

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, May 29, 1990 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 90/05/29

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

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

### Prayers

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

### head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce some people who are sitting in your gallery. These are the people who make up the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families. I'm very pleased that they're going to be making a contribution to our province and pleased that they're here today. Sitting in your gallery are Mrs. Paulette Patterson, Mr. Denis Martin, Ms Renee D'Amour, Mrs. Deanna Johnson, Mrs. Carolyn Pettifer, Dr. Stephen Genuis, Ms Margaret Alexander, Mr. Gerald Mertick, and Ms Sandi Carlile. Also members of this council, although they are members of our Assembly, are the Member for Slave Lake and Mr. Day, the Member for Red Deer-North, the chairman. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the members would recognize these people who will be making an outstanding contribution, I'm sure, to the people of Alberta.

### head: **Introduction of Bills**

#### Bill 49

#### **Ambulance Services Act**

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to introduce Bill 49, the Ambulance Services Act, which is a revised version of the legislation I introduced at the last session, following extensive review and consultation with Albertans.

The Bill provides for a minimum basic life-support standard of service throughout the province and is a recognition of the importance of the issue of reasonable access to health services, a primary principle of health in this province.

[Leave granted; Bill 49 read a First time]

#### Bill 17

#### **Municipal District of Badlands No. 7 Incorporation Act**

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce a Bill, being the Municipal District of Badlands No. 7 Incorporation Act.

This Bill has as its purpose to incorporate ID No. 7 into a municipal government. In the mid-1980s the government made a commitment that if this ID could show financial independence, then we would consider making it a municipality. At this time they have done that, and the intent of the Bill upon proclamation would make the ID a municipality in this province.

[Leave granted; Bill 17 read a first time]

#### Bill 275

#### **Unfair Contract Terms Act**

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona I request leave to introduce Bill 275, the Unfair Contract Terms Act. This Act attempts to make most clauses of contracts, which for practical purposes are drawn up by only one of the parties, answer to a test of reasonableness, and also a couple to be outlawed altogether so that few ordinary persons are caught out by the fine print of many contracts.

[Leave granted; Bill 275 read a first time]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 17, the Municipal District of Badlands No. 7 Incorporation Act, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

### head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure, sir, to table a response to Written Question 253.

### head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

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

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the other members of this Assembly a number of people from Olds College, in my constituency: the vice-president of Olds College, Bob Lockwood; the manager of the town of Olds, Ron Hilton; the chairman of the Mountain View waste management committee, Mr. Everett Paynter; Mr. Fred Haddock and Bev Hadley, representing Greenleaf Products. They are here to discuss environmental matters with the Minister of the Environment. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Recreation and Parks.

DR. WEST: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have rather an exciting introduction today, seeing that it is Canada's Fitweek throughout the province. I have two individuals who are cycling across Canada to bring a greater awareness to the Meech Lake accord and the unity of Canada. They are planning on visiting every Legislative Assembly and the Parliament of Canada as they travel across in a 100-day, 10,000 kilometre trip. They are

Douglas Bell, from the University of Western Ontario – he's a third-year law student – and Nooral Ahmed, a second-year law student from Victoria University. They are also accompanied by their sponsors: from Canadian Club, Babe McAvoy, the regional manager, and Dennis Kassian, district manager of Hiram Walker & Sons. I would wish them well on their journey to unite this country, and I ask them to receive the warm welcome of this House. Good luck.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege today to introduce a group of 23 individuals: students, teachers, and parents from the Lyndon area in the heart of the Three Hills constituency. They are from the Kneehill Christian school. Their teachers are Miss Terri Miller and Miss Heidi Toews. As well, there are parents Mr. and Mrs. Orville Klassen, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Toews, and Mr. and Mrs. Chester Ratzlaff. I would ask them all to rise, students included, and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great pleasure for me today to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly four students from the Atikameg school, in Atikameg, with their teacher Mr. M. Bradley and their teacher aide Cathy Cunningham as they travel Alberta on a school tour. I would like to ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SEVERTSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly 23 grade 5 students from the Penhold school, along with their teacher Edith Shepherd and parents Mrs. McKean, Mrs. Jobagy, and Mrs. Hollman. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I also have the privilege to introduce 23 grade 10 school kids from River Glen school, along with their teacher Richard West. They are in the public gallery, and I'd like them to rise and receive a warm welcome.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and to the members of the Legislature on behalf of my seatmate the hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont, who will be here in time for pictures, 11 students from the M.E. Lazerte challenge program who are accompanied by their teacher Kim Malayko. I'd ask them rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly. They are seated in the public gallery.

#### head: Oral Question Period

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

#### Petrochemical Workers' Safety

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The workers in this province don't trust the minister of Occupational and Health and Safety to look after their interests, and if there was any doubt about that, the minister himself removed that doubt yesterday, when following a tragic accident at the Petro-Canada refinery,

he said that he's not willing to change the regulations governing petrochemical workers. In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, while a Petro-Canada official was saying that cotton suits are good enough, workers, including workers who have been burned, are saying that you're better off naked than you are wearing a cotton suit if you're caught in one of those petrochemical fires. So my question to the minister is this. Whose line does he buy on this matter: the company's or the workers', including the workers who know firsthand?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, the comments I believe the hon. member is referring to are two words that I used. The question was asked: would I make compulsory legislation to cover all aspects of an industry with fire retardant clothes. I said I would not, but in certain cases I certainly support it, and the regulations call for that. So the hon. member should get her questions in total, instead of just a short two words that she saw on TV.

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do have the quote that I saw on TV, and it reads as follows: to make everything mandatory; I certainly don't support that.

So my question to this minister is this: what's he really saying? That just because the outfits are costly, he's not going to force the petrochemical industry to buy them for their workers. Or is he going to stick the workers with the injuries that they could sustain in a fire?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, again the quote she uses is just part of the question asked. I was asked if I would make fire retardant clothing compulsory in every aspect of an industry. I said I would not, but where it's necessary, certainly. That legislation is there, Mr. Speaker, and fire retardant clothing is used in a lot of those cases. It is compulsory and it's in our legislation, so I don't know what she's getting at.

MS BARRETT: Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, what I'm getting at. Brought to you by the Conservative government that likes to deregulate everything it can put its hands on – this is the government that also deregulated certain jobs done within industries. My question to the minister is this: given the results of this tragic event and others like it, will he now give the people who have been affected by it one good reason that those jobs should not be performed only by people wearing protective clothing?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, there is an investigation taking place now in regards to that incident, and as far as I'm concerned and as far as the legislation is concerned and as far as this government is concerned, wherever fire retardant clothing is necessary, it shall be used. That's in the regulations. I will enforce it and so will this government, so I don't know what she's talking about. [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The next question.

MS BARRETT: I'd like to designate the second question to the Member for Edmonton-Centre.

#### Ambulance Services Act

REV. ROBERTS: I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to have an advance copy of the Ambulance Services Act, which the minister

finally tabled today after many years of debate. I can't believe how unfair it is, Mr. Speaker, to so many Albertans. It has not lived up to the very excellent Schumacher report and its many good recommendations nor the expectation of many of us that this Bill would be state-of-the-art ambulance legislation in the province to integrate emergency health services as part of the universal health care system. The Bill is unfair for doctors, who, with the New Democrats, have been calling for a provincially integrated air and ground system; not to mention treaty Indians who are offended by this Bill. What I'd like to ask the minister today has to do with the greatest unfairness I feel about this Bill, which is the added burden it puts onto local municipalities and the local tax base. I would like to ask the minister how she can possibly with any credibility impose all of these necessary minimum standards but not offer the dollars to the district boards and the municipalities, the funding they need to implement and operate this new ambulance service.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Well, I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member, with his keen interest in health, is pleased with our Bill 49, because I agree with him. I think it's something that we want to see in this province, and I'm very proud to stand and represent the government in introducing the Bill.

The Act has been widely consulted on since it was last introduced in this Legislature and allowed to die on the Order Paper and then come into this session. I don't understand what the hon. member means when he says that there's been an unreasonable delay. Certainly the principles of the Schumacher report have been very well embodied within that legislation, and I look forward to discussing the Bill and its contents during second reading in the Assembly.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and many others just don't think that section 5, which says that the local boards can go and operate "fund-raising events" to finance their ambulance service – what have we come to in the province that they have to have fund-raising events to operate vital ambulance services? With respect to this Bill can the minister also, with any degree of fairness, say how she can on the one hand establish a basic minimum service, which is the basic life-support service for all ambulance operators, and then on the other hand waive that basic minimum service and say, "Well, if you can't meet it, don't worry; you can have a lesser service." Isn't that a two-tiered ambulance service for Albertans?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the funding question, I'm not aware of a piece of legislation that provides for grant amounts in the actual legislation itself. What it does provide for is that the minister or the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make grants with respect to legislation. Those are not contained in the legislation nor should they be.

Secondly, with respect to funding: the issue of municipalities. We have given municipalities a far broader choice in the Bill, if the hon. member would care to read it more carefully than he obviously has, with respect to how they may solicit funds or requisition funds within their local municipality.

Thirdly, just to bring him up to date on what health is about in this province, right now we don't really have a minimum standard across the province, albeit we've reached a very high level of basic life support in this province. There are some areas of the province that are in very dire need of support for health services. It's my intention, with a review that's provided for in

the legislation, to have ministerial permission to be below basic life support until such time as that level can be brought up to basic life support. I think it's an appropriate approach in recognition of municipalities who might find it very, very difficult to meet the standard, but it's one that we plan to meet in the shortest possible time within this province in the interests of the health of all Albertans, regardless of where they live in Alberta.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, how many Albertans will continue to receive a lower and inferior quality of ambulance services because of that provision, which gives a great loophole for a lesser quality of care?

The final question I'd like to ask the minister is about the unfairness that this Bill represents to Albertans, especially the thousands of Albertans who are in low-paying jobs, who are not covered for ambulance costs or covered by Blue Cross or other services in the event that they have a major illness or accident. How can the minister deny them the right to essential, vital prehospital emergency care fully covered under Alberta health care?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Well, here we go again with respect to the New Democratic Party saying that we should be funding this service fully in this province. Certainly as I look to funding health over the longer term, I think that as we see funds freed up from other exercises we're undergoing, clearly access to health care and community services becomes a key priority in terms of those new dollars flowing into health. I think that the municipalities who are struggling in order to meet a certain level of ambulance support would be very, very interested in the position of the New Democratic Party with respect to the fact that we should make it mandatory basic life support right off the bat. That's not the position of the government, because we believe we have to move to that. And we will, and we'll help those who are least able to meet that standard in the first instance. But to suggest that we should do it all at once in my view would be a disservice to health and a disservice to Albertans.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenarry, the leader of the Liberal Party.

