly involved the Premier, including

- (1) TV air time costs and production costs,
- (2) other electronic air time and production costs,
- (3) print media space and production costs, and
- (4) any other costs associated with this advertising campaign?

MR. GOGO: Accept.

287. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question:

- (1) What administrative and support positions relating to the construction of dams have been transferred from the Department of the Environment to the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services?
- (2) How many full-time equivalent positions were transferred in total?

MR. GOGO: Accept.

288. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: What is the government's policy concerning the use of helicopters to access provincial parks, natural areas, and wilderness areas for recreational use such as fishing, skiing, and walking?

MR. GOGO: Reject.

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that all motions for returns appearing on today's Order Paper except the following: 181, 182, 204, 211, 222, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 248, 249, 250, and 292, stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

181. Mr. Wickman moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the lease agreement between the province of Alberta and Olympia & York Developments Ltd. for 40,000 square feet of office space in Olympia & York's new office/retail complex between 101st and 102nd Streets, Jasper Avenue, and Manulife Place in Edmonton.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, speaking to the motion, there are two issues I want to address. First of all, the question of the actual terms of that negotiated agreement. There are many, many building owners in particular and other members of the public that would like to know: what did the government lay out to secure that 40,000 square feet of office space in the new complex we see at 101st and 102nd Streets? During the period of time negotiations were going on – and the negotiations, I understand, were done by a person in real estate that was very, very involved with somebody, let's say, with Tory connections – at that particular time BOMA, the Building Owners and Managers Association, were pointing out that there was a 25 percent vacancy in class A office space in the downtown area. They were pointing out the implications as to that type of negotiated contract for a development that was being proposed that was not even built. But the government chose not to listen; the government chose to go ahead and enter into the agreement.

Mr. Speaker, it raises the question: why is the government not prepared to release this particular document? Why is it that the public, those that are interested in seeing the terms of that negotiated agreement, are not entitled to do so? I think the larger picture is that it again dwells on the need for a Bill spelling out freedom-of-information rights. It points out again the difficulty that not only members of the opposition but members of the public at large, the very taxpayers, the same people that support this particular system we're part of, are denied that right to even challenge government as to what information is available.

We see it occur time after time, and it is very, very frustrating, because the minister can simply stand up and say, "No, I'm not going to make that information available." It's not only this instance, but we've seen it go on in so many instances. For example, we can ask such simple questions as "Where are lottery funds being spent?" We don't get that information. There is no freedom of information Bill in this province. There are fewer and fewer provinces that do not have such a Bill. In Saskatchewan it is being considered; I think it should be considered here in Alberta as well.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would ask the Assembly to approve this motion so that agreement can be released, can be made public, so all Albertans who are interested have the right to see that documentation.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the government will not be accepting Motion for a Return 181 for several reasons, but I think it's important to talk about the reasons for a minute or two.

First of all, the question is factually incorrect, Mr. Speaker. It befuddles me to continue to look at questions that are being written by the Liberal research mechanism or consortium they have. They talk about 40,000 square feet of office space. Time and time again we've dealt with this matter in this Assembly, and everyone knows that is factually incorrect subject matter. Nevertheless, those kinds of subjects continue to come back into the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the member who moved this motion also made some other statements. He said that a lot of people in the commercial retail business would like to know, of course, what the conditions are of the specific lease arrangement and lease agreement. That's probably true, because there is a competitive market in the leased space business in not only this province but all other jurisdictions I'm aware of. It always has been a tradition, always has been the position, that in the interests of commercial confidentiality lease agreements are not made public. That has been a standard policy. It's not something that has just been invented in the last few months or the last few weeks, and that will remain. That's a second reason.

But the hon. member also said one other thing: he also quoted a large percentage figure about vacancies in retail space, and I think we should go back, Mr. Speaker, to look at the time when Olympia & York was being proposed here in the city of Edmonton. There were people who were in leadership positions here in the province of Alberta. There were certainly people who were in leadership positions in the city of Edmonton who made comments, and at the time when the O & Y project was under way, the government had indicated that it was a very important project. It would create construction jobs that were badly needed during the past several years and the several years prior to the announcement of it and also into the future. I think it's also important, no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that at the time the mayor of the city of Edmonton was quoted – a pretty authentic document I'm told, anyway – and the quote was:

This is a top quality building doing exactly what the policy of downtown rejuvenation wants us to do . . . and creates employment when unemployment stands at the rate of 11% in our city.

I should also point out that at that very time the city council of Edmonton, when, as I understand, a certain gentleman who now purports to represent a constituency – well, he does represent a constituency; gee whiz, "purport" is the wrong word

to use – and also serves as the leader of the Liberal Party, and I'm not sure if my memory serves me correct, but it may very well be that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud was a member of his city council at that time, to my understanding contributed some \$5 million in concessions in support of the O & Y project. But it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we have these factual matters on the record, and the question is factually incorrect as it is worded. Secondly, it has been a policy, not only of this government but previous governments in the province of Alberta as well, that in the interest of commercial confidentiality lease agreements are not made public, and that's the reason the government cannot accept the question.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I heard my name being used rather rudely and in vain; at least I thought it was. It is quite correct that the city of Edmonton was in very dire financial straits in the 1982, '83, '84, '85, '86 period of time, and it is also true that the city of Edmonton had a program of inviting development and encouraging development and giving investment incentives to get development going. I don't apologize for that one bit. I think what is important here is the issue that is being skirted. The issue is that of information, the issue of informing Albertans about what the facts are.

There are now only three governments in Canada – after Saskatchewan passes its legislation, and they're committed to do so – that continue to be secretive, that continue to play the game that the hon. member that has just spoken likes to play, and that is to hold back information from taxpayers. "Why should you give out information on taxpayers dollars," the hon. member would like to say. "It's private information; it's secret business between a government and entrepreneurs." Hogwash. What absolute nonsense. Surely government moneys that are used to put offices in place should be done competitively, and people should be able to see if it was done competitively. We're not even able to see that. The hon. member isn't able to satisfy that concern because he likes to make this secret.

You can't get around this issue, hon. minister, by attempting to skirt it or divert or set people off on another tangent or track. The issue here is secretiveness, and this government is one of the worst in Canada when it comes to being secretive. The appalling situation is that it was a great Canadian, Ged Baldwin, a Member of Parliament from the Peace River country, that started this whole movement of freedom of information. A Conservative member of the Diefenbaker government who got this whole ball rolling, and great credit from all parties is given to that hon. gentleman for the work that he did. But it's truly unbelievable how a Conservative government in our own province won't follow that same kind of openness, that process of making available information to the taxpayers of Alberta. Without laughing – and you should have been laughing, Mr. Minister, when you said it. Without laughing, to be able to stand here in the Assembly and say it's secret, private communication between an entrepreneur and a government is just unacceptable, and I don't accept it.

MR. SPEAKER: Question. Is there a call for the question on the motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion lost]

182. Mr. Decore moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a complete inventory of all land held in the province of Alberta by Her Majesty the Queen in right of Alberta or any government department, agency, or agent.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, sometimes matters that you're not aware of, sometimes issues that are known to others who've had experience with those issues become known to you. This is one of those cases that came to my attention. When I was elected as the mayor of this great city of Edmonton, I didn't think of the fact that there should be a public inventory of landholdings of a government, of the city of Edmonton. It was the external auditors of the city of Edmonton that suggested to the mayor and the council members of the city of Edmonton that such a public inventory of land should be put into place. At that time the city of Edmonton wasn't able to say how much land existed in the Department of Transportation or how much existed in the department of recreation or whatever. There was just sort of a loose understanding of what it was that was parkland and a loose understanding of what it was that was required for transportation road widening or whatever. There wasn't a detailed list of land that was held by all departments.

The external auditors took the position that if that list was known and if that list was made public, first of all there would be good financial control. You would know what you had. You would know, and you would be able to get rid of that which you didn't need. It was discovered, Mr. Speaker, that there were lands that were sort of just back on a shelf, as it were, that were forgotten about. The external auditors indicated that if this was public, if it was set out on a piece of paper, if it was easily obtained by the public, then they themselves could be part of the challenge on government and say: "What are you holding all of this land for? What do you need this land for? Why don't you get rid of it?" So there would be some pressure put on government to get rid of lands that they don't need and therefore increase the moneys that would go into the Treasury and get rid of capital holdings that weren't necessary.