### Alberta-Pacific Project

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A lot of Albertans had great expectations of what the Minister of the Environment could do to protect Alberta's environment. Unfortunately, those expectations have been shattered, I think to a large measure because of the directions he has received from the Premier. The minister is not allowed to take his own legislation through this Assembly; the minister isn't allowed to attend private meetings with Al-Pac officials. The whole issue of the process involved in Al-Pac is an embarrassment to Albertans, and now we have the Daishowa matter giving a company the end run around Alberta's environment. My first question to the minister is this: given that Albertans have had to spend some \$400,000 to get Jaakko Pöyry to do a review of the review of Al-Pac and given that Jaakko Pöyry has yet to give us that report or make public that report, how is it possible that the minister can say that the review of the second proposal for Al-Pac is quite satisfactory before this Jaakko Pöyry report is even received?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I don't believe a word of the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition in his lead-up to the question. Notwithstanding that, the comments that he alludes to in the press pertain to an assessment that was done by Alberta Environment, particularly scientists at the Alberta environmental centre at Vegreville, relative to chlorinated organics with respect to the second Al-Pac proposal. They did a fairly detailed assessment of the revised Al-Pac proposal. They are satisfied that basically chlorinated organics have been eliminated, and I'm satisfied that that report is complete and accurate.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, given that the Rafferty and Alameda dams decision has put clear duties and responsibilities on ministers of the Environment across Canada, why is it necessary for the minister to look to Ottawa again to talk about or to have a full environmental impact assessment done of the second proposal? Why doesn't he just fulfill that duty and responsibility, and order and commit to that kind of an assessment?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, time and time again members of the opposition, both the Liberal opposition and the NDP opposition, have suggested that we co-operate with the federal government, and that's precisely what we're doing in this particular instance. Very basically, we want to make sure that we're on the same wavelength in terms of a common evaluation of the scientific evidence with respect to the second proposal, and we want to be on track with the federal government relative to what happens from here on in in terms of a review process. I don't see any problems with co-operating with the federal government in this regard in that it was clearly demonstrated through the Al-Pac review panel that the federal government indeed had an interest in this matter. I would think that the opposition would be reasonably satisfied that indeed we are participating and co-operating with the federal government in this regard.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the change in style in the minister is, I think, noteworthy. The seriousness that he's giving these matters is truly extraordinary.

Mr. Speaker, my last question is this. Despite the minister's best intentions and despite his commitment – and I think we would all agree that there have been best intentions and a strong commitment – the minister continues to lose ground in terms of protecting the environment for Albertans. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the only conclusion is to have the minister tender his personal resignation so as to put enormous pressure on the Premier and the other members of cabinet to do what should be done, and that is to protect Alberta's environment in the true sense of the words.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the last time that was suggested by a member of the opposition, I went to the Premier, and I said, "Premier, what do you think about me tendering my resignation?" The Premier said, "Well, I'll think about it." And he's still thinking about it.

I'm sorry to have disappointed the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition in his perceived change in my style. He finally gets around to asking a reasonable question after a string of insults. I've decided to not pay attention to the insults and answer to the best of my ability the questions that have been put to me. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

### Flooding along Eastern Slopes

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend the people of Banff-Cochrane constituency experienced the wrath of Mother Nature when as a result of significant rainfall in the Rocky Mountains there was substantial flooding throughout our constituency. Not only was there severe damage to the surroundings, as evidenced by a declaration of a state of local emergency in the town of Canmore when the Cougar Creek dam burst on Friday evening, but in point of fact we even lost two of our constituents from the Cochrane area as a result of very severe water level problems: one drowned crossing a creek and the other while scuba diving. This is a very serious matter, and my question is to our Minister of the Environment. In light of this severe emergency matter, what plans are in place and what, in fact, is the Department of the Environment doing to alleviate the problems that began over this weekend?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member refers to the Cougar Creek dike, which was erected some time ago to protect a subdivision in Canmore, and as a result of the heavy rains and the very fast snowmelt, it overtopped and was damaged severely. The town, with the assistance of Environment and Public Works, Supply and Services, started remedial repairs on Saturday and have put some semblance of a dike in place to trap the debris and contain the water. I guess we can pray that the rain stops down there and that in conjunction with that we don't get a lot of sunshine to speed up the snowmelt. Later this summer we will work with the town along with PWSS to strengthen and reinforce that dike.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: A supplemental question.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just carrying on on the minister's comments about the snowmelt, I happened to be up at Bow summit on the Jasper-Banff highway some 10 days ago, and I was absolutely amazed at the level of the snowpack that is still up in the high country. In light of that, and I'm sure the minister and his department are well aware of the significance of the snowpack, is there a contingency plan that the department has developed in the event that we get a severe runoff as a result of an increase in temperature and a quick meltdown?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, certainly there's an elaborate system of monitoring river flows and forecasting snowmelts, and I can perhaps give the hon. member some examples relative to the current situation. For instance, beginning on Friday, May 25, the river forecast centre was in close contact with a number of agencies regarding the situation, including Alberta Public Safety Services, all of the municipalities expected to be affected by the high river levels, especially the city of Calgary, the primary contractor at the Oldman dam site, and TransAlta Utilities. Now, as the events progressed, forecasts and other information were provided by the centre to enable the various agencies to deal with the emergency. In particular, communication with the city of Calgary regarding the Elbow River situation was very frequent during the early morning hours of Saturday, May 26. So what I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, is that we're constantly monitoring this situation, and we have in place a system to provide as early a warning as we possibly can of impending

dangers and the kinds of actions that should be taken to avoid harm to life and property.

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

### **Alberta-Pacific Project**

*(continued)*

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm noticing the more gentle the manner gets, the more vicious the decisions get.

Alberta Environment's commitment: do you remember that? It was delivered on December 14, 1989, at the Al-Pac EIA Review Board hearings in Prosperity. It says that every Albertan should have the opportunity to understand and provide input to decisions affecting our environment: fine sounding words. Well, since that time Daishowa and Weldwood have been given operating licences with no public information or input. Government has withheld the terms of reference from the Jaakko Pöyry study and the names of the short list. The government has decided that they and they alone have access to the names of polluters who violate their pollution control permits. They've even decided to privatize and slaughter elk for meat sales with no public input.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. McINNIS: I know the government doesn't like to hear this list, but it goes on and on and on. Albertans get the mushroom treatment: they're kept in the dark and fed commitments. Yesterday the Minister of the Environment announced that his department has completed a secret review of the still secret proposal from the Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries company, and he's declared himself satisfied. I wonder if in the future when he issues commitments like this, he'll put in a warning that says: do not believe a single word you read herein.

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, in that there was no question posed, I don't think I can answer it.

MR. McINNIS: Well, in that case, you don't listen.

Not only has Al-Pac ordered the entire wet end of their pulp mill, but they have recently leased a large number of apartment units in the town of Athabasca, and they've told some of the local people that they will be making an announcement on the green light for this proposal in the month of June 1990. [interjections] Now that the minister has conducted his own review . . . Will there be order in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, I think there'd be more order if the hon. member would follow the rule of brief supplementals with very brief, succinct lead-ins, if any, to the supplemental.

MR. McINNIS: Now that the minister has conducted his own review . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon. member. The hon. member's had plenty of opportunity to lay the groundwork for his question and supplemental. The Chair has been very relaxed and easy with him, but the Chair is not prepared to hear another three- or four-minute speech on the subject.

Supplemental, please.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, most of the time has been taken up by caterwauling from the Tory backbenchers over there.

My question is simple. Now that the minister has conducted his own review and declared himself satisfied, will he make the proposal public, give it to an independent scientific board, and direct them to hold public hearings?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, as I stated to the hon. leader of the Liberal Party, there has been a review undertaken by scientists at the Alberta environmental centre at Vegreville. That review indicates that they are satisfied that chlorinated organics will be eliminated from this particular process. On the basis of that, I'm satisfied insofar as our Alberta officials have done a sufficient review. We want to see what the federal government has to say about this matter and consult with them on a co-operative basis as to where we go from there.

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

### **Advanced Education Enrollment Limits**

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The University of Alberta General Faculties Council has passed a plan to reduce full- and part-time enrollment by 1,600 students in five years. They've had to do this in order to maintain quality in light of inadequate funding. The Minister of Advanced Education has been quoted as saying that if universities cut their enrollment, operating grants will also be cut, a heads I win, tails you lose scenario. My question is to the Minister of Advanced Education. Does the University of Alberta risk having their operating grant cut by reducing their enrollment, and if so, by how much?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that the General Faculties Council at the University has made a recommendation to the board with regard to reducing enrollments. I've not heard anything at this point from the board of governors, who, in my reading of the Act, are the people responsible for accepting a recommendation or rejecting a recommendation of GFC. So until I receive that from the board, it's really not fair for me to be making any comment.

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, the very fact that they would recommend that is indicative of the crisis facing not only the University of Alberta but all of our postsecondary institutions.

Grant MacEwan College vice-president Dr. T.C. Day, at their April 28, 1990, convocation, said, and I quote:

It is more than somewhat of a disturbing reality that access to post-secondary education in our province is no longer available to all those who are capable of and who [deserve] it.

This government is moving towards the slow disintegration of our postsecondary system. My question to the Premier is: will the Premier move towards emergency funding, or is he willing to accept that our high school graduates could easily be Alberta's single biggest export in the future?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Advanced Education may want to augment my reply, but I must tell the hon. member that she is completely off base.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, as hon. members know, it's not that long ago that they accepted the estimates of the Department of Advanced Education of some billion dollars, the majority of which, of course, goes to operating costs. I've said publicly . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Twenty-nine institutions.

MR. GOGO: And 29 institutions, hon. member.

I've said before that we as a government believe that on a per capita basis the government, the taxpayer of this province, is treating the postsecondary system in a fairly generous way compared to other jurisdictions in Canada. There are simply no more funds available, Mr. Speaker, and in our view all applicants who are applying for the postsecondary system, we believe and this minister believes, can be accommodated in the coming year within the existing system.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Wainwright.

### **Students Finance**

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Advanced Education regarding the March 23 changes in the guidelines to the student loan forms. Certainly in southeastern Alberta there have been some very trying times in the farming industry because of five consecutive years of extremely low rainfall. It has been brought to my attention by some of my constituents that the guidelines in the new form virtually eliminate the average farm student because it is based heavily on farm equity rather than on farm income. Has the minister considered the effect of these changes?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, as members will recall, as a result of visiting and meeting with student groups throughout the province, there seemed to be the view that the student loan program was not fair and equitable to all Albertans. Part of the reason was that if you worked on a salary, your income was considered as a factor in assisting or contributing towards your child's education; not so with regard to those who were in business for themselves. As a result of that review, it was determined that indeed parents with sizable assets should be contributing to their children's education. It has come to my attention that we have in Alberta such groups as farmers who are perhaps land poor and don't have that income. I have now had occasion to review the whole question of the student asset system and will be announcing to hon. members shortly a revision of that very formula.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplemental question?

MR. FISCHER: Yes. To the minister: have there been applications already sent in from farm students that have been turned down, and if so, what are we doing about it?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, there have been some applications received, and there appears to be some confusion with regard to the assessment based on assets. The Students Finance Board is now reviewing those applications. Future applications will have an insert into them indicating what the new formula will be.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar.

### **Liquor Sales in Hotels**

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We now see that phase 2 of the Solicitor General's new liquor sales policy involves extending off-sale opportunities to hotels in com-

munities of 20,000 or less. The minister has admitted that this policy may result in the closure of liquor outlets in some of these communities and certainly reduce services, as in the town of Gleichen, which has seen plans for a recent ALCB outlet canceled. To the minister who likes to quote out of context, also known as the Solicitor General: how does this minister justify eliminating these jobs for Alberta Liquor Control Board workers and subjecting even more Albertans to the inconvenience and expense of either driving farther to a liquor store or paying higher prices at the privatized liquor outlets?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, I guess we're at phase 2 today and will be at phase 3 tomorrow on this matter of liquor sales. What we're trying to do, and I'll repeat again, is rationalize the retail sales of liquor in the province of Alberta in such a manner that it will be more convenient for the many Albertans without a store in their particular area. I do acknowledge to this House that there are in fact instances in Alberta where liquor stores have been put in when in fact they should not have been put in. They are not by any means an economically viable operation in some areas. I think it is the responsibility of this government and more so of my department, which is in charge of ALCB, to look at all areas there to see where there can be any savings for the efficient operation of this province.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. PASHAK: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. These changes have nothing to do with providing Albertans with a well-run, well-regulated liquor industry, nor do these changes do anything to curb the abuse of alcohol. None of the directors of alcohol treatment centres were consulted before this decision to allow these privatized liquor stores. My question to the minister: will the minister now admit that these changes are nothing but a thinly veiled attempt to prop up an ailing hotel industry?