Now, I don't know of any kind of public document, any kind of place that the public can go and find a complete list of all of the inventory of the province of Alberta in terms of landholdings. If I'm wrong, I hope the minister will correct me and tell me that that's the case. But I would like to be able to say to a real estate agent: "Come and look at this whenever you want. Look at this list if you think it should be challenged. The list is available in the Legislature, or wherever. You can see what's funded and what's not funded, what's looked after by debenture or isn't looked after by debenture, what can be got rid of and what can't be got rid of." It would tell interest groups, if it were properly documented, of spaces, landholdings, that were endangered species areas or would tell us where wildlife preserves exist or where wildlife zones are created or where greenbelts are created. Right now, Mr. Speaker, it's a very nebulous situation, as I understand it, where the public can't go to a central inventory and find out the information that they need.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's from experience that I bring this suggestion to the government that they formalize this process, that it's clear and understandable, that it's able to be challenged, and I think that makes for good fiscal control.

Thank you.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the comments put forward by the leader of the Liberal Party. This has been an initiative that's been under way for some period of time now on behalf of the government to, in fact, assemble a complete inventory of all land held in the province of Alberta. Of course, there are various departments that would hold land: Public Works, Supply and Services being one; Alberta Transportation and Utilities; Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. There is a variety of Crown agencies: the Agricultural Development Corporation, the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation, and the like. The difficulty, Mr. Speaker, is that this information currently is available, and of course it is available at the Land Titles Office.

Having read the question, I had one interpretation; having heard the leader, I have now an additional interpretation of what basically he was suggesting. We have been working on such an inventory, Mr. Speaker. It won't be ready, I'm sure, for some years, and I don't mean forever. I mean probably within 24 months. If we were to accept this question today, we wouldn't have it ready for a couple of years. I'm wondering if the hon. member would appreciate that it would be our view that we would not accept the question today, but he would also understand we're working on it, and if he wanted to raise it again in 1992, we may very well be in a position to table such a document at that time, rather than have it sit for a couple of years.

The principle of a land inventory on behalf of the province is one that we're supportive of, because we accept exactly what the leader of the Liberal Party said. Obviously he gained some experience as being the mayor of the city of Edmonton, and that's important, and it's an additional and positive aspect to the management of government in the province of Alberta. One of the longer-term objectives, of course, would be, after having the complete inventory of land that is available in the province of Alberta, then to ask the question: how then do we dispose of all surplus lands? Because we do have carrying costs associated with everything, such as weed control to who knows what.

So that's the intent, but I must regretfully ask the Assembly to not accept the question today. I think we understood, though, the direction we're all heading in.

MR. SPEAKER: Additional? Call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion lost]

204. On behalf of Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Taylor moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all tenders submitted for the project or projects for which contracts totaling \$439,653 were awarded to David Bromley Engineering (1983) Ltd., by the Department of Recreation and Parks, in the 1986-87 and 1987-88 fiscal years.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Is there . . .

MR. TAYLOR: I assumed that I could speak after . . .

MR. SPEAKER: If you wish. Or is there a minister wishing to speak to Motion for a Return 204?

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. Minister for Recreation and Parks. He has moved and agreed to the Assembly that he would accept the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

MR. TAYLOR: I understand that he accepted the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Order please, gentlemen.

[Motion carried]

211. Mr. Taylor moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all invoices relating to the expenditure of \$176,533 at the Dai-Ichi Hotel Enterprise Co. in the 1987-1988 fiscal year by the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, Motion for a Return 211. I'm going to ask that the Assembly reject the motion for a return, but I'm prepared to tell the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon what these dollars were for. The reason I'm asking the Assembly to reject it is that it's dealing with another policy of invoices. There are hundreds of thousands of invoices that a government would receive in any particular year, so it's a principle that we've established, in terms of management and administration, to not have to duplicate all these things. The Auditor General deals with this. The hon. gentleman from Westlock-Sturgeon has gone through public accounts and has noted that in a particular fiscal year there was a transfer of \$176,533 by the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services to the Dai-Ichi Hotel Enterprise Co., and he basically says that he wants to see the invoice. So it's essentially pieces of paper that went through, completely audited, acceptable, and this is – don't fall out of your chair, hon. member – the rental payment for the lease that the province of Alberta has for the Agent General's residence in Tokyo.

Now, we've all heard the horrifying stories of how much it costs to pay for rental spaces in various places throughout the world, and this is a bona fide thing, and I released this one. Please don't accuse me of being contradictory to the previous one, because this has no impact on the competitiveness of the real estate of the leasing industry in the province of Alberta, and this goes back in that particular year. But, hon. member, that's what the dollar figure is, and that's the marketplace in Tokyo, Japan. In my humble opinion, I'm sure most citizens in Alberta are going to have a really great difficulty understanding how come it costs so much to do business there, but I'm sure there will be a number of people who'll say, "Well, yeah, that's what it costs in Tokyo, Japan."

That's the answer to the question. It's not a sinister thing where the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services went to Tokyo and spent, you know, 23 days there on a mission or anything like that, wining and dining. It's simply the cost of the lease agreement for the Agent General's residence in Tokyo and a flabbergasting amount of money, the cost of doing business. I've given you the answer, hon. member, but I'm going to ask the Assembly to reject the motion because of the principle of not wanting to stand up here and having to file hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of thousands of invoices on a per annum basis. Those are dealt with by the Auditor General, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Westlock-Sturgeon, in conclusion.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I have trouble understanding the answer. I gather, and I'm sure the minister has assured me, that this is for rent, which is a heck of a lot of rent, there's no doubt, \$15,000 a month. But I'm only asking for the invoices. Surely there should be no more than 12 invoices, which is 12 months, or one invoice for the 12-month period. I don't understand why he says there would be hundreds and hundreds of invoices, unless I bet you'd argue that if you gave the invoices on this, you'd start a precedent. [interjection] I see. It would go all the way . . . But I then have the assurance through the Speaker that this is strictly rent and only rent for one year . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: Per annum.

MR. TAYLOR: For our agent's . . . Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

[Motion lost]

222. Mr. Mitchell moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of the documents pertaining to Weldwood of Canada, Hinton division, and H.R. Milner plant, Alberta Power, Grande Cache, as listed below:

- (1) the companies' applications to operate under the clean air and clean water Acts,
- (2) the licences to operate issued under the clean air and clean water Acts,
- (3) certificates, orders, or waivers issued by Alberta Environment pursuant to licences to operate in the last 10 years,
- (4) the latest annual reports for each company under the clean air and clean water Acts, and
- (5) a list and description of violations in the last five years relating to contaminants or conditions that should have been controlled pursuant to the clean air and clean water Acts licences to operate.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, it's my intention to accept this motion with three amendments. I would be pleased to circulate these amendments.

MR. FOX: Are they friendly?

MR. KLEIN: Yeah, they're friendly.

MR. FOX: Okay.

MR. McINNIS: Are they environmentally friendly?

MR. KLEIN: They're environmentally friendly. Right.

Amendment 1 would amend section (3) of the motion for a return to delete "certificates, orders, or waivers" and substitute "control orders," and it would delete "10" years and substitute "two" years. It's just, again, one of these administrative things where I guess if we want to increase the department's budget alone, just for the staff to go back and do that kind of work, I think it would be an inappropriate use of money and of people power. I think that two years is a reasonable time.

The other amendment relates to section (4), adding after the word "Acts," the following: "excluding confidential company information." This is information that rightfully belongs to the

company that has been supplied to the government in confidence. Of course, it goes without saying that unless there is permission received from the company, then the government has no legal rights and certainly has a moral obligation to keep that information confidential.

With respect to section (5) the suggested amendment is to delete "relating to contaminants or conditions that should have been controlled" and substitute "for these companies." So it would read:

a list and description of violations in the last five years for these companies pursuant to the clean air and clean water Acts licences to operate.

Those are the amendments, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: We have a procedural question. The Chair wants to know, first of all, of Edmonton-Meadowlark and then to the House: is the member willing to agree to these amendments and to take them all? If so, then perhaps we can take them, all three, as being an omnibus amendment.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I'm willing to agree to the amendments. I'm grateful that he's willing to answer the motion in part, and I'll see what I get. Then I'll proceed from there.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. All right. Anyone wishing to speak to the amendments?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion as amended carried]

CLERK: Motion 237, the Rev. Mr. Roberts.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I move Motion 237 standing on the Order Paper under my name.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Motion for a Return 237. Comment on behalf of the government? [interjections] Hon. members, there is a considerable number of items to be dealt with. Let's just take our time here.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Government House Leader, I would ask that 237 remain on the Order Paper, and we would then move on to Motion 238.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. It's quite obvious that, yes, indeed, we did pass a motion earlier that they would deal with it, but there's no one here to be able to deal with it. Therefore, this particular motion makes a lot of sense. So all those in favour of having 237 stand on the Order Paper . . .

Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services speaking to . . .

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, is it too late to enter the debate on Motion for a Return 237?

MR. SPEAKER: Well, I've got a motion now that it stands on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

CLERK: Motion 238, Rev. Mr. Roberts.

REV. ROBERTS: Now, will they be ready for this one, Mr. Speaker? I move Motion 238 standing on the Order Paper under my name.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Motion 238, minister of manpower.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the minister, Mr. Speaker, I would accept Motion 238 as amended.

MR. SPEAKER: We do not have an amendment for this one. The Chair doesn't.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the House. I thought that the minister had provided the amendments.

MR. SPEAKER: Not that we're aware of.

Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, speaking to this or leaving the Chamber? Thank you.

I think that under the circumstances perhaps the Acting Government House Leader would be good enough to move that 238 stands and holds its place.

MR. WEISS: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I thought that's what would be accepted. I would move that Motion 238 stand on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

239. Mr. Mitchell moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of the water quality data on the secondary treatment lagoon effluent from

- (1) the Procter & Gamble mill, Grande Prairie,
- (2) the Millar Western Pulp mill, Grande Prairie, and
- (3) the Weldwood pulp mill, Hinton,

to be tabled in the House the day following receipt on an ongoing basis.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I propose to reject this motion for a return. This information or a compilation of this information is already available upon request either from the companies involved or from Alberta Environment in the form of annual or monthly reports. Now, the information being requested by the hon. member could be provided for an identified or a specific period of concern. In other words, if he wanted the data for a particular month or even for a particular year, that's not a problem, but on an ongoing basis it would be a very, very unnecessary expense. When we're trying to save trees, the last thing we want to do is generate more paper. I can't begin to imagine how much paper would be generated by filing on a daily basis the water quality data on secondary treatment lagoon effluent on an ongoing basis.

MR. MITCHELL: Put it on recycled paper.

MR. KLEIN: Even if we put it on recycled paper, we would eventually find ourselves into the virgin fibre situation because we'd still be consuming too much of that.

Mr. Speaker, basically, it's a matter of practicality, and it would just take a tremendous amount of time, a tremendous amount of money, and most of it would be unnecessary because the information on a reasonable basis is available now.

MR. McINNIS: Well, I think today is as good a day as any to deal with the situation of what's public information and what's not out of the Department of the Environment. The minister stood in his place today and said that the monitoring data is public information. People in the department always say it's public information. It's public until you try to get it, Mr. Speaker. I've been trying to get some information out of that minister on monitoring data for a very long time. The other day I got a memo in the mail that says that Mr. Mitchell, the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, has a motion on the Order Paper and you should wait until that's dealt with. Well, it can't be public information if you have to come here and try to get a motion for a return passed by the Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta to get the information. Public information means you can go down there and get it.

Well, it turns out that he and a certain somebody in his office have issued instructions to the staff in Environment. Well, it may be public to some people, but it's not public to Members of the Legislative Assembly who try to get it. And now he's saying to us today, "Well, you have to trust us that we're going to operate this system in such a way that the information will be public when the time comes." Well, it can't be public information if it's withheld from the public on any kind of reasonable notice. Public information means that it ought to be there for inspection during reasonable office hours by any Albertan, and you shouldn't have to come cap in hand. You shouldn't have to fill out forms and send them to the minister's office where they're ignored. [interjection] Look I haven't had a decent response from your office since November of last year.

MR. KLEIN: You haven't asked any questions that made any sense.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. members. Through the Chair, both of you.

MR. McINNIS: I mean, he's clammed up a little bit tighter than a clam over there on that side of the House. So when he comes here and says that this is already public and he's concerned about saving the trees, now that's a good one. You know, they sign forest management agreements that give international pulp inc. the right to cut down every tree in northern Alberta regardless of what the native people want, regardless of what the people in those communities want, and he comes here and says that he's trying to save trees. I mean, give me a break. There has to be sometime, somewhere where we deal with reality in this place, and the reality is that this information is not always available.

MR. KLEIN: Reality to you is to have a paper machine right in the Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. minister, please. Still through the Chair.

MR. McINNIS: So the question before us today is whether this material should be tabled in the Assembly on a timely basis. I know that when you go to the Legislature Library to get their documents, you don't get the same runaround you get from Alberta Environment. They help you find the material. They show it to you. That's the kind of system we need. Now, if Alberta Environment, if this minister and his assistant Dr. Strangelove would operate in the same way that the Legislature Library does in respect of freedom of information, then I think

we wouldn't need a motion like this, but the way it sits today we need this motion. We need it passed now.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark, in conclusion.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place for making those comments. I think he sums up the issue extremely well. It is the case that they get us coming and going. They say on the one hand that this is public, and on the other hand, whenever we ask for it, we can't get it.

It's interesting that today of all days he would raise this, and say: no problem, you can get this data; it's public information. I phoned the department today. I made a number of phone calls, and I was told about a public meeting to be held in Whitecourt – it turns out, eventually, this evening – to release the results of tests done on fly ash in the Millar Western teepee burner. I was referred by a member of that department back to the minister's office to get that information. That's how public information is in that department. Public information about a public meeting that's going to be on the radio this afternoon in Whitecourt, I have to get referred back to the minister's office.

Well, I'm referring this question to the minister's office before I even attempt to go through that rigmarole, and what do I get? I get a snide comment about let's save the trees. Well, if we were serious about saving the trees, many, many policy differences would have been implemented by this government over the last 18 months, two years, three years. Having accepted that this isn't going to pass, of course, I will test the minister's goodwill and test the confidence of his statements in this House. I will come back with a specific period, and I will ask that he submit for a specific period this data.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion lost]

240. Mr. Mitchell moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of the water quality data on the secondary treatment lagoon effluent from

- (1) the Procter & Gamble pulp mill, Grande Prairie, from January 1989 until the present,
- (2) the Millar Western Pulp mill, Whitecourt, from the date of commissioning in 1988 until the present, and
- (3) the Weldwood pulp mill, Hinton, from 1985 until the present.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of the Environment.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm willing to accept this motion for a return with an amendment, and I think it's a friendly amendment. Basically, it substitutes the words "data for the last annual reporting period, January 1989 to March 31, 1990." That substitution relates to section (1): "from January 1989 until the present"; section (2): "from the date of commissioning in 1988 until the present"; and section (3): "from 1985 until the present." I'll circulate the amendment.

Basically, the reason for this is to provide for the member an accurate base for the data being required. I think this is the kind of information that we can supply on an ongoing basis, or at least maybe on a quarterly basis or on a semiannual basis. But on a daily basis I don't think it would be too easy to achieve. Certainly we're pleased to provide the information, but

for a reasonable length of time to make sure that the information on which the data was based is good, consistent information.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

This is now speaking to the amendment, which is three deletions from sections (1), (2), and (3), and a substitution in each case of the following words: "data for the last annual reporting period, January 1989 to March 31, 1990."

The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, speaking to the amendments.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, once again I'm grateful for what information I can get. I will accept the amendments as being friendly and assess the information I get and proceed from there if I need it for a longer period of time.

MR. SPEAKER: Call for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion as amended carried]

241. On behalf of Rev. Roberts, Mr. McInnis moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing the records of the Alberta health care insurance plan showing

- (1) the total of all payments made to and the number of services provided by optometrists according to benefit codes B650 to B659 between June 30, 1988, and December 31, 1989, and
- (2) the total of all payments made to and the number of services provided by ophthalmologists according to the nonsurgical benefit codes, P and B sections, for the same period.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Health, we'd so accept Motion 241.

[Motion carried]

248. Mr. McInnis moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all emission control orders issued by Alberta Environment from April 1, 1988, through March 31, 1990.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to accept that.

[Motion carried]

249. Mr. McInnis moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all letters of permission issued by Alberta Environment for nonroutine discharge of liquid effluents from April 1, 1988, through March 31, 1990.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to reject this motion, and I think the reasoning is quite sound. Perhaps if the motion could come back in another form it might be more acceptable, but in its present form, very simply, this would be another unnecessary use of money and resources. I'm informed there are something in excess of 2,000 industrial and municipal facilities licensed under the Clean Water Act in this province. Indeed, a facility, whether it's a municipal facility or an industrial facility, may have one or more liquid effluents, and it's likely that during any year

various types of activities may be undertaken at any one of these 2,000 plants that require a letter of permission.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

I guess what I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, is that the paper, again, that would be generated, the time to research all this information, simply . . .

MR. McINNIS: How many letters are there?

MR. KLEIN: Well, there are over 2,000 that we know of, and that's a lot of letters.

Again, as I point out, we're looking at various kinds of liquid effluents, and what you're asking here, hon. member, is: "for nonroutine discharge of liquid effluents." Well, you know, what kind of effluent? What are we talking about here? If the department could get some direction that could be more specific, we might be willing to look at the motion for a return in a more favourable light.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this motion for a return, and I'll tell you why. The fact is, investigation that I've done, for example, of the Procter & Gamble episode, where that company exceeded more than 30 times certain total suspended solids guidelines, determined that those discharges in excess of standards were never authorized by any one of the three official approval mechanisms that are called for under this minister's legislation: a control order, a certificate of variance, an amendment to the existing licence – not one of those three mechanisms called for in his own legislation.

We talk about breaking the law. We talk about this government standing up and saying that social workers are breaking the law. Well, the Minister of Environment's law says that if a company is going to be allowed to exceed certain regulated standards, there is one of three ways that that can be approved and must be approved. None of those three ways was utilized in the Procter & Gamble case, where it exceeded, on over 30 different occasions, total suspended solids standards.

Therefore, it is a reasonable request based upon a reasonable premise by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place that there must be a letter, there must be something authorizing why those kinds of excesses were allowed in that case and in many other cases. In fact, the minister today has admitted that there are 2,000 such letters. That indicates a pretty broad and pretty serious number of cases in which companies were allowed to break the law, exceed standards. What we would like to see – and what I would like to see, because it is a very reasonable request – are copies of the letters, because we know that the other mechanisms aren't being utilized. I'd like to know what this minister is truly afraid of.

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

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know that I've moved a more important motion in the Assembly so far. It seems to me that this whole system that we have for regulating pollution in our province does not serve Albertans particularly well at the moment. The minister has said that he's reviewing the environmental statutes, the regulations standards: there is to be a visioning process followed by public hearings, a two-year process which will eventually get us new legislation. But what

we're talking about here today, this document that's entitled a letter of permission, which is given to companies that hold these permits to pollute, and other, not necessarily companies . . .

MR. KLEIN: Every city.

MR. McINNIS: As the minister mentioned, there are municipalities that are involved as well as other levels of government. All of these things are involved as well as corporations. I recognize that, but I think there's something very fundamental here that's not really been brought up in the debate. A permit under the clean water and clean air Acts is all that the public gets to see on a routine basis about what's happening from an industrial source of pollution. Whether it's in the public sector or the private sector is irrelevant to this debate. All they get to see is what's in that clean air and clean water Acts permit, and that's what the government, by virtue of the laws passed by this Assembly and the mandate given them by the people, issues.

But then they have this other thing called a letter of permission for nonroutine discharge of liquid effluents, which means, in effect, so long as these documents continue to exist, that those permits cannot be relied upon by the public. If you live on the Wapiti River or the Smoky River or the Peace River downstream from Procter & Gamble, to use the example quoted by my colleague, you can't rely on the fact that that permit is going to be adhered to on a day-to-day basis because, for all you know, Alberta Environment may have issued another letter of permission. If you live downstream from the Weldwood mill on the Athabasca River, whether it's in the town of Athabasca or Fort MacKay or on down to the delta, you can't rely on the fact that Weldwood is going to only issue the amount of pollution that the minister has said they can issue from their pulp mill. You can't rely on those limits being adhered to because, for all you know, the Department of the Environment may have issued a letter of permission.

I really think there are problems with giving a department and a minister the authority to do this to allow the nonroutine discharge of effluents. We get into a problem with language here, because the minister's argument was that there are so many of them he can't afford the paper to reproduce them. Well, why call them nonroutine discharges then? If there are so many letters that he can't table them all, it seems like they routinely get the nonroutine pollution permits. And that's a problem. There are 2,000 facilities licensed? So what? There are how many day cares licensed in the province of Alberta? How many bars licensed in the province of Alberta? Just because you've got a lot of licences doesn't give the government the right, Mr. Speaker, to withhold information about when and how often they're allowing these permit holders to exceed the permits.

You know, I really think and I feel very strongly that we should rename those clean air and clean water Acts. The minister has in mind the title "the environmental protection and enhancement Act" as an omnibus statute. But for sure these should be called the dirty water and the dirty air Acts, because all they provide for is permits that allow people to put sewage and effluent and discharges into the atmosphere. But I think if you say to people that we're going to have some public involvement, even if you ignore their opinions at the outset, you have to be able to give them some reasonable assurance that these permits will mean something at the end of the day, that it's something that has some force and effect.

Now, the reality is that the government probably could not prosecute most of these polluters for permit violations even if they wanted to. We have a report from the task force on environmental law enforcement issued in January 1988 saying that these permits are unenforceable, or the laws upon which they're based are unenforceable. Is that what leaves the government in a position where it feels it has to issue these letters of permission on a routine basis, because they could not get a conviction otherwise? Well, you know, darn it . . . The minister shakes his head. I go up to Grande Prairie and I talk to people, maybe not the same people he talks to, but they tell me that they don't like it when Procter & Gamble, 36 times over approximately an 18-month period, is entitled to exceed their quota of suspended solids, in some cases by double. I certainly don't like it when the Minister of the Environment stands up and says: well, we approved that; we thought that was a good idea; we thought that was the lesser of evils . . .

MR. KLEIN: No.

MR. McINNIS: That was the term that was used, hon. minister, by yourself: that it was the lesser of evils; therefore, Alberta Environment allowed them to do it.

Well, they didn't tell anybody about it at the time. They didn't post warnings along the river. They didn't put ads in the newspaper saying: "For the next month Procter & Gamble gets to double up on their suspended solids. Warning: dioxins and furans contained within." They did no such thing. In fact, most people in the Grande Prairie area knew next to nothing about it until it was raised in this Legislative Assembly by myself.

Now, that is not the way that we should be policing our environmental laws in the province of Alberta. I don't mind the idea that Alberta Environment works co-operatively with permit holders. I don't mind the idea that they have discussion and dialogue. I wish they would include other Albertans in that discussion and dialogue from time to time on these matters. But there has to be a bottom line. Somewhere there has to be a bottom line. The Solicitor General likes to tell us about the bottom line as far as drunk driving is concerned. He's on a crusade to rid our streets of drunk drivers, so we have a firm standard and we stick to it. We enforce it. If people are over the line, they're charged. In Alberta what happens? If they're over the line, chances are they get a letter. It's called a letter of permission for the nonroutine discharge of liquid effluents. They get a letter, you know, that basically says it's okay for them to break the law.

Now, we hear piety beyond belief. We see a John Wayne imitation on the part of the Premier about some social workers who have a different interpretation of the law than he does. He refers to them as lawbreakers and says we can't discuss and sit down and negotiate with people who break the law. Well, what happens to Procter & Gamble? They get letters of permission issued from Alberta Environment for the nonroutine discharge of liquid effluents. Now, as I say, I quarrel with that in principle. I don't think that you should have the right to issue letters. But I'll tell you one thing: if you're going to issue them, you bloody well have to table them here in the Legislative Assembly afterwards.

MR. KLEIN: I bloody well don't have to do anything.

MR. McINNIS: The minister doesn't have to do anything. Well, I guess the minister's attitude that he doesn't have to do

anything is why Weldwood has an operating licence and that community had no input. I guess that's the reason why Procter & Gamble has their operating licence when the people demanded through the community input that they have a public hearing, because he has the view that he doesn't have to do anything he doesn't want to do.

Well, I'm saying that there's a higher authority here. I'm saying that the people who live in this province and who have to breathe the air that comes out of these smokestacks and who bathe and wash in and drink the water that goes in the rivers, have a right to know when the *Environment department* issues a letter of permission for the nonroutine discharge of liquid effluents. I say they have a right to know every time that's done . . .

MR. KLEIN: In the North Saskatchewan, yeah.

MR. McINNIS: And if it's the city of Edmonton, it's no different. If you're giving letters to the city of Edmonton saying that you can dump raw sewage in the river in excess of your permit, then I think you should make that public. If you issue it to an oil sands plant, if you issue it to any type of industrial endeavour that's putting effluent according to a clean water, clean air Act permit – if you give them permission to exceed that permit, then I really think you have an obligation to let people know ahead of time, as a matter of fact, because then they can take precautions at least.