MR. FOWLER: I don't believe there's any evidence at all, Mr. Speaker, to indicate that this government has gone out of its way at any given time to prop up any sector, as suggested by the hon. member. Those areas where we have assisted in the development of the economy of this province have been done openly through Executive Council by other means than changing the policy of the sale of liquor or such items as that. So, no, Mr. Speaker, I cannot admit that such is the case.

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

### **Children in Poverty**

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A very special and momentous event took place in Ottawa today. It's the federal government's signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This long-anticipated occasion was graced by the presence of His Excellency the Secretary General of the UN, Perez de Cuellar. While another hurdle on this important piece of international law has been passed, the real work now begins: the work of the provinces to ensure that their legislation is not only in compliance with this convention but also to ensure that children within our province are indeed accorded the full rights and protection that the convention intends. Yesterday, in answer to my questions, Mr. Speaker, the Premier, I think, echoed some of the concerns that I expressed about the children

of Alberta. My first question is to the Premier. Now that the Alberta government has signed the agreement, the UN convention, what steps will the Premier take to ensure that economic conditions will change for those 93,600 Alberta children living in poverty, since they obviously are not accorded these rights today within our province?

MR. GETTY: I assume, Mr. Speaker, that my hon. friend meant to say now that the federal government has signed an agreement. I would ask the Minister of Family and Social Services to respond to the hon. member.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, this government has been striving for many, many years and working with many, many Albertans and Canadians in addressing this national problem. I've said on many occasions that it's not unique to Alberta. We can take, I suppose, some comfort in knowing that at least in Alberta our statistics are amongst the lowest in Canada. We're striving to fight poverty as a province, as a nation. It's something that's not new to Canada or to North America. I recall when John F. Kennedy in 1962 declared war on poverty in the United States. I guess it's fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that we have made progress.

I think the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar knows that the statistics, although they're higher than we'd like to see them, are dropping, that some of the things children in poverty have to face are diminishing. Again, Mr. Speaker, we realize that there's much more to be done. We realize that we have a role to play in fighting poverty. We're going to continue to meet our responsibilities, and we're going to continue to work with Albertans in meeting these responsibilities.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplemental question?

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in answer to the Premier, I'm proud to say that this province has signed the agreement but has not as yet ratified it until our legislation conforms with it. But we have signed it already.

Mr. Speaker, my other question is to the Premier again. Will the Premier now prove his commitment to the family and to curbing the growing incidence of poverty among children by ensuring that the issue of children and poverty is on the agenda for the next First Ministers' Conference?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, obviously in trying to set an agenda there is heavy responsibility on the Prime Minister, who would be chairing that First Ministers' Conference, but I'd certainly raise this matter with the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs and see whether it might fit into an agenda item in one of our coming meetings.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bow Valley.

#### **Agricultural Assistance**

MR. MUSGROVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of Agriculture. On May 28 he and the associate minister made an announcement of \$89 million of federal assistance matched with \$11 million of provincial assistance to Alberta farmers. Could the minister advise the House on the comparison of contributions from other provinces when they were arranging to distribute their portion of the federal assistance?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in the House earlier, the agreement reached at the Toronto meeting of agriculture ministers was on the allocation of the funds to the provinces. Secondly, there would be a recognition of certain provincial programs that contributed to the farmers' bottom line in 1990, and thirdly, bilateral discussions would then be carried out with the provinces to determine what new topping-off money would be required. As of yesterday the first agreement signed was the Alberta/Canada agreement. Today I believe the Ontario agreement is being signed, although I haven't seen the figures on it. To the best of my knowledge bilateral negotiations are still going on with the other provinces.

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, I would have to assume that this money would be distributed to Alberta farmers on a per acre basis, and looking at \$100 million in an amount per acre wouldn't amount to a lot of money. I think one of the questions that farmers in my constituency are asking is: when will this money be distributed?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the details of what the Alberta program will look like are currently being discussed in committee and in cabinet. I'm hoping those details will be finalized over the next few days, at which time we'll make the detailed announcement as to how the program will work, who will be eligible for it, and how they will apply for it. Hopefully once that announcement is made, within two to three weeks the cheques will start to flow.

#### **Ecological Reserves**

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Recreation and Parks is aware, only 11 representative ecological reserves have been established in this province, none of which were established by this minister since he was appointed in April last year. In fact, this minister is on record as believing this small yet crucial program is nothing more than, I quote, a big land grab and has effectively stalled the program. To the minister: given that this program is part of a worldwide conservation strategy and that Albertans in growing numbers are demanding that their natural heritage be protected, will the minister provide us with dates and details of when he intends on setting aside more ecological reserves?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the ecological reserve program was started in 1981 in this province through an enactment of this Legislature, and since then we have moved to a third position in Canada with the number of lands protected under ecological reserves, some 54,000 acres. At the present time the advisory committee, a public committee that advises the ministry on ecological reserves, has made three recommendations to us. We are reviewing those at the present time and look forward to a continued record of legislating these areas for protection for the future.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table this letter recently sent by the minister to the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society in which he berates them and their causes as being inaccurate, existing on hype, irresponsible, and involving high-pressure tactics.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there a question, hon. member?

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, given that the Parks and Wilderness Society is comprised of hardworking volunteers . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Is there a question coming?

MR. DOYLE: Yes, the question's coming, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, you'd better get to the question.

MR. DOYLE: These people, Mr. Speaker, are dedicated to the protection of Alberta's natural heritage. How can the minister claim to be environmentally concerned yet respond to this society's efforts in such an aggressive, antagonistic, and downright insulting manner?

DR. WEST: If pointing out the true facts is antagonistic, then I'll rest my case.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. minister's more entertaining than Monty Python.

#### **Pork Producers' Development Corporation**

MR. TAYLOR: This question is to the Minister of Agriculture. The background, Mr. Speaker: this government, through orders in council, appoints all members of the Agricultural Products Marketing Council, which in turn supervises some 13 boards. One of these boards is the Alberta pork producers' council. Recently in a court case in Red Deer, the transcripts or minutes of the pork board were entered as evidence. In view of the fact that signed copies of the minutes from the Alberta Pork Producers' Marketing Board were recently filed with the judicial court in Red Deer, could the minister tell us if he authorized this directly or indirectly?

MR. ISLEY: The answer specifically to the question, if I understand the question – I just want to repeat the question to make sure that what I say yes or no to is what I think he's asking. I believe he's asking if I directly or indirectly released minutes of the Pork Producers' Development Corporation to a court case in Red Deer, and the answer is no.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that this is a most dangerous precedent, that minutes that are supposed to be filed in confidence with a government-appointed board and kept in confidence somehow would scape out in the public enough to be able to be filed in court, would the minister agree to investigate how these minutes got out and report back to the Legislature?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the minister has had that matter under review for the past 10 days, and if the hon. member has any specific information related to the alleged leakage of minutes, I would welcome him to share that information with me.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

#### **Criminal Records Retention**

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Solicitor General has refused to tell this Assembly why the province wants to retain the fingerprints and photographs of acquitted Albertans. However, he has pointed out in writing that this information is not under any circumstances made available to the public; I repeat, to the public. Given that the province has an information sharing agreement with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, better known as CSIS, can the Solicitor General guarantee that the information held by the province on acquitted individuals will not under any circumstances be made available to CSIS?

MR. FOWLER: Well, Mr. Speaker, CSIS does not have to come to the Attorney General's department for any information. They can go to their own Department of Justice and get precisely that which we would hold on record in any case.

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Mr. Speaker, that is totally an incorrect statement because they don't retain it.

However, the information management system in this province is administered by the department of public works. Given that information such as fingerprints can end up in places such as the remand centre archives, which is directly under the minister's control, can the minister of public works guarantee that such information will not be shared with CSIS?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, one of the reviews that I currently have under way right now is this whole question of the battery of information that the province retains in its records. Over the last decades since 1905, we've had a horrendous amount of paper that is part of the inventory of government records. As a matter of fact, I asked somebody to give me an analogy a little while ago as to exactly how much paper this would entail. If you could visualize a football field, it would be, I think, nine feet high of paper covering one football field. That's part of the archives of the province of Alberta.

So we currently have an interdepartmental committee, hon. member, that is looking at how much paper it is necessary for us to retain, and I would sincerely hope that given a matter of months, surely within the next year or so, we would be able to make some kind of a decision as to what information we want to retain for the future. Secondly, part of that whole evaluation will be: if we do not need this paper, how would we eliminate it, terminate it, wipe it off the record for eternity's sake if it's not considered part of the valuable part of the history and records of the province of Alberta? I would sincerely welcome any suggestions that would be forthcoming from the Member for Stony Plain as to how we would specifically deal with any particular record that's currently now stored by the province of Alberta.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please. The Chair would like to congratulate hon. members. We've dealt with 13 questions, an advance of two over yesterday, leaving only two on the list. So keep working in that direction.

Could we revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.  
The hon. Member for Ponoka-Rimbey.



## Introduction of Special Guests

(reversion)

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly 59 students from the elementary school located in the friendly town of Rimbey. They are accompanied by their teachers Jim Moore and Ken Stemo, and parents Dawn Service, Mabel Kreil, Barb Pennoyer, Laurie Reeves, Karen Wilkie, Susan Koots, and Val Nikirk. They are located in the members' and public galleries, and I would ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly 25 bright young students from the Savanna school in the wonderful constituency of Dunvegan, where everybody likes to live but we can't all live up there. They are accompanied by teacher Holly Pitman, parents Ivy Scarrow, Gail Sorensen, Russell Sauder, and Tim Fox, and by Harold Mickelson. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Before calling Orders of the Day, the Chair inquired yesterday about whether or not the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View would like to respond with respect to the hon. Provincial Treasurer's point of order about possible unparliamentary language being used yesterday.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've had a chance to review *Hansard*, and I did in fact use the word "fraud," which seemed to have caused offence to the Provincial Treasurer. If it's the word "fraud" which provided him discomfort, then certainly I'd be prepared to withdraw that particular word and perhaps substitute "misrepresentation" in its place.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, the Chair expresses its gratitude to the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View for his response to the Treasurer's point of order. It saves the Chair from its responsibility. Thank you very much for your co-operation, hon. member.

## Orders of the Day

head: **Written Questions**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that all written questions standing on the Order Paper, except for 275, 299, 301, and 321, stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

275. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: What was the nature of the work done, service rendered, or report provided by Jaakko Pöyry Oy for the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife in the fiscal year 1987-88 and by Jaakko Pöyry Consulting Inc. for the Department of Agriculture in the fiscal year 1988-89?

MR. GOGO: Accepted, Mr. Speaker.

299. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: What cost/benefit studies has the government carried out into the operation of pulp mills in Alberta and specifically into the operation of mills: Daishowa at Peace River, Millar Western and Alberta Newsprint at Whitecourt, Alberta Energy Company at Slave Lake, and Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries on the Athabasca River? What were the conclusions of each study?

MR. GOGO: Rejected, Mr. Speaker.

301. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question: What amount, if any, was invested by the pension fund in Principal Group, First Investors Corporation, Associated Investors corporation, Northland Bank, or the Canadian Commercial Bank?

MR. GOGO: Rejected, Mr. Speaker.

321. Mrs. Hewes asked the government the following question: How many resignations have been received by the Department of Family and Social Services from social workers, child care counselors, and psychologists since May 1, 1990, and up to and including May 11, 1990?

MR. GOGO: The government accepts that, Mr. Speaker.

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that all motions for returns standing on today's Order Paper, except 252, 262, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 279, 283, 285, 289, 290, 292, 294, and 295, stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the motion of the . . . [interjection]

MR. JOHNSTON: Order.

MR. GIBEAULT: Isn't that a debatable motion?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, it's not a debatable motion.

MR. FOX: All motions are debatable.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: A debatable motion. Oh.  
The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I did want to rise and oppose this motion because I have had on the Order Paper for several weeks motions for returns 308, 309, 310, and 311, and I am getting just a little annoyed why we're not getting some response. Let's have a response. The government either accepts them or they don't. I'm getting a little tired of this stalling and delay.

[Motion carried]

252. Mr. Hawkesworth moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a comprehensive listing of all Canadian equities, convertible bonds, short-term money market securities, and other assets held by the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund under schedule 4, commercial

investment division investments, as of June 30, 1989, December 31, 1989, and March 31, 1990.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, the motion that I've presented on the Order Paper is basically asking the Provincial Treasurer to table something he's tabled in the past. I would presume that it's not going to require extensive debate. He's previously provided this through the standing committee to all members of the Assembly. I would look forward to them accepting this particular motion.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to Motion for a Return 252, we will reject this motion for the following reason: that, in fact, as the member points out, the information has been provided to the committee with respect to the year ended March 31, 1989, and we do not provide the information because we don't compile it on a quarterly basis. So if the member wants the information, I'm sure that if he'd check with the chairman of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee, to whom that filing has been made, he would provide it to him. But the government does not intend to provide the information for the other dates that are provided.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are not at all objecting to providing the information on an annual basis. As the member points out, we have done it on a year-to-year basis. When I was before the Heritage Savings Trust Fund committee, I believe in the fall of this year, I made the information available, and if he wants to pursue it, he can ask the chairman of that committee.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, I will follow that up. But my information is that that information has not been made available, which is why I put the motion on the Order Paper. The Provincial Treasurer can read as well as I do that one of the requests in this motion is for March 31, 1990, which again is the end of the fiscal year. If one were willing to accept his statement at face value, I would have presumed that he could have accepted at least that portion of the motion.

Mr. Speaker, if I'm an investor in this province and I go out and buy a mutual fund, this is basic information that's provided to me as an investor. Here we have an investment fund, otherwise known as the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, presumably a diversified fund held on behalf of the people of Alberta, and the people of Alberta aren't even allowed to get the same information that a private investor could get in this province. I think that's absolutely unacceptable. This Provincial Treasurer day after day, week after week, month after month stands in his place as the so-called manager of the fiscal regime of this province and we can't even get the basic information we could get if we were private citizens going about our private business dealings. I think that's just shameful.

I've heard members of this government talk about how proud they are, about how they conduct government according to basic business practices. I only wish it were true. I only wish it were true, Mr. Speaker, that the information given to this Assembly and to the people of this province was as forthcoming as a private investor would be eligible to get. It's just astounding to me that the Provincial Treasurer should be so arrogant about discharging his responsibilities. I just think that this government has no need to be proud of the kind of management it's shown of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and this is just one more example of how badly and poorly they've mismanaged the fiscal affairs of this province. They used to take great pride in the Alberta heritage trust fund. They don't talk about it anymore

for obvious reasons, and this is one more reason why they're afraid to even tell us basic information that Albertans have a right to know. It's pathetic the way they've conducted themselves, the way they've mismanaged this fund. To deny this kind of information to the Assembly is just indefensible.

[Motion lost]

262. Mr. Mitchell moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing any reports that the government has purchased or received that have been carried out by Jaakko Pöyry Oy or Jaakko Pöyry Consulting Inc.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move an amendment to Motion for a Return 262 by deleting the words "that the government has purchased or received" and substituting therefor the words "contracted for by a department or departments of the government." The reason for the amendment is that it doesn't substantially change the motion for a return, and as worded we'd have to track down every copy of reports. What we're agreeing to provide here is anything that's been directly contracted by a department or departments of the government and provide the information that was directly contracted. So I'd appreciate the support on the amendment.

MR. MITCHELL: I accept the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion as amended carried]

264. Mr. Fox moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the operating leases in effect after September 25, 1987, and any subsequent amendments thereto between Gainers Properties Inc. on the one hand and Gainers Inc. and Sodor Foods Inc. on the other.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, again, we've had a long discussion as we've reviewed the motions for returns on the Order Paper going back some several weeks, and in considering the motions for returns which deal with those issues surrounding Gainers, Gainers Properties Inc., Gainers Inc., or Gainers Limited, Sodor Foods, or other corporations related to the Gainers group, we have said before that this matter is before the courts. I gave a very long explanation previously that when a matter is before the courts, the words that can be used in the Assembly obviously may, in fact, at some point be used against the government in the litigation which has now been filed under several actions, and which more actions will be filed, as I've said.

What I would ask you to do, Mr. Speaker, is in considering all those motions for returns which deal with Gainers or any of the related companies, they should be dealt with at once, because I can assure you our answer will be the very same to all of them. I would so move that at this point.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the hon. Provincial Treasurer happen to have something in writing?

MR. FOX: He can't do that.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The only way we can deal with this, then, is by unanimous consent, but perhaps the hon. Member for Vegreville is rising to give that unanimous consent.

MR. FOX: Well, no. I'm rising to close debate on Motion for a Return 264, the motion that does have the floor of the Assembly. The hon. Provincial Treasurer, who likes to try and offer direction to the Chair on these things, thinks he can just invoke the word "sub judice" and, you know, the clamps will be on any sort of discussion that we have here. And then making some out of order motion: I would have thought that a member with some 15 years' experience in the Assembly might know a little bit more about procedure than that, but evidently that's not the case.

Again, we have had – I agree with the Provincial Treasurer – substantial debate on motions for returns similar to this one, though not identical to it, motions for returns that are seeking to gain access to information about the agreements made between the government and Peter Pocklington and various subsidiary operations of Gainers Properties Inc. and Gainers Inc. The government seems unwilling to share the information with us, and I would point out that this matter wasn't even purported to be before the courts last year when the Provincial Treasurer turned thumbs down on all of our requests for information. So I suggest it's not his uneasy feelings about a court case that may or may not proceed in the future that prevents him from acknowledging our request here. It's his almost paranoid need to keep information from the people of Alberta because he knows full well that the deals that were made, the agreements that were signed, were very flimsy deals, very poor deals, and they won't stand the test of time. They won't stand the light of public scrutiny, and they're going to continue to refuse to make them available to us. I don't think they'll see the light of day in a court case, because I don't believe it's his intention to proceed with that either, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm offering members of the Provincial Treasurer's back bench an opportunity to redeem the tarnished reputation of the Conservative Party and vote in favour of something for a change, take a positive approach in this Assembly. Instead of being so negative and doom and gloom all the time, I'd like them to be positive and vote in favour of something for a change, Mr. Speaker. I move Motion 264.

[Motion lost]

265. Mr. Fox moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the personal performance guarantee dated September 25, 1987, and any subsequent amendments thereto provided by Peter Pocklington to the government of Alberta pursuant to a \$55 million guaranteed loan and a \$12 million loan made available to Gainers Properties Inc. on March 3, 1988.

MR. FOX: Well, here we go again, Mr. Speaker. This motion for a return is a little different than the one just turned down by the Provincial Treasurer, because it asks specifically for a copy of the personal performance guarantee. Now, I've filled pages of *Hansard*, for those who would care to read. For the tens of thousands of Albertans paying close attention to the debate on motions for returns, I would refer them to previous comments relative to this issue, because I think they're worthwhile comments that seek to get to the bottom of this sordid affair, to find out just what sort of flimsy agreement was made with respect to taxpayers' money and the government's good friend, in an effort to find out not only what's happened to all that money, but more important than that, perhaps, to find out how a once vital industry in the province of Alberta has been virtually

brought to its knees by a sort of cycle of incompetence and secrecy on the part of the government.

So again I implore members of the Assembly to accept Motion 265.

MR. JOHNSTON: With respect to 265, what I said on 264: *ibid*.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Please don't.

[Motion lost]

266. Mr. Fox moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the trust agreement or agreements between the government of Alberta and 369413 Alberta Ltd. with respect to the ownership and control of Gainers Inc., Gainers Properties Inc., Sodor Foods Inc., or their subsidiaries.

MR. FOX: Only eight more to go. In moving Motion 266, I'm hoping that perhaps through process here I can confuse the Treasurer sufficiently that he'll say yes when he means no or say no when he means yes and accept one of these. So consider the motion moved and the arguments made, and I'll await his response.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to 266, the arguments are even more relevant here than they are on 264 and 265. We'll oppose it.

[Motion lost]

267. Mr. Fox moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of a report prepared by Coopers & Lybrand Limited with the assistance of Clarkson Gordon on or about July 1989, which contains a comprehensive business plan for Gainers and a detailed industry and market study to address the company's short- and long-term viability.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Treasurer tried to lump Motion 267 together with the ones he claimed as sub judice and together with motions for returns that he claimed he couldn't accept because it somehow violates a code of honour or code of secrecy between the major players in the economy: Conservative cabinet ministers and their buddies in business. Even though these buddies seem to do their business with public money, the public has no access or, if you listen to the Provincial Treasurer, right to information in respect of that money.

Motion 267 is something quite different. It's asking for a copy of a report prepared about a year ago by a consulting firm, Coopers & Lybrand, with the assistance of another firm, Clarkson Gordon. Now, what we're dealing with here is a report that was prepared for the public – prepared for the government, hence the public – paid for by the people of Alberta. We think that in the interests of trying to assess what happened to that important company, that important link in the red meat industry in the province of Alberta, we need to know what happened in the final hours, in the final months, prior to the government takeover, prior to the ascension of the Three Amigos in cabinet there – the Minister of Agriculture, the minister of economic

development, and the Provincial Treasurer – who took charge and were going to set everything right after the fact, Mr. Speaker.

This information is important, I guess, also because we know the government has failed to live up to many of the commitments it made subsequent to the receipt of that report, subsequent to the takeover of Gainers: commitments, for example, to appoint a board of directors for Gainers; commitments to involve the employees in a possible ownership scheme – we've not heard much on that – commitment to provide, you know, a concrete management plan, operating plan, with respect to the future of this company. So I think there are a lot of compelling reasons for the Provincial Treasurer to stand up and say yes to this report.

Actually, I'm hoping that it'll be in the hands of someone a little more closely connected to the red meat industry in the province, the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade, because from my experience he's perhaps a little more willing to listen to good ideas from the opposition, and he might be willing to accept Motion 267. Besides, it's been a fairly light session for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. He hasn't had much occasion to share his wisdom or to underscore points raised by the opposition during debate.

AN HON. MEMBER: And emphasize.

MR. FOX: And emphasize. Underscore and emphasize.

That being said, I await eagerly the response to Motion for a Return 267.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, again, while it is somewhat at the margin, a different calibration of the same issue, we do have, however, two particular problems; one, that the date itself is a period when in fact Gainers was not a Crown-controlled corporation. It would be hardly fair for the government to proffer something which was not theirs and which was in the hands of the private sector at the time. Moreover, *Beauchesne* covers very exhaustively what kinds of items can be retained by government. Was this in fact a confidential piece of information the government would use for its own planning purposes, as in fact it points out here, which contains business plans, which talks about future forecasts, talks about scenario painting or normative arrangements, it in itself is covered by *Beauchesne*, which provides that this kind of information is not the kind of information required by a motion for a return. Consequently, the answer is nyet.

[Motion lost]

268. Mr. Fox moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all agreements between the government of Alberta, 369413 Alberta Ltd., and Gainers Inc. with respect to the payment or nonpayment of any debts or advances owing by Gainers or any of its subsidiaries.

MR. FOX: You know, the Provincial Treasurer runs the risk of discouraging the Member for Vegreville in his attempts to enlighten the Assembly here. I'm trying to get the important information on the table so that it can be assessed by all members in an open, public way and used for the benefit of all Albertans in the unraveling of the Gainers mystery, the Pocklington mystery, so that we can look towards building a healthy

future for the red meat industry in the province of Alberta. That's my motive. I think he knows that, and I hope he will accept that at face value and accept the motion for a return today.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, you know full well that the government will not accept this return because, of course, it touches Gainers Inc. and a numbered company, which is a company set up to control the shares of Gainers, and therefore it is subject to the same sub judice provision that we've argued already. In fact, our lawyers have advised us not to accept these questions because of the potential for use against the government in some legal action which is now ongoing or potential legal actions which will be embarked upon in due course.