There are people whose children have suffered health effects, they believe, from the fact that kids like to swim in the river. When I was a kid, I swam in the river. I don't doubt that the minister did as well. Kids do things like that, and it's almost impossible for parents to prevent it at all times. But at least if they knew that there was a letter of permission allowing excess dumping – they should have access to that information so for that period of time they could take a precaution and perhaps try to keep the kids away from the river, although, Lord knows, we can't all stay away from the rivers in Alberta all of the time. Perhaps we do need to clean up the rivers as well as make this information public.

Now, I've been looking at a court case in the United States involving Monsanto Corporation, which makes herbicides and pesticides, among other things. They've been convicted in a court of an unauthorized release of dioxin in the river system. Not a lot: something in the neighbourhood of a teaspoon of dioxin. The judge ruled in a U.S. court that Monsanto Corporation violated the rights of people who lived downstream on the river by not informing them of that release of dioxins, and there's a damage settlement in the millions of dollars. I believe it's \$20 million, or it might be tens of millions of dollars. That's what courts in the United States feel about nonroutine discharge of liquid effluents. They feel it's a serious enough matter that they're awarding mega damage settlements to people who are downstream.

How does this government feel? Well, the minister said himself he doesn't have to do anything, and I guess there's nothing we can do to make him table this information in the Assembly. There's nothing we can do to make him inform Albertans when he is issuing letters of permission for nonroutine discharge of liquid effluents. But there's something that Albertans can do about it: they can throw him and the rest of them out of office.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the motion of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, would those members in favour of Motion for a Return 249, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion is defeated.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the House divided]

For the motion:

Bruseker	Gibeault	Mitchell
Chumir	Hewes	Mjolsness
Decore	Laing, M.	Roberts
Doyle	Martin	Taylor
Fox	McInnis	Woloshyn

Against the motion:

Adair	Isley	Oldring
Betkowski	Johnston	Osterman
Bogle	Jonson	Paszkowski
Bradley	Klein	Rostad
Brassard	Kowalski	Schumacher
Calahasen	Laing, B.	Severtson
Cherry	Lund	Shrake
Clegg	Main	Speaker, R.
Day	McClellan	Tannas
Evans	Mirosh	Trynchy
Fowler	Moore	Weiss
Gesell	Musgrove	West
Gogo	Nelson	Zaruský

Totals:	Ayes – 39	Noes – 15
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[Motion lost]

head: **Public Bills and Orders**
Other than
Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading
Bill 206
Community Health Centre Act

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Centre.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased this afternoon to be able to introduce for second reading and for debate and argument on its merits Bill 206, Community Health Centre Act.

We in the New Democrat caucus have seen this Bill to be one of our higher priority Bills, because we feel it very strongly. It talks about a very progressive model of health care delivery that we need to see more evidence of in this province. We want a

healthy future for Albertans. This Bill will help take us a long way in that direction, because it has the magic formula that we know that anyone involved in health care today has to be involved with, the magic formula of providing a service at, hopefully, a lower cost, and secondly, at improved quality. If providers in the health care system can be involved with things that are going to be lower in cost and higher in quality, it's the magic formula for success in the health care system of today. Bill 206, the Community Health Centre Act, does that.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

It's long overdue in this province. Even discussion and debate on this kind of concept of health care delivery is long overdue. We've had it in other provinces throughout Canada, and yet we in Alberta are dragging our feet and are far behind in terms of this kind of model of health care delivery.

What we have had in Alberta instead of these kinds of nonprofit community health centres is a variety of for-profit, walk-in mediclinics, which I think we have some real problems with. I know people have seen them as some real convenience in terms of access to health care services, but a closer examination will see that mediclinics and the proliferation of for-profit clinics delivering medical and other health services can really jack up utilization and not provide the kind of care that could be with this kind of Bill. I know it might be difficult for members to try to sort through the variety of ways in which clinics, centres, and so on can be operated. Normally, we think of either a doctor's office or a hospital, but we have intervening now a whole range of not only different clinics but different arrangements. In the United States they talk about health maintenance organizations or health service organizations, as they have in the province of Ontario, as opposed to fee-for-service clinics, which we understand to be mediclinics. What I'd like to present is a community health centre as outlined in the Bill here before us. We're dealing with the whole area of primary health care. That's not secondary or tertiary but primary health care, the kind of health care that 80 or 90 percent of Albertans access most often.

I'd also be pleased today, Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, if I could take a moment to introduce a couple of people who are guests of ours in the gallery today from the Primary Health Care Society. They are the president, Shelley Lester, and another member, Ms Jansen. They're in the public gallery. I'd ask if they could please rise and receive the welcome of the members of the Assembly here. Thank you.

There are a lot of people who are wanting to draw far more attention to primary health care as an area of far more creativity in terms of how we approach it, and I'm appreciative of the support of the Primary Health Care Society and a number of nurses, family doctors, and family practitioners. I think a growing number of people in the health care field are looking at ways to strengthen and improve particularly primary health care, and this Bill is going to help with that as well.

If I could just take members through certain different sections of the Act. What we're talking about in the definitions section even is really, as I've said, outpatient community-based services. These aren't anything to do with a hospital bed or a severe illness but more to do with medical services and health services that can help keep us better, sometimes episodic in nature, but often even more preventative and health promoting in terms of advice and counsel and certain tips and information that people need to lead the kind of healthy lives that they'd like to lead.

So when we talk about a community health centre, it's geared to all of those kinds of noninstitutional health and medical services which are going to equip people to lead healthy lives and use health as a resource in their lives.

We're talking, too, about these health centres having the ability to deliver medically insured services. Now, that sets them apart from just other centres. If you're going to deliver a medically insured service as insured under the Alberta health care plan, then certain provisions will have to be provided for, and we've done that in the Bill. But certainly any medical services such as diagnostic, some day-surgical kinds of procedures, as well other services of physical therapists, optometrists, some dental services and the rest, can all be provided for through these community health centres.

As well, we've taken a look and decided that the best way to provide kind of a framework and foundation for these community health centres is to have them incorporated under the Societies Act. In that way they can be a society of five members or more on a public board that is nonprofit. I think that's the other key ingredient of this kind of community health centre: that is under the Societies Act and run by a nonprofit board. This is a not-for-profit kind of service. So, again, unlike a private, for-profit mediclinic where a doctor or some others might get some money together and try to deliver services to increase their profit margin, this would be controlled by a board of five or more people under the Societies Act and would be nonprofit in nature.

We've provided, Mr. Speaker, for the professionals who would be employed by this community health centre. There would be a variety of agreements under which these professionals would work, but the predominant method of payment would be that of being on a salary. This is not fee-for-service medicine we're talking about or fee-for-service anything. These are health professionals, whether they're nurses or rehab people or medical people, who are providing a service for a group of clients and constituents through this health centre, and the professionals, the providers, would be there on a salary basis only. I think we want to make it clear about the nature of a health centre in that regard.

Then we've also provided, in sections 7, 8, 9, and 10, that "the Minister of Health shall appoint a Director of Community Health Centre Services." So there would not just be the assistant deputy minister for public health or someone from the health care insurance division, but there would be a separate person in the department who would be a director of community health centres such as these and whose job it would be to oversee the licensing, the operating, and the regulating of these health centres. It wouldn't necessarily be up to the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Association of Registered Nurses and others, who would still have a great role to play in terms of the licensing of the professionals who would work, but the director of community health centre services would oversee that when they come together in the team approach, they would be working together in the facility with whatever lab services and others that they would have. That would all be licensed and regulated and monitored by a director directly responsible to the Minister of Health.

The community health centre would also, we provide for, be able to be reviewed by the Health Facilities Review Committee. Unlike mediclinics, which are not reviewed by anybody, I'm told, here we would provide for the Health Facilities Review Committee to actually go in and do periodic spot checks on this health centre and ensure that the standards are being met, that the

quality is there, and that good health care delivery is taking place.

As well, section 12 provides for certain funds to support these community health centres, not just in their day-to-day operations but also in terms of some capital funding. Now, we've just had a recent experience in the province where a community health centre that falls within the definition of this Bill was needing some capital funds. I think that although there was some willingness on the part of government to give them some capital funding, there was no statute by which that could be accomplished. So this would be the kind of legislation that would enable the Crown, through appropriation and legislative assent, to provide both operating and capital funding for community health centres which is currently not even in existence in the province, and I think that's a great shame.