[Motion lost]

269. Mr. Fox moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all agreements between the government of Alberta or its nominee and Lloyds Bank Canada with respect to the special warrant expenditure of \$35 million on or about October 20, 1989, to purchase the indebtedness owing to Lloyds Bank by Gainers Inc.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we will again reject this order, because of course it surrounds the issue of Gainers and the financial arrangements which were made with Gainers with respect to the acquisition of the company subsequent to the foreclosure on the loan. As well, this item is subject to litigation. Lloyds Bank has in fact proceeded very far in the litigation process against Gainers, and therefore it cannot be provided because it is in front of the courts. We reject the motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would suggest that the hon. Provincial Treasurer finds himself in a rut and unable to think clearly about questions that are being asked of him and deal with the issues before him.

This motion for a return seeks information about an agreement made with respect to a special warrant issuing \$35 million of public money in October 1989. This is subsequent to the government takeover of Gainers. I think it's an important principle that people of Alberta have the right to know what's happened with their money, and I think based on debate in this Legislature, people of Alberta have the right to know that this government doesn't want them to know anything about what's happened to their money. They continue to put a lid on access to information. They continue to try and sweep all the evidence under the rug and hide from public view the concrete examples of the extent of their bungling and incompetence, and I think this is a very solid testimony to that fact.

[Motion lost]

270. Mr. Fox moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of a priorities and postponement agreement between Lloyds Bank Canada and 369413 Alberta Ltd., dated on or about August 8, 1989, whereby the bank was allowed to take a \$5 million prior charge on the fixed assets of Gainers.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the government rejects this motion for a return. Again this matter is before the courts right now and is proceeding quite actively. In fact, it has with respect to Lloyds Bank and Gainers proceeded beyond hearing for discovery and is, I think, an active claim. If any of these satisfy the sub judice convention, this certainly does.

MR. FOX: Well, I take some comfort in the Provincial Treasurer's lack of comment, lack of argument on these motions for returns, because I take it by implication, then, that he thinks the research on this was well done and that the wording of the motions for returns is appropriate and accurate. Usually one of the curious little reasons he uses to reject all the motions for returns we put on the Order Paper is that we don't know what we're asking for, that we're seeking information in a way that is confusing and without merit, and that we lack sufficient understanding of the issues to ask for the information properly. He's not used that argument in respect of any of these motions for returns, so I thank you, Provincial Treasurer, for that compliment. I'll take that to heart and pass it on to the research department that we value so highly.

[Motion lost]

271. Mr. Fox moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all agreements between the government of Alberta, 369413 Alberta Ltd., and the lending institution which advanced moneys under the \$55 million loan to Gainers Properties Inc. announced on March 3, 1988.

MR. FOX: In requesting that information from the government, I would like to tell the Provincial Treasurer a little story about this person that a friend of mine found sitting in a field someplace in England, saying, "No, no, no, no, no." A person came up to him and said: "What's the problem? Why are you saying, 'No, no, no, no, no'?" You may have thought he was responding to motions for returns in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, but that wasn't the case. It turned out that it was one of Maggie Thatcher's yes-men on holiday. The Provincial Treasurer is beginning to sound like one of Maggie Thatcher's yes-men on holiday when he says no, no, no, no. I think it's a shame, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: Do you mean that?

MR. FOX: Yes, I do.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the comment from the Member for Vegreville. It reminds of the opposite of sex: his speeches, even when they're good, are lousy.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the array of orders which have preceded us in the discussions here under the Gainers Properties section, we have made it very clear throughout the discussion on Gainers that at some point this information will be provided to the courts. All the information we have will be in the courts' hands; it will be argued by both sides of the case. There are three or four cases before the court right now on behalf of the government or Gainers, and we expect that additional litigation will be launched to protect the interests of the taxpayers and the Crown in this matter. It's for that reason that we've had to be judicial in what it is we provide to the Legislative Assembly. At some point I'll be glad to provide all the information, and the

researchers to whom the Member for Vegreville has referred will be able to go back and see if they can find the key they should have found some time before to unlock this myriad of trails. I must say it's very complex. I understand the position that the Member for Vegreville has spent a lot of time on this issue over the past year or so – and really for naught, because he's not been able to point out anything that is remiss. It's simply a matter of a guarantee being called. The government has secured its position.

The hog meat industry, contrary to what the member is saying, is an important segment of our economy here in this province, an important segment worldwide, Mr. Speaker, and as we start to trade into the United States more aggressively as a result of the free trade arrangement, we will find that Gainers and the jobs here are key to part of the economic progress of this province. Now, we have concerns for the jobs surrounding Gainers, not just here in Edmonton but right across Canada, because the value of that output goes directly to the producer here in this province, the person who grows the hogs, the farmer to whom we think much of the future should go. The economic future should belong to the agricultural sector. They toiled long and hard; they settled the country. We have to move in to ensure that they have a place, that they can add value to their commodity here in the province of Alberta.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, we will find at some point, as we have said time and time again, that we will move out of this investment. Now, all the opposition would have done is to have the company go into bankruptcy. That's a no-thought solution. That's the kind of policy response you get from the opposition, of course. Not us, Mr. Speaker. We took a chance. We knew it was going to be risky; we knew there was going to be some criticism of us. We knew we'd be associated with the former owner of the company. But there's a bigger challenge facing government, and that's to make things happen in the future. That's why this government took the risk to protect Gainers corporation, to ensure that the farmer was protected and to ensure that the value-added of pork products was secured to this province.

Right now the comparative advantage is moving back to the province of Alberta. As the free trade arrangement . . . And I notice that the expert on free trade from Edmonton-Kingsway is away today. Otherwise every sin in the world, every doomsday forecast is based on the fact that we sold the free trade arrangement, did a deal with the United States. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that when those subsidies in agriculture are stripped away, when the opportunity returns for the free market system to allocate resources and to judge where growth industries will succeed, then you will see the pork industry flourish in this province. That's why the province has made a considerable commitment, not just to the pork industry but to the red meat industry as a whole, to ensure that the unnatural shift in the comparative advantage to other parts of Canada, driven by subsidies, not real economic forces, will soon come back to this province. The evidence that the strength is returning to this province is before us now.

Since I have spoken already, Mr. Speaker . . . As the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway isn't here today, he always talked about the free trade pact and the importance of the pork industry and the role Gainers will play. I did answer one of the questions nyet, a Russian word meaning no, because it was a Russian introduction. Now, I know our Marxist-Leninists across the way don't like it when I refer to some of their ties. But you know, it's an interesting thing. Gorbachev arrives in Canada tomorrow,

if not today – sometime today. Tomorrow he goes to the United States. Guess what number one agenda item he is pursuing? He wants a trade arrangement with the United States. He wants most-favoured-nation status with the United States. Now, even Gorbachev, the ally of our friends across the way, knows you have to have a major trading relationship. Just last week the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade agreed that they would give introductory status to Russia as well. Russians know that they have to have trading opportunities to expand their economic economy. Moreover, what has happened? Just recently Mr. Gorbachev also set forward a new economic strategy. Guess what? Not based on Marxist-Leninist anymore, not based on Marxist-Leninist philosophy, the heart of this ND Party across the way, but based on a much broader spectrum and a more realistic understanding of what's happening in the world, based on market forces, based on capitalism. That's what's happened now, and I think it's great that Gorbachev is in the United States pursuing a trade arrangement with the United States.

Now, if our friend from Edmonton-Kingsway had been here, I would have loved to recount that to him, I can assure you. In fact, I'm going to send a copy of it to him, Mr. Speaker, because I know he needs it for his records.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. Provincial Treasurer, but it is really not proper to note the absence or presence of any member of the Assembly. I would ask him to try to refrain from doing that in the future.

The hon. Member for Vegreville no doubt is moved to say something.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your intervention. The Provincial Treasurer wandered not only all over the map but all over the globe in his attempts to defend their decision not to respond to Motion 271 on the Order Paper. That's what we're debating here, and I appreciate you admonishing him so early in his diatribe to call him to order, because his debate didn't relate in any way to the matter under discussion. Again, an inexperienced member, I guess, but hopefully he'll learn what's permitted and what isn't in this House.

So by standing up now, I've closed debate and he doesn't have the floor on this issue with respect to motions for returns under my name, and that's it.

[Motion lost]

272. On behalf of Mr. Chumir, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all documents and correspondence exchanged by the government of Canada and the government of Alberta regarding the implementation and administration of the flat rate tax.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we reject Motion 272 in that *Beauchesne* is quite clear with respect to confidential correspondence and contracts which are more than just contracts but are statements of positions between governments. Therefore, this will be rejected.

MRS. HEWES: Well, Mr. Speaker, after the last 10 minutes, I suppose I shouldn't be at all surprised by the response from the Provincial Treasurer. But once again I must express my real disappointment with this continuing business of thwarting all attempts on our part to access information of importance to the people of Alberta. The hon. Provincial Treasurer has not really

explained to us exactly what parts of this, information would be considered confidential. It's certainly not before the courts; it's a matter under consideration. I think the people of Alberta have a right to know what the position of this government is and the kind of correspondence they are exchanging with their counterparts in Ottawa.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this little business that we go through in motions for returns and questions, this little dance, this little minuet we do, would be a joke if it weren't so serious. I don't know why this should be held confidential. These are matters of record, and I ask the minister: what is to cover up? I'm not ordinarily a suspicious person. I'm not suspicious by nature, and I don't believe Albertans generally are. But one really wonders why the Treasurer feels that he has to withhold this kind of information. This whole exchange over the last 15 minutes certainly has done nothing to develop confidence in the government of Alberta in its secretive nature. It's done nothing to develop confidence in the exchanges that we have with the federal government in Ottawa or the processes we through towards making decisions.

Mr. Speaker, once again I'm disappointed.

[Motion lost]

279. On behalf of Mr. Chumir, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all documents pertaining to the loan guarantee agreement of \$3 million made on June 5, 1988, between the government of Alberta and the principals of Sprung Instant Structures Ltd. and Sprung Clindinin Limited.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, recognizing the commercial confidentiality as it relates to this motion for a return, the government has to reject it.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I'll spare you the same speech, same sentiments exactly, same reasons.

[Motion lost]

283. On behalf of Mr. Mitchell, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the report of the Task Force on the Volunteer Incorporations Act and copies of all written briefs submitted to that task force.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, there's nothing particularly secret with respect to either the report or the submissions. However, both were given in confidence to the government as part of the evolution of the development of our legislation regarding volunteer organizations. I would be pleased to share with the hon. member our general concepts regarding both the Act and the report itself. It is my opinion that it will be some time before we evolve a forum that we're sure helps volunteer organizations rather than negatively affects them. In that respect, because of the confidential nature of the submissions made, I would not support the motion and would suggest we reject it. Again, though, I would make the offer to the member who proposed the motion to discuss it with him, and the ongoing process we have in place, should he wish to do that.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you. I appreciate the minister's response and offer to share information.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a matter of some contention in our communities over the last two or three years, and there has been a great deal of worry and anxiety in our private, nonprofit organizations about the intentions of the government. I feel that it would be far more beneficial if the minister could see his way to making the submissions and the report of the task force available to the public. I think that would serve to allay some of the fears voluntary organizations have and would help them in their disposition, as they move forward within their own bylaws, to take proper positions in their communities. Once again, I see no particular reason for this to remain confidential, but I will avail myself, or the member will, of the minister's offer.

Thank you.