We also, in section 13, say that community health centres, in terms of any contracting for services, whether it's drugs or equipment or other services, "shall give preference first to Canadians, [and] Canadian non-profit organizations." We don't want to have our health centres taken over by a big Kaiser Permanente out of the U.S. and the health maintenance organizations, which are quite widespread there, but want to give first preference to it being owned and operated by Canadians and given Canadian preference, "notwithstanding any international treaty" that might exist.

So that sort of explains in the different sections of the Bill what we're getting at here. I'd like now just to turn to some other models of how these kinds of community health centres have functioned and operated in other provinces in Canada. For instance, in the province of Saskatchewan we have had community health centres of this nature in existence since 1963. They were among the first to set up, both in Prince Albert and in Saskatoon, nonprofit community health centres that delivered insured medical services and other services by a team of professionals on a nonprofit basis for a certain number of constituents. They've been in existence, as I say, since 1963.

Then in 1983 a certain study was done to try to measure the effectiveness, the outcome of the kind of health care delivery that was going on: how effective is it in terms of delivering health care services? They compared the work of these health centres in Saskatchewan with for-profit mediclinics and other doctors' offices that other people in those towns and cities would get their health care from. In 1983 they discovered this: they determined that the people who had their primary health care services provided through the health centres had 23 percent fewer days in hospital than those who went through mediclinics or other doctors' offices. They had 23 percent fewer admissions to hospital, and of those who did go to hospital, 15 percent had a shorter length of stay in hospital. So clearly we're finding that community health centres do equip and enable and empower individuals to take better care of their health and to do it in a way that doesn't rely on more costly institutional care. I think that's a key ingredient and again shows how improved quality and decreased costs are the result.

They also showed that clients at community health centres had 21 percent fewer drug prescriptions written out for them. Those who did not go to a community health centre but had their health care delivered by other places would have, you know: "Well, here's a prescription. Get this drug; get that drug." We know the high cost and increasing cost of drugs is a real area of concern, but here we have a health centre which provided for people who had, on average, 21 percent fewer prescription drug costs. It even measured the total cost of health services when

compared with clients and patients outside of the health centres. In fact, their total health care costs were 17 percent lower.

I have the data on that. It was sort of hushed up by the Devine government, for some reason, for a number of years. It was finally released just a year and a half ago, and I have it here. It's more detailed than what I've been able to explain thus far but I think proves the point that these community health centres can provide a health care delivery for people that is of higher quality and less cost than all other alternatives.

We also have the Sault Sainte Marie model, where the steelworkers in the city got together about 20 years ago and decided to put together a community health centre for their workers. All kinds of advantages accrued: again, fewer hospital days, greater incentives for linking up with other community health services. We've had the recent release of the Hyndman report. People have looked at that and its recommendation that, you know, you need to have health professionals work together more as a team. Well, this Sault Sainte Marie community health centre is a model of how nurses, doctors, rehab people can work hard together as a team, and they are very strong in that characteristic. In fact, they even have paid leave and sabbaticals for all the professionals every year. They have a week so they can go and upgrade and read and learn and go to some conferences and keep their health care knowledge and the understanding of their profession right up to snuff. It shows a great deal of quality for not just the people who receive services but who provide services, and I think that's another great advantage.

Another one we could look at is the Victoria health project in the city of Victoria, which is geared primarily toward the elderly and those with mental health needs. It does a marvelous job as a community health centre, locally initiated and run on a nonprofit basis, delivering incredibly high-quality services for the elderly in a very networked and linked approach.

Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, I know you'll be very eager to see and read about this community health centre and how it works in the city of Victoria, because it was endorsed a year and a half ago by our Premier at a Western Premiers' Conference. They sat down – I guess when they were on Vander Zalm's yacht there – and, among other things, took a look at what they did in Victoria with this health project there. Out of the communiqué that was issued, the four western Premiers said: "Hey. You know, this Victoria health project's a real good idea, and we'd better try to implement it." I haven't seen any mention of it by the hon. Premier or the Minister of Health, that we should do similar things here in Alberta, but it's there as an important model endorsed by our Premier, and I know members of the Assembly want, under the leadership of Don Getty, to see that this thing comes to pass here in the province as well.

And then for the real right-wingers over there who might still need some persuading, all they have to do is look at that great Republican, that great American entrepreneur by the name of Lee Iacocca, the president of Chrysler Corporation. Lee Iacocca is quite a guy, as we know. But he was very concerned about his profit margins and the success of Chrysler and all the rest, and he found out as he was president of Chrysler that more and more of his profits and costs were going into paying for the health care of his employees, for all kinds of medical services, insurance services, private insurance, drug costs, and all the rest. So Lee Iacocca got together with some of his workers and the unions, UAW and the rest, and again came up with a kind of community health centre – I guess more along the lines of a health maintenance organization – and was able to provide for

an extensive range of primary health care services and medical services . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Privatized.

REV. ROBERTS: No, no. It was run by a nonprofit group to let the workers of Chrysler have their health care needs met not on a fee-for-service basis by those with a private, for-profit motivation, but they were really wanting to, again, provide services, to keep down costs, to reduce hospital admissions, and to increase the quality of care for those workers. You know, it worked, and Lee Iacocca now is going around the United States – guess what? – calling for a proliferation of nonprofit community health clinics like these and others and even a public health care insurance system for the United States of America. I mean, this guy has been convinced. He's seen the results of what we can do in a creative way, and I think it's incumbent upon members here to seed the way.

Now I'd like to move into an area which I know might disturb some other people, but it has to do with really getting a handle on these mediclinics. I think what would be injected into the system if we were to put community health centres into place is that they would really provide some competition for or threaten the work or the practice of mediclinics or walk-in clinics as we've seen them. I've been a bit concerned, I must admit, by a couple of reports that have come out of the department and have been undergone here in the province of Alberta.

One was in 1988. It was a report which looked at consultations and showed that medical consultations have been increasing by 7.5 percent each year for the last five years, that referring to another doctor or having another consultation is increasing at a rate higher than the population is increasing, at a rate higher than what any other indicator would want to suggest, higher than consultations in other provinces, and higher than any other medical services. So they looked at why it is that these medical consultations and referrals are going on, and I was disappointed in the results. They said that, well, there are more elderly people out there, that we have more subspecialists and super-specialists and others, that there are just more people to refer. Well, I think that's not a cogent analysis. I think if some more primary health care physicians and family practice doctors were able to work with a range of other providers and professionals, they wouldn't have to refer out quite as often and that service of the whole person could be dealt with in a primary way with a holistic health care team in a community health centre.

Further, then just last year sort of a subcommittee of the Watanabe committee on utilization of medical services did a whole review – well, a couple of them did – on walk-in clinics in the province. Again, it's very important information that they provide for us here, although I think some of their conclusions are inadequate. They talk about a very high increase in walk-in clinics, particularly in the city of Calgary. Now, we know that Calgary has a number of these walk-in clinics, by a former member of the Assembly, in fact. But what that did to emergency services and emergency health services in Calgary hospitals – it meant a real decrease there. But, still, many emergency doctors, and I quote, claim that "significant referrals from walk-in clinics" continue to occur. So they took some of the business away from emergency centres and hospitals, and so we have the problem with the Holy Cross hospital in the member's riding there having to be shut down and some other emergency centres in other hospitals there. But I think we need a far more cogent analysis, as we've spent a lot of money on emergency services in

hospitals, of whether they're going to deal with this urgent or emergent care or whether walk-in clinics are going to do it or whether community health centres can, in fact, pick up a lot of this.

Also, if I just may quote a very important sentence here on page 4 of this Watanabe subcommittee report, it says that family practitioners [carry] a larger caseload of more complex illnesses which take longer to examine and treat, and are poorly remunerated while the "bread and butter" problems, which can be quite profitable, are usually seen in the walk-in clinics.

Well, again, I don't see how we can sit here and continue to put more and more money into the health care system when we see that even this report is saying that the family practice docs are actually having to see more and more acute caseloads and complex diseases, and yet the bread and butter stuff, the profitable stuff, is all being picked up by the walk-in clinics.

Well, the report does go on to suggest that there could be some things to do to better control walk-in clinics, but it does not, among its six recommendations, talk about community health centres as being one of the ways that you can curtail the high utilization of medical services that walk-in clinics have continued to cause in the province.

Put this in contrast to a study in the province of Manitoba which was begun in 1988 and which, again, was covered up by the Filmon government. Freedom of information in the province of Manitoba finally uncovered it, and the *Globe and Mail* made a report about it just last December. It is a report which shows that as many as 13,000 Manitobans may be receiving an unnecessary duplication of services from walk-in medical clinics each year and that this is costing well over \$368,000, just identifying some of that initial duplication of services. It goes on to say in this document that the references from walk-in clinics and the duplication of services to the 13,000 Manitobans are costing that government unnecessary health care dollars, and they're now beginning to do something about it, particularly along the areas and the lines of community health centres.

Well, I'm not trying to say that we need to do away with walk-in clinics. All I'm saying is let's provide for some models in some areas where community health centres can be initiated. We have here in the city of Edmonton the Boyle McCauley Health Centre, and it is a classic example of a community-based, nonprofit board that has a wide range of services – mental health, dental health, foot care clinics – dealing with inner-city clients and residents who have all kinds of problems with substance abuse, Lysol, alcohol, and involving native people and immigrant people in the inner city. It is a model of what can be done at low cost with improved quality of services for people who otherwise are just falling through the cracks of our health care system. I think it shows again that if we can have two or three Boyle McCauley health centres in this city or such as the Queen Alexandria centre in Calgary, we'd be much better served.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

In the area of women's health, the YWCA here has provided a model of a women's health centre which it wants to see as an information and referral and resource centre, because as we know, women have an incredible number of ways that they can more creatively meet their health care needs than are currently being provided. I think that together with the Royal Alexandra hospital and the reproductive care centre there, there can be a very important linkage here to provide for women's health at, again, lower cost and improved quality of service. Not to

mention the proposal at the Grace hospital for the women's health care centre there. Now, Grace hospital in Calgary has done some good work already, but they want to expand the range of services they can provide for women. I don't have time to go into it all here, but I do want to touch on that as a really important area where this kind of health centre can take root and do some important and terrific things.

Not to mention the remote and northern communities of this province. Already in La Crête there is a kind of a model like a nursing station. But whether it's in La Crête or High Level or different places where they have a difficult time having a doctor coming and setting up his own practice, it would be much better served to have a community health centre where doctors and nurses and rehab people can come together and, in a nonprofit way with some extra government funding, provide a supportive and a team approach to health care delivery in some areas that are underserved already. I think people and members of this government really need to look at that as a model to meet the needs that aren't currently being met.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please, hon. members. We're not in committee. Lloydminster, would you please return to your seat.

REV. ROBERTS: I still would like to point out the benefits – I'd like to see some certain employers use this concept as sort of the Lee Iacocca model. I mean, what would be wrong with the Alberta government, for instance, providing a health centre for the workers of AUPE, who work for this government? I mean, we have certain mediclinics around here which want to service their needs. Whether it's Imperial Oil in Calgary or any place where there's a large employer with a large number of employees who come to work daily, they are already beginning to move in the area of health clubs and certain health benefits. Why not a nonprofit health clinic which is going to provide for a lot of their care by people who are on salary? I think it could do a lot to improve, as it has in the Chrysler example, health services as well as workplace time and productivity.

The Worker's Health Centre is another way in which this can be applied, certainly the kind of need to educate workers about workplace safety and dangerous workplace situations. Not to mention that they have in the province of Ontario under the Department of Labour set up some very progressive workers' health centres, which help to do some of the rehab and treatment work there: another very important, I think, area where we could move with this kind of a model.

Not to mention native urban health. Now, there's a proposal currently, I think, somewhere before government for a native urban health project here in the city of Edmonton. As we know, native people in this city have a whole range of needs which are not being met by the existing services. The models that have come up, by Dr. Paton from the board of health and the Indian health care association, have said, "Let's just use, again, some kick-start money from government, provide a community health centre which has a particular focus on meeting the needs of natives in the urban setting, and really go to town to provide better health care for them and improve their health status and have the kind of outcomes which we know the community health centres can provide."

So, Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, I urge you to look carefully, and I appreciate this time to present Bill 206 and the models of it throughout Canada, the United States, and even Europe. It's based on that magic health care formula of

providing a service at lower cost with increased quality and increased outcomes, and that's the name of the game. This Bill 206 on community health centres can do it. Why are we wasting our time? Why are we dragging our feet? It's meaningful; it's community-oriented, community-based. It's got health promotion, illness- and injury-prevention. It's a model of how primary health care needs to be rooted into our health care system in the province. Certainly there are going to be some difficulties, and I will acknowledge and want to hear the debate from other members of the Assembly, but let's get on and at least begin to experiment with this kind of community health centre. I urge the government to make significant moves in this direction. Even as the Premier has endorsed the Victoria health project, let's have an Edmonton or Calgary or Red Deer health project on that same basis. Let it be known that we in the New Democratic caucus have had enough of government just dragging its feet where they know there's some advantage, where they know there's some benefit. They keep dragging their feet when there's a progressive health care policy which they can grasp and implement. We want a healthy future for all Albertans. We in the New Democrat caucus firmly believe that community health centres and this Bill 206 are a vital part of bringing that healthy future to reality here in the province of Alberta.

Thank you very much.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Rocky Mountain House.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It certainly gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise and speak to this Bill this afternoon, [interjection] Thank you, hon. member.

As we're all well aware, Alberta certainly does have a fine health care system, probably one of the finest in the world in operation today, but there are many challenges facing our very fine system. Our aging population, the economic shifts, and major advances in technology are creating opportunities to put in place innovative and effective solutions. The objective of this government is better health care, not necessarily more health care. Mr. Speaker, I would like to just outline the situation in Alberta and a number of the things that are happening presently in our fine system. We have health clinics that deliver medical services which require patients to go into the health service location and then leave on the same day after receiving their care. There are many types of health clinics presently operating in Alberta. There are the walk-in clinics, the mediclinics, rehabilitation clinics, and so on.

Presently Alberta health care does not regulate these types of facilities or practices in which physicians may deliver services. As of November 1989 there were 500 base labs, 380 satellite and collection labs, 150 diagnostic radiology facilities, and 30 nonhospital surgery centres accredited by the college. The Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons currently requires labs and radiology facilities and nonhospital surgical centres to be accredited by the College of Physicians and Surgeons to carry on their operations. Alberta health does not, however, require this accreditation as a condition of payment, except for hospital beds. In order to be issued a billing number under the Alberta health care insurance plan, physicians must be registered with the College of Physicians and Surgeons. Based on either a solo practice or a clinical billing, there is a number issued from the Alberta health care insurance plan. The Alberta government covers the professional fees charged by health clinics and only

partially covers the overhead and capital costs of some of the health clinics in the province.

So you can see there's a very wide-ranging system of delivery in our province at the present time. There's no doubt that everyone knows that over the past 15 years there's been a tremendous growth in the utilization and the cost of our physicians' services. During this period of growth the services of physicians have far surpassed the actual growth in the number of patient-days that Albertans have spent in the hospital. It is logical that as more services move out of hospitals and into health care clinics, in fact the cost will increase dramatically.

Now, I don't want that to be misunderstood, of course. We have a government that is excited about potential health care clinics as they are applied to Albertans. Health clinics offer a flexible alternative to big hospitals. We're not having a problem with Bill 206 in that respect. They do encourage a general shift in health care from inpatient institutions to health clinics. Health care clinics skim off the minor cases from inpatient care and could potentially save the province quite a lot of money on these minor operations because, of course, we don't have the problem with the housing and the feeding of the patient. Health care clinics may help reduce waiting periods as well for patients requiring inpatient care and surgery. Health clinics in Alberta have not only responded to the health needs of Albertans, but they have also acted as a window of opportunity for many health care practitioners and entrepreneurs. The business opportunity afforded by these clinics has led to many new, innovative health care techniques in the field.

But, Mr. Speaker, there are some negative sides to the whole question of health care clinics as well, and I think one of the problems with health clinic care is the fact that both within and without the hospital setting you have a policy concern of this government because of rapid growth in the utilization and cost of these services. The Department of Health is currently carefully examining the issue and options that it has with respect to registration, accreditation, approval, licensing, regulation, and funding of health care clinics. We are concerned that a brash, bold, and now poorly analyzed health care policy could do grave harm to Alberta's health care system. New legislation could lead to increasing bureaucracy, administration costs, and needless red tape for Albertans trying to receive quality health care.