[Motion lost]

285. Mr. Bruseker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the economic feasibility study which was commissioned by the Department of Tourism and prepared by Manecon Limited into the possibility of holding a country music jamboree near the town of Big Valley.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, Motion for a Return 285 is rejected because of its commercial confidentiality. I'm informed that the client has not yet fully reviewed all aspects of the report in terms of making a decision on whether to proceed or not to proceed. Although they have issued at their press conference an executive summary of the study, because of its commercial confidentiality, we'll have to reject the question at this time.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess my colleague from Edmonton-Gold Bar has summed it up quite nicely. The argument of commercial confidentiality does not really seem appropriate in this case. As far as I am aware, there is no great lineup of companies beating a path to the door to hold a country music jamboree near Big Valley, so the idea of commercial confidentiality I'm afraid I simply cannot accept. So I would again move that all members of the House would support Motion for a Return 285.

[Motion lost]

289. On behalf of Mr. Chumir, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a detailed breakdown of payments received by the province from the government of Canada under the Canada Assistance Plan by department and by program component for the fiscal years 1988, 1989, 1990 forecast, and 1990 estimated.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the arguments we have made before with respect to information are well covered in *Beauchesne* 446(d) which deals with intergovernmental relations, so we will reject this question. It's not a question of us not being as helpful as possible; it's simply a matter between provinces, which on a matter of policy cannot be provided.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid I didn't quite understand that answer from the Provincial Treasurer. A matter between provinces? [interjections] I'm sorry; I understood the Provincial Treasurer to say it was a matter between provinces. If in fact what he meant was a matter between the federal

government and the provincial government, then I do comprehend.

However, Mr. Speaker, I see no reason. This is revenue that this province receives from the federal government, and I see no reason why the people of Alberta cannot know the kinds of payments we are receiving relative to what programs, whether they're education or social services programs and so on. Again, this has been a source of puzzlement to the citizens of Alberta, because from time to time we have asked questions about whether or not the government is in fact accessing the maximum funds it can under the Canada Assistance Plan. Of course, we now have information that transfers are being reduced and CAP funds are being capped, and I think that makes it all the more important that we have some deeper understanding of how they have been accessed and how they have been apportioned through the years that are named here, '88 to the year they're in; whether or not we are achieving all funds available for all programs and how they are being allocated in the province of Alberta.

Of course, this is an arrangement between the federal government and the province, but it seems to me it is public business and should be public information.

[Motion lost]

290. On behalf of Mr. Chumir, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all letters between the Provincial Treasurer and the federal Finance minister regarding the flat rate tax.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, again the government cites *Beauchesne* 446(d), which talks about correspondence between governments, the content of which would be detrimental to negotiations now ongoing. We reject this motion.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to give the same speech, but I'll spare you.

[Motion lost]

292. Mr. Gibeault moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of every invoice submitted to the Crown in respect of legal services and related expenditures incurred for the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark relative to the Code inquiry showing which items were paid from public funds.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we reject this motion. We will at some point provide aggregate amounts that will be necessary to understand the cost of the Code inquiry. Those dollars are now being compiled and being provided. I would not, I suspect, provide them on an individual basis.

I'm not too sure the member is seeking the information for broad policy considerations. He may have other motives. [interjection] I would not want to impute motives, Mr. Speaker. I'm just casting ideas out loud. If it causes any embarrassment to the member, then I think he's becoming a little defensive.

Mr. Speaker, we will reject this motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods in reply? No.

[Motion lost]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could prevail upon the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. The government would entertain motions for returns 280 and 281, moved by a member of the hon. member's caucus, if the hon. member would care to have them moved.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to revert to Motion for a Return 280 before proceeding with the list?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed?

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Member for Calgary-Buffalo and without his permission, I would prefer that they be deferred.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Did I understand the hon. member to say that she would prefer that the motions stand?

MRS. HEWES: Yes; that they be left on the table.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. They'll stand.

294. Mr. Pashak moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing

- (1) what is the total amount paid to the government by the energy sector on all public lands in Alberta under mineral surface leases, pipeline rights-of-way, and seismic exploration contracts in each of the last five fiscal years;
- (2) what is the total amount paid to the government by the energy sector for the purposes above on public lands under disposition for grazing leases and community pastures, what percentage was paid to the leaseholders, and what percentage was retained by the government for each of the last five fiscal years; and
- (3) what is the total amount paid to the government by the energy sector for the purposes above on public lands subject to forest management agreements and timber quotas, what percentage was paid to the leaseholders, and what percentage was retained by the government for each of the last five fiscal years.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, what I'm attempting to do here with motions 294 and 295 is to determine just how much money comes into the provincial Treasury as opposed to money that goes into the pockets of leaseholders from people who conduct operations on land that really belongs to the people of the province of Alberta but may be leased to people for other purposes.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I move that we reject this motion because it's confusing, to say the least. As worded, I have to recommend that it be defeated because I can't fulfill an order of the Assembly that I can't really understand. The wording in the motion is flawed. If I or my department were to make some assumptions about the motion, I think there is a number that could be provided as it related to revenue. But as it stands, accepting this motion would really be improper. It has a number of clauses in it that just make it impossible for me to accept, and there are certain aspects of it that we do not have

the information for in any event because they're private arrangements between the lessee of the land and the energy company with respect to disturbance. So I recommend rejection.

MR. PASHAK: I just find it hard to believe that the government wouldn't monitor those contractual relationships that would be entered into between lessees and energy companies in any event. You'd think that because that land does belong to the people of the province of Alberta, they at least should have that information and be able to make it available. In any event, I'll review the *Hansard* with interest and redraft these motions and hopefully put them in a form that would be more acceptable to the minister.

[Motion lost]

295. Mr. Pashak moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing an itemized list showing the amount paid to the government by the energy sector for mineral surface leases, pipeline rights-of-way, and seismic exploration contracts under each grazing lease, forest reserve lease, community pasture lease, timber quota lease, and forest management agreement lease, and in each instance what percentage paid went to the leaseholders and what percentage was retained by the government for each of the last five fiscal years.

MR. PASHAK: Mr. Speaker, the motion is similar to my previous motion. I'm just trying to find out how much of a return the province gets on land that, again, is really ultimately owned by all citizens of the province of Alberta as opposed to a return that goes to people that, again, are using that land for some other purpose such as forestry development or whatever.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I must recommend rejection of Motion 295, because again it's confusing in its wording. If you wish to look at *Hansard*, I will make a couple of comments that might be helpful to you. For example, the motion identifies dispositions described as forest reserve leases, timber quota leases, and forest management agreement leases. None of these exist.

I believe I understand what the hon. member is looking for, and it might be helpful for him to understand, while I'm rejecting this, that we are in the process now of reviewing leases, and we're looking at the process. Also, I would ask the hon. member to review the surface rights select committee report of 1981. The select committee report recommended that the way it was handled stay the way it is or the way it is right now. That was a select committee report at that time.

There are many leases in forest reserves that are non energy related as well. Timber quotas are just that; they're quotas. They're not area-specific leases. So the motion, the way it's worded – I couldn't provide that in any event.

There should be no illusion that I'm trying to sidestep the issue at all on what dollars are provided by the energy companies, because if you go back to the select committee report and the way the distinctions are made – for example, a leaseholder does not get an entrance fee. A leaseholder does not get an entrance fee like a private landowner gets. There is a disturbance and things like that that are paid for. That's a negotiation between the leaseholder and the energy company, and if they can't come to an agreement or if one side or the other feels that they've been unfairly treated, they can then



appeal to the Surface Rights Board, which will review that case. There are a lot of leases across the province, and there are a lot of negotiations that go on in a variety of ways between energy companies that want to just go through or whatever.

I don't have it with me today, but I'd be happy to provide to the hon. member how the split really works out. I can't give the number that the lessee gets, because that's something that is a private negotiation between the two, with an appeal mechanism if they don't feel it's fair.

Mr. Speaker, the way the motion is worded, I must say that I recommend rejection.

MR. PASHAK: Well, Mr. Speaker, in spite of the fact that the minister rejected these two motions for returns, I'd like to thank him for the attention that he paid to them and the comments he's made and the fact that they're entered on the record, and I'll be able to either improve the wording of these motions or . . . I think I indicated my concerns that prompted me to put these questions on the Order Paper during the debate on the Energy estimates. I think they're valid, legitimate concerns, and I think the people of the province would like to have those concerns addressed in some final way.

Thank you.

[Motion lost]

#### **head: Motions Other than Government Motions**

210. Moved by Rev. Roberts:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to defend every Albertan's right to equal access to quality health care services and refuse to establish a two tiered medicare system by rejecting the implementation of a supplementary health insurance plan as recommended by the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, after coming up to bat, at least being on deck three times with this motion, I'm glad to finally be able to get in the batter's box and let people know what this motion is all about and why all members of the House need to support it this afternoon. I think it's a very urgent motion, and I'm looking forward to all sides of the House, particularly the government caucus, supporting it.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Hyndman report came down this past February, and it has a number of very useful, positive, insightful recommendations and suggestions which I think we all need to take our time to evaluate and analyze and use to help better the health services for Albertans. But we in the New Democrat caucus couldn't believe our eyes when we looked through the report; we had a bit of an advance look at it as well. Again we just couldn't imagine that a government-appointed Premier's commission would in its final report have a recommendation that calls for a supplementary health insurance plan. Now, this is for members who have their Hyndman report with them: it's recommendation 8 on page 83, and sticks right out as a very dangerous and, we submit, insidious way of thinking about changes to the universal health care system. Most dangerous, most unacceptable, and we wanted to bring it to members'

attention today to put a halt to any more of this kind of thinking in this province.

Now, there was an experience, of course, we had with the previous Minister of Health, who with Bill 15 tried to bring in the possibility for private insurance companies to actually provide services that are currently covered under the Alberta health care insurance plan. Somehow they would bid for doctors' services so that they could be covered through a private plan. Of course, the minister at the time said that this is no problem; it's done all over the place. We raised quite a question about it, suggesting that even a private insurance system, not to mention a whole supplementary health insurance plan, through the Canada Health Act needs to continue to be asserted to be a publicly administered and public plan, and that that minister's Bill at the time was anathema. Again, a dangerous precedent that we in the New Democrat caucus couldn't allow to proceed.

Again there were certain back-bench members who actually spoke in support of the fact. "Well, why not have a private insurance system? Some people have more money and could pay the premiums for more and better services. Why deny them that luxury?" "Because otherwise we're all going to be on waiting lists," it was argued. Well, I think that really set the hen among the pigeons, and we had all kinds of retraction and denial on the part of government until finally that particular Bill was dropped. We thought, well, government has learned the lesson. Any kind of tampering with the public administration and public funding of the universal health care insurance system as we have it in Canada and in Alberta needs to be promoted and preserved, not tampered with, and don't allow elements of privatization to enter into it, not to mention supplementary health insurance. So we need to be ever vigilant.

I have some trust, some sense that the current minister herself isn't very supportive of this kind of notion. I think at the time we raised it, it was said: "Well, don't worry. This government really has no plans to set up a supplementary health insurance plan as the Hyndman people were recommending." In fact, not only would it be wrong minded from a health care point of view, but the government seemed to have learned that Albertans throughout the province just won't allow for this kind of erosion and two-tier system. So I'm pleased that the minister might seem to support the position as outlined in this Bill. I'd like to hear maybe a reiteration of that as well as the members of the entire government caucus to get on record and support this Bill of one universal health care system for all Albertans regardless of their income.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me just speak again to the context in which the Hyndman report did its work. As we know, there were years of study, at least two years of study, traveling all over the province, hundreds of submissions. It was supposed to be state-of-the-art thinking with respect to health care services here in the province. Again it just behooves me to know why in their final report – I mean, they could have gotten so many of us all on side if right up front they had said: "Listen; we acknowledge, we understand that we as a province in the great nation of Canada want to preserve as a basic principle of our health care system the principle of universality." Somehow in the basic principles as outlined in the Hyndman report – I don't quite understand how they even function as principles. They talk about people, choice, change: different things. I mean, they're words, they're concepts; I don't understand quite what the principle is. But it would have just, I think, brought a lot of people together and gotten a lot of us on side, and we'd have said: "Okay. Let's look at these recommendations, because we

trust you. We realize that you're not going to tamper with universality, that the one basic principle of our health care system is that it's for all Albertans."

Unfortunately, the report does not say that as a basic principle. It does refer to the government of the province of Alberta having to comply with the Canada Health Act, but it was kind of a grudging admission to the five principles of the Canada Health Act as being operative here in Alberta. We don't need that grudging admission. We need to be, as I say, preserving and promoting that concept. And, as I say, we do not need, then, as we have in recommendation 8, that they want to get into this very thorny business of defining what are basic health care services. Now, this, for those who are interested in such exercises, is, I think, a bottomless pit. It's sort of like quicksand. You get into trying to define what a basic service is, and I think it's all the wrong kind of question. Nonetheless, they say that we need to have this carefully defined, and after we've defined what's basic, then we need to go on and somehow also define or set up a supplementary health insurance system that will sit on top of this now defined basic plan. Heaven knows who would make these kinds of decisions and what sort of input would be required. Nonetheless, they go on to say that it's up to Albertans, either through the basic or supplementary plan, to encourage "coverage to include approved alternate care providers within the system." So whether they're talking about faith healers, naturopaths, acupuncturists, or dieticians, all of these alternative service providers could be in this supplementary plan as well. Again, I think all wrong headed, all setting up in a sense a false dichotomy, and using that dichotomy to further erode a plan that we really need to instead preserve.

The other question that I have, then, is why this health report here in the province of Alberta, the Hyndman report, the Premier's commission, should be, as I read it, the only health report in Canada – it's all in vogue now; it's very current for provinces to do wide-ranging health care reports – which even alludes to or makes any mention of this notion of a supplementary or a separate health care plan. Now, I don't know, and I've looked through the Ontario report of Premier Peterson and his people there: no mention of this. The Rochon report in Quebec: no mention of it. Manitoba before that; the Nova Scotia one, which is a very good one; the New Brunswick one of last fall, which the government acted on in that province very quickly. And then I got the Saskatchewan report, which came out just a couple of weeks ago and has a lot of interesting things about what they're trying to do, particularly with some of the native people and the concerns with their health status there in the province of Saskatchewan. But I looked through it, called over, and said, "Do they talk about a supplementary health insurance plan or any kind of basic and optional or Cadillac service in Saskatchewan?" Not a mention of it, not a mention. So you have to kind of wonder why we here in the province of Alberta have to be the only ones in Canada talking this way.

Now, I say "Canada" because, as we know, there is great precedence. There's a huge model of how this kind of system can work when we look south of the border. In the United States, of course, there is no universal national health care plan which covers all the people of the United States of America. Rather, there are a variety of medicare and medicaid plans for certain segments of the population, but the vast majority of the people have to buy into some sort of health insurance. So the health insurance industry becomes a very lucrative one and a very studied one, and there they know that in fact you can have a supplementary plan. You can have kind of an enriched

insurance plan for health services that in fact some people with a lot of money can get on, a really great Cadillac service. They can get private rooms; they can get state-of-the-art this and that in the U.S. and have access to all kinds of services which fully 20 million or 30 million other Americans, by virtue of the fact they don't have an income matching these other people, are denied. Even within certain plans in industry or in certain workplaces, I'm told, the employees have access to a certain level of insurance of health services, but the management has an even more enriched plan than the employees. So they can get, you know, massage therapy and other things that the management sector might want, but the average run-of-the-mill labourers on the plant floor have sort of a lesser service or basic service.

In fact, it's also now coming to our knowledge that in fact this kind of system in the U.S. actually ends up costing more money overall. When you have fragmented and competitive health care insurance schemes vying for business, the administrative costs of that are enormous, the lack of incentives for restraint or reform are enormous, and it ends up costing Americans overall for health care far more than the one universal, easily acceptable plan that we have here in Canada and Alberta. So through that experience, which we can all read about, it really is again an indictment of why we need to look at this recommendation, at why this recommendation was put in in the first place, when the model for it in the U.S. says that if you're rich and covered, you're fine; if you're not, you're bankrupt. We just can't allow that kind of system to take root here in Canada in any way, shape, or form.

I guess some could look at the British experience. They don't, in my understanding, have . . . They have the National Health Service. They do have, as I understand, private hospitals which certain people . . . Like we have our private nursing homes here in Alberta, they have private acute care hospitals, and some people can pay more and get into a supplementary or private or Cadillac sort of hospital. It doesn't, as I understand it, work into what is insured services for people in Britain. Nonetheless, we see even there how in that system the publicly funded hospitals are deteriorating, how they're having to deal far more with quality of care issues where they just don't have the resources, again fragmenting a system in a needless sort of way. To have Margaret Thatcher there, doing what she's doing with it, isn't helping matters much.

So to reiterate, this principle of universality as established in the Canada Health Act is a product of Canadian social enlightenment forged, as I might point out, by the CCFers like Tommy Douglas. Then not only in Saskatchewan, despite doctors' strikes and despite Conservative governments and conservative people wanting to not have it move very far, did it emerge as the preferred model that Canadians want to have in terms of their health care system: one plan, one system for everyone. You can't, as the Canada Health Act finally acknowledged, buy your way to the front of the line or influence your way to better treatment. It's not market driven, as the U.S. experience of market failure in health care insurance. That's currently what the word is to describe it, market failure, in terms of private health care service in the U.S.

We don't have any kind of free market in health care services. We have a system which put in place: publicly funded, portable between provinces, and accessible and reasonable for all people. To have access to quality services based on your health status, not on your financial status: that's the key difference. So it doesn't really matter whether you're a single mother with three

young kids, you suffer from migraine headaches, you go to the food bank, and you buy your clothes at Army & Navy; that woman has access to the same health care services as some chief executive officer at Nova who might have lunches down at the Hilton and buy his clothes from Henry Singer. Both those Albertans have access to the same plan, and somehow I am still not convinced that most Tories like this idea. Most Tories still represent a party of privilege, a party of class, and it's just an uneasy feeling to think that a single mother who goes to the food bank and buys clothes from Army & Navy can have access to the same services as someone who makes \$300,000. Somehow Tories, in my estimation, in my understanding, just can't understand how this system really works.

We like to think about equality before the law for all people: that they have due process before the law in the courts no matter what their age, race, income level, or whatever. Similarly, we have equality before the health care insurance plan. We're not going to allow a supplementary court system or a supplementary legal system, nor should we allow a supplementary insurance of health services system either.

Universality is not just for consumers, but it's for providers. It was an interesting thing. I mean, I saw all kinds of talk in the Hyndman report about how we need to bring providers together and work as a team. Power to them for trying to get providers not to have a hierarchy of authority but to work collaboratively, to work co-operatively together in a team as providers in terms of quality health services. But how ironic it is that if you set up a supplementary health insurance plan, guess which providers would like to bill the supplementary plan rather than the basic plan? All kinds, who would think, "Oh, this is an easy way to make some more money; we want to be associated with these people who can afford more," this sort of sense of privilege. So it would erode this sense of teamwork among health care providers to have supplementary health insurance, as it does in the British experience again, where some doctors are left to deal with the public city hospitals and other doctors can just work in the lush, carpeted hospitals of the privileged. So you're not going to get co-operation. In fact, it's going to exacerbate divisions within the health care providers to have this as well. Again, I just can't understand why, with that kind of understanding, we can be here today trying to put a stop to what this recommendation is calling for.

I alluded a bit earlier to the principle of economic efficiency, and I'd like to spell this out a bit more. Certainly there are going to be cost containments in the system; certainly we can't provide everything for everyone. That does not mean to say that we have to go and fragment and privatize the system. As I argued earlier, in the U.S., as a percentage of its gross national product, that which it devotes to health care with its private plans, with its supplementary plans, ends up costing more for Americans. They end up spending more money on health care in total when they have that kind of fragmented system; that supplementary and basic and divided system. Our universal system makes economic sense. We need to see that and to remind ourselves of that and not see this as a way to bump up against cost controls and funding mechanisms, if this is the root of this recommendation. Well, we're not just going to continue to afford it; we're going to continue to do much better at providing reasonable and universal health services for all Albertans. We're going to be able to do it much better with this kind of universal plan than with a supplementary plan competing with a basic plan.

In fact, as we know – maybe some here don't know – we in the province of Alberta spend less of our gross provincial product on our health care system than many other provinces do. It's about 7 or 8 percent of our total gross provincial product. Of the wealth of this province of Alberta, we spend as a percentage far less than they do in the province of Newfoundland, for instance, or even the province of Quebec. So why should we be talking about this system, which we might have some motivation of needing because of cost constraints? We're managing our system economically very well. We need to continue to reform it, to move it along. We don't at all need this kind of recommendation, which is going to hit at the heart of it and start to cause problems deep within the system.

We've had other threats of erosion, which isn't just the supplementary plan, but, as we've seen, people say, "Well, we'll have a basic plan, and that will allow us to deinsure certain other services," that in fact the basic plan shouldn't cover contraceptive counseling or shouldn't cover a variety of services, as we tried to get in that debate two years ago in this Assembly. Well, deinsurance isn't the way to go either. Certainly we need to revise and update the fee code by which doctors bill the plan, and we need to continue to examine with physicians themselves the various utilization patterns of what services are delivered and what services Albertans utilize more than others, and maybe provide some incentives, some education, move things around, as the Watanabe report is an attempt to do: all kinds of ways, within the very complex and complicated system, of looking at utilization patterns. But to arbitrarily try to deinsure or cut certain services and put them in a supplementary plan has proven folly before and will continue to be.

I know there's some that say, "Well, a step to a supplementary plan might be using co-insurance and co-payments." Say a chiropractor: you'll have a certain amount which the province will pay and you'll pay beyond a certain amount. Deductibles are another way of trying to cut down on the utilization.

All of these are, I feel, not very sound ways of trying to force fiscal responsibility within our system, and all it does in the final analysis, as we know, is to penalize low-income Albertans who, it's demonstrated time and time again, most need access to those services. So we don't need any more Rand commission studies to try to tell us from an American point of view how we can use financial mechanisms and incentives to better utilize our plan. What we need is some reform, some education, some open public discussion, some health promotion efforts that might even more strongly help Albertans to better use the plan and not end up having to see their physician or specialist or enter hospital.

So there's a variety of things which we creatively and co-operatively can do which aren't going to financially impact on or mess with the system or have that kind of impact on low-income Albertans.

Another reason that this motion is trying to put a stop to this supplementary health care insurance plan is the danger I see in it of being kind of a basket into which new services will, over time, be added. Now, I know the minister will say, "Well, we have no intention of setting up a supplementary health plan." But there might be those that argue, "Well, let's set up this supplementary plan, and we can next year put some specialized diagnostic imaging services into it or some specialized other treatment or services," anything which might be new, experimental, maybe expensive. The tendency will be to say, "Well, we have this supplementary health insurance plan; let's put any of those new experimental and maybe expensive services into that basket," which will continue to deny Albertans access to state-

of-the-art services. Whether it's new technology or new treatments, those need to be assessed on behalf of their benefits for all of us and not just sort of thrown into a supplementary health care insurance basket while the basic plan will continue to be held steady, and a supplementary plan will be the enriched one over time.

So, Mr. Speaker, I've tried to outline some of the ways. I know members are going to get up and say, "Well, you know, as we hear from the AMA . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: We can talk for ourselves.