Or, if we proceeded in the way the NDs would have us, all of the existing private health care clinics could end up being replaced by the community health clinic. This would, in effect, push the private health clinics out of the medical field. This would also have an effect on the placing of physicians. It would place them all on a salary, reduce everybody to the lowest level, of course, as is their policy, and wouldn't reward for the quality of work or the hours of work: the performance. It is inevitable that some changes will be made in the future with regard to health care clinics in Alberta, but this province will not legislate a new health clinic policy until a thorough dialogue has taken place with the health care providers, with the consumers, the administrators, and the private-sector and volunteer agencies.

So what is our government doing to improve this health care system that I talked about, that is already one of the best in the world? This government is taking measures and is working towards a thoughtful, proactive, comprehensive health policy and will continue to develop, fund, and provide Albertans with health facilities, services, and programs. We are also working with many committees that have been struck and entrusted with the task of setting the future course for Alberta's health care system.

The first of these committees was the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans. The recommendations included in this report deal with issues and topics well beyond the mandate of just the Department of Health. But there are some definite references to the type of health care delivery and health care clinics offered. The Hyndman commission's report, or the Rainbow Report, as it's often called, called on the province to mold a creative mix of agencies and services specifically tailored to particular sectors of the province. The suggestions made in the Rainbow Report will soon be addressed by the ministerial committee, and the government will ensure that the needs of the evolving health clinic field will be addressed.

The Minister of Health has also tabled the report of the Advisory Committee on the Utilization of Medical Services, which states that concepts such as health care clinics are positive alternatives to the trend towards centralization that began in the 1970s. The report suggests that the Department of Health should provide a vehicle for planning, evaluation, and control of independent facilities and practices in terms of numbers, distribution, quality, safety, and cost. The report also suggests that the department enact a funding policy which would discourage facility fees and professional fees, supplies, capital equipment costs, and costs related to the actual health clinic.

The suggestions listed in both reports are designed to ensure equality of access, but they cannot guarantee equality of health status. The government will work to support those individuals who are less capable of speaking for themselves or who have difficulty accessing the variety of program delivery mechanisms that could assist them.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, this government has a role to ensure the stewardship of resources allocated for the delivery of the health system in Alberta. The issue of health care centres is a fine example of this government's ability to co-operate and collaborate to meet the needs of all Albertans. This government is consulting with the many different groups of Albertans regarding decisions and procedures that affect us all. We are continuing to draw on their knowledge and expertise in order to more fully understand the possible benefits and consequences that a new health clinic policy would entail.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MRS. HEWES: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FOX: Did Stockwell write that for you?

MRS. HEWES: For me?

MR. FOX: No, no.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, if I may. Yes, I will support this Bill. I like it. I think it formalizes an option in health care that has some very particular applications in our province and could add to that catalogue or cafeteria of services that we are now beginning to assemble. It has particular applications, as the Member for Edmonton-Centre mentioned, in certain types of communities, either by the kind of people that are there or the geography or the demography in the community.

Mr. Speaker, I too am familiar with the Boyle McCauley clinic and have long been associated with it and its progress in our city. I want to publicly thank the government for their support of this clinic. It has always been funded, operationwise, through the board of health in the city of Edmonton, but the province has most recently made a grant of money available to them to enable them to continue with a capital project that has long been needed. I want to thank particularly the Minister of Health and the minister of public works, whom I believe were instrumental in making this money possible for them. The Boyle McCauley clinic itself has raised a large amount of money towards this capital program, which I think also proves its worthiness in the community and the support the community in the city of Edmonton has for it.

Mr. Speaker, in the brief time I have available, I'd just like to comment on 11 items I have here that I believe are important objectives that this model of clinic could achieve for us. The first one is access and visibility. In many of our communities access to health care is not as easily obtained as one would think. Certainly this type of clinic would be very, very visible and a noticeable part of the community and well-known and understood in the community – I think that's part of the intent – and be visible and open and inviting to people in the community to make use of it. It would have, I'm assuming, community ownership and, therefore, community accountability through a board. One would hope that the consumers, the people and families who use it, would also be a part of the management of the operation.

Mr. Speaker, another important objective would be early interventions through knowledge. A community clinic of this kind would, I'm sure, compile a profile of those it serves and would therefore be able to predict and project trends and move out ahead of certain developing things in that neighbourhood in order to prevent and to make positive interventions. It would, of course, have a holistic approach – that's been described in the Bill itself – including mental and physical support systems. This, no question, is the way that health care and medicine is going at this point in time. The Hyndman report attests to it as well.

Mr. Speaker, a clinic of this kind would have the flexibility to adjust the mix of services contained and available to the needs of the community that it serves. It would also have the flexibility to change that mix as the surrounding community or the needs changed. I think that kind of flexibility is something that is missing in the walk-in clinics that we have now, where you get what they have, and if they don't have it, you don't get it. They don't seem to have that flexibility to adjust their services to the needs of the community.

Another important benefit would be the use of volunteers. The Queen Alexandria clinic and the Boyle McCauley clinic make extensive use of volunteers in their activities. They recruit and train them. This, of course, adds to the capacity to run a low-cost health care service, because they have access to that body of help that can do so many functions.

Another item that I've noted here is that in many of the communities that this type of clinic would fit, there are cultural differences. We've seen our boards of health in the city of Edmonton and the city of Calgary and other communities put together seminars to try to help health providers understand the conflicts that some new Canadians have in accessing health care services that often lead to an exacerbation of their health needs or their illness problems. I think a clinic of this kind, that is of the community, would be able to respond in a more finely tuned

way to cultural requirements or potential cultural differences or conflicts.

Mr. Speaker, further, it would definitely ease pressure on emergency rooms in acute care facilities in our communities, in our towns and cities. It would have the capacity of an outreach program, moving out into the community, not simply waiting for the community to come to it but getting to people in their homes.

I would hope – although it's not included in the Bill, and perhaps the mover will give me some information on it – that there would always be a research data collection component built in. Unfortunately, in so much of what we do in operations of this kind, we are not able to collect the data in a form that is useful for predicting trends and for transposing the useful parts of such an operation into other locations. So I would hope that there'd be a research component brought in.

Finally, an objective that the Member for Edmonton-Centre has spoken to at length is that it would provide quality health care at a lower cost, and I think we are always looking to do that.

Mr. Speaker, those are a few of the reasons that I believe this Bill has some merit and potential. I do have some questions that were not answered by the Member for Edmonton-Centre and, I think, need to be dealt with. The first one is: what, if any, would be the continuing formal relationship between such clinics and the public health units; for instance, the public health units who run home care and so on? I believe that somehow we need to examine that and have a clear idea of how they would function together in a collaborative and collegial sense and not have any duplication or difficulties evolve. Again, their relationship to hospitals and other institutions, either in the community or used by that community: I think there is some thought being given by urban hospitals to moving to develop this type of clinic themselves in outlying parts of cities and towns in Alberta. I think that's an interesting one, and I'm not sure how this would fit with that kind of initiative.

Mr. Speaker, nurses are not mentioned as one of the health care givers in 1(c). I'm assuming that they're there. Oh, yes, they are there. I apologize to the member. I read it wrong. They are there, and I'm assuming that the clinic itself would bill the health care system for the individual services and procedures provided by each of these.

Mr. Speaker, just one other item. The Member for Edmonton-Centre mentioned that a women's health centre would also fall within this rubric, so I take it that a clinic could have as much or as little or as wide a net cast for individuals who would be patients as they wished. I, too, have supported the YWCA's proposal for a women's health centre in a downtown spot, in an easily accessible location. If my understanding is correct, this

Bill would also accommodate that type of centre or another centre that would serve a particular group of individuals.

Mr. Speaker, my last question is on section 13 of the Bill. The Member for Edmonton-Centre has indicated preference to Canadians. I'm assuming that this in no way means clients or patients, that simply it means suppliers or providers of the service. I think it needs to be understood that this preference for Canadians does not in any way invite the idea that only people who are Canadians are welcome as patients in the clinic. I was quite sure that I had his understanding on that one.

MR. FOX: You just needed to mention that, though.

MRS. HEWES: Yes, I did. It came as rather a surprise to me when I read it.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to support this Bill. I'm getting the signal from across the way, and it's time to sit down.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: For both of us. Thank you very much.
The Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Mr. Speaker, in view of the hour I request leave to adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Those in favour of the motion to adjourn debate, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried. Thank you.
Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the business of the House this evening will be Committee of Supply with Transportation and Utilities. I move that when the members reassemble at 8 p.m., they do so in Committee of Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

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