REV. ROBERTS: What I've heard members say – particularly at the AMA they say: "Well, we already have a two-tier system. We already have a three-tier system." There's already a way in which Albertans can buy extra Blue Cross coverage or can buy extra coverage from Eaton life. Or you see the ads on TV: "Your health insurance system isn't good enough. Buy into this plan. Call this toll-free number and you can get an enriched service for you and your family when you need medical services." Or they say, "You know, Albertans, if they're rich, can just skip the Alberta plan and go down to the States or go to Europe or go someplace where they can pay for the flight, they can pay for the doctors' fees, they can pay for the heart surgery. So they'll travel to the U.S., and doesn't that allow them a second tier?" Well, I don't think so, because all that does is to drain dollars out of the province, dollars that really should be spent here to improve the services and to reduce the waiting lists. Further, it seems to me that only 1 or 2 percent of all cases end up where someone says, "Well, I'm not going to wait here any longer; I'm going to just take that plane and buy my way to some fancy treatment at the Mayo clinic or something."

Well, if that's true in 1 or 2 percent of the cases, why do we need to make that our modus operandi for the whole system? Why do we have to say, "Well, it's happening for 1 or 2 percent, so we'll have the whole system go like that"? We'll say it should be *carte blanche*; we should encourage them or enable them to skip the province here and to go where they want. Isn't that a divide and conquer kind of mentality? It's not a way of looking at the system in a holistic, reform-minded kind of way. It's a way of saying, "Oh, the system doesn't work, and those 1 or 2 percent don't like it, so they can buy their way out." So what? Why do we need to applaud that or to say that we should all have that opportunity or should all be able to buy our way to the services that we want because as capitalists, as Conservatives, as selfish people, we're going to get what we want and nothing's going to stand in our way? That's faulty thinking. We need to be able to say: "Yes, there are ways to reform the system. Yes, with some better home care measures we can get people out of hospital and home." Maybe we can again reform the system economically so that we don't have waiting lists as they're perceived for some services, and with a better allocation we can deliver services better for people at home and improve the system overall.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to let members of the Assembly know here that the number of ways to argue this motion is immense, and I think the evidence is convincing, both in the Alberta experience and the Canadian experience, when we compare that, as I've tried to, with other parts of the world. We don't need this recommendation. We have to stop it in its tracks right now. What I'm concerned about is not the data, not the information, not the studies and experience which prove that, but rather the other sort of philosophical, ideological forces at

work here in the province and, I fear, in this government party across the way.

As I said, it was Tommy Douglas and the CCF who fought to bring this in. Who was there to fight against it? Conservatives – Conservatives in Saskatchewan, in Ottawa, in every province – who don't like universal medicare. That's what the problem is. They give this grudging support. Again, with this Tory bastion, we're the last province to even do away with extra billing. There's something in how Tories are bred which says to them: medicare, universality, can't last; we've got to put an end to it; we'll find any which way we can to have it two tiered, to have a division, to have it fragmented. After all, if you've made your money, if you're at the top of the class, you should be able to get far better services than that single mother down there with three kids who can't afford it. There's something about a Tory mindset which doesn't want to preserve and promote medicare in Alberta and Canada. Instead, we get Tories who may be responsible in this commission for bringing this kind of recommendation for us to have to deal with.

So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I urge all members to support the motion. [some applause] I'm not finished yet.

MR. DAY: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of order, Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, citing 23(i) in Standing Orders, if the member across wants to continue to stray into the socialist diatribe with which we're familiar, that's one thing. But when he specifically talks about us as a government not caring, as in the example he raised of single mothers trying to raise children, and speculates that we would give preference to other people in society and that we would look upon a class of society, I would say that that is imputing a motive that is absolutely wrong and is far beneath how he purports himself to be, as a man of intellect, which I continue to doubt every time he opens his mouth. [interjections]

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Is there anyone else wishing to speak on the point of order?

Please proceed.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the shoe fits, wear it. We sit on this side of the House and hear all kinds of imputations of motive about socialists and Marxist socialists and Communists. This member should . . .

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please proceed with your . . .

REV. ROBERTS: . . . sit back and take a few of his licks, Mr. Speaker, because what I'm really concerned about is that all members of the House – I want all members of the House to support this motion. If members can't support this motion, if they don't want a universal health care system for all Albertans, I want them to stand up in their places today and speak against this motion. Get it on the record and tell Albertans that you don't want a universal plan, that you want a supplementary health plan, that you want a separate plan for people who make \$300,000 or more, that the selfish, greedy, profit motive at work within the Conservative Party really wants a supplementary plan. That's what it's all about.

If they've matured, if they've seen themselves to be some kind of red Tory or something and they don't want to speak against it, that's fine. They might equivocate, and we'll have it done with today. But if they still are of the mind that they want to support this, Mr. Speaker, then in the next half hour I would want members of the government party to get up and put on the record how they are not going to support this motion because they still think that a supplementary plan or a private plan or some privatization is the way to go. I want to hear it. Albertans want to hear it. I know there are many of you over on that side of the House – maybe this would impute motive, because I think the members over there do hold that position, and if they do, then I want to hear it. I've stated my case. I've stated the case of the New Democratic caucus in this Assembly. We hold firm to universality, to one system for all Albertans. It makes good health care sense; it makes good economic sense. I want to hear from members of the government side. Stand up, repudiate this, and get it on the record. Tell Albertans how they want to dismantle the system and have a deterioration of our health care services: let's hear it from all members over there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After the rhetoric we just listened to, I want to go on record as stating that I, for one, am totally in favour of the government's position that we will continue to provide a basic health care system to all Albertans regardless of their income and regardless of their position.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question in my mind that Motion 210 is asking the Assembly to simply reject a recommendation put forward by the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans to establish a supplementary health insurance plan. While I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the government's position on the universal access to medical care services for Albertans, I would like to go on record from the outset stating that the direct intent and timing of Motion 210 is entirely inappropriate.

Any definitive decision regarding approval or rejection of the commission's recommendations is premature. A thorough assessment of each recommendation is necessary and will be undertaken by a task force of ministers over the coming months. Just to see who all is on that task force, Mr. Speaker: we have the Minister of Health, the Minister of Education, the Minister of the Environment, the minister of social services, the minister of Occupational Health and Safety. This task force will be going out and getting the opinions of Albertans over the next period of time based on the findings of the commission that has spent some considerable time coming forward with these recommendations.

I find it very interesting that we continually hear about how before we do anything, we should be consulting the public and going out and getting that information. Now we have the hon. member standing up and suggesting that we immediately scrap one of the recommendations without even going to the public. I find that rather interesting, this change in attitude.

Mr. Speaker, as a government we are considering creative ways to enhance the access. That is one of the reasons why the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans was established. It's unfortunate that the opposition doesn't support the policy by introducing innovative, constructive motions instead of just simply trying to tear it apart. Motion 210 makes a

number of assumptions, and one of them is that the implementation of a supplementary insurance plan will limit access to quality health care.

Mr. Speaker, if the supplementary insurance was implemented, the only way it could limit access to health care is if medical services under the basic health care plan were shifted to a supplementary plan. The government has no intentions of altering the basic services found under the Alberta health care plan.

A knee-jerk response to any of the commission's recommendations does a disservice to the commission and the people of Alberta. A highly qualified eight-member commission – which included a former president of the Alberta Medical Association, Deputy Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, and director of medicine at the Cross Cancer Institute; and a dean of nursing – all pooled their expertise and health-related experiences over the past two years. From June to November of '88 the commission carefully considered presentations made by 68 major organizations in the health care system, and thousands of written submissions were also received.

The results of the commission's report were not produced overnight, and they cannot nor should they be decided upon overnight. To make any firm decision at this point would deny Albertans the opportunity to use the report as a framework for discussing with the task force appointed to assess the recommendations. Motion 210 suggests that if after a thorough review process a supplementary health plan is implemented, Albertans will not have equal access to basic medical care services. This allegation is without basic consideration of the fact that both the Premier and the Minister of Health have recently reaffirmed their commitment to a universal health care system. At a news conference following the release of The Rainbow Report, Premier Getty stated: I am completely committed to a universal health care system in Alberta. At the same news conference, the Minister of Health, the Hon. Nancy Betkowski, stated: I personally and the government as a whole are firmly committed to the concept of universal access within our health care system in Alberta.

To limit Albertans' access to basic medical services on the basis of financial standing is not a policy that this government will consider implementing. In fact, under the federal Health Act it is illegal for any province to establish a health system that is not universal. The commission identified 11 goals or building blocks which the members of the commission felt were essential parts of our future health system. One of these deals with the universal access and reads as follows:

We intend to provide linkages between people and the essentials of the health system in order to assure access to the health system by creating ways that will allow people to use the system easily.

In reference to the recommendations considering a system of supplementary insurance, former commission chairman Lou Hyndman indicated the commission's intent to maintain universality of basic coverage.

Motion 210 is also based on the fear that with the implementation of a supplementary insurance plan, basic medical care services will be deinsured under Alberta health care coverage and come under the supplementary plan. Motion 210 asks the government to commit itself to a standard inventory of future basic medical care services. While the government does define basic health services each year in the annual report for the Department of Health, speculation on details of future parameters is not possible because basic health services must reflect technological changes and scientific advancements that are made

on an almost daily basis. For example, cardiovascular surgery did not take place in Alberta 10 years ago, and now 2,600 procedures are performed each year under basic Alberta health care coverage.

Maybe we should take a little further look at the things that are covered under the basic health services now in Alberta: medically required services of physicians are paid for under an approved schedule of fees; a number of specific oral surgical procedures carried out by a dental surgeon; chiropractic services to a maximum of \$12.40 for each visit with a limit during each benefit year to \$300 a person; physical therapy services paid for under an approved schedule of fees to a maximum of \$20.20 per person per day and with a benefit limit each year to \$300 a person.

While we're looking to forecast the future parameters of basic medical services, the Premier and the Minister of Health have stated that the government has no intentions to remove services that are now covered under Alberta health care. Current Alberta health care coverage is second to none in the country, meeting all the national standards. In many respects Alberta health care coverage surpasses national standards, particularly in the area of medical care for seniors through a full subsidy of Alberta health care premiums and the Blue Cross premiums.

When we look at what Blue Cross covers, we see another broad range of items: private and semiprivate ward accommodation for insurable charges; limited coverage for inpatient and outpatient charges at a public acute treatment hospital located outside Canada; 80 percent of the drugs and medication obtained on the prescription of a physician; ambulance services in the event of illness or injury; medical appliances by order of a physician; limited coverage for clinical physiological services; limited coverage for home nursing care. When one looks at the fact that for seniors the province is paying the premium costs for Blue Cross and we look at all the coverage, I don't really understand what the hon. member was talking about when he talked about that limiting the access of the elderly and the poor.

We also have the extended health benefit program for seniors. When we look at what that covers here, we have inpatient services which include: accommodation and meals at the standard or public ward level; necessary nursing care; diagnostic and treatment services; drugs, medical preparations and routine surgical supplies provided and administered in the hospital; transportation within the province between hospitals and from a hospital to a nursing home when ordered by a physician; and special services as ordered by a physician – as an example, a private room. Outpatient services include: emergency treatment and, where available, day surgery; diagnostic laboratory and radiological procedures; specialized clinics; diabetic clinics; physical, occupational, speech, and respiratory therapy. So, Mr. Speaker, we can see that a very wide, broad range of services and care are provided for the seniors' population just by the province paying the premiums for these people.

In a recent interview commission chairman Lou Hyndman indicated the commission's support for the basic coverage of essential medical services that is now in place. If a two-tier health system means that our basic system becomes second rate or of a secondary quality, then we are against that. I don't believe there is a danger that the government will remove basic health services from the insured basket, because Albertans know and want the many-sided base system we now have, which is, incidentally, one of the most comprehensive in Canada.

I would also like to set the record straight about allegations that this government has a hidden agenda – we heard that again

today – to cut back on the health expenditures at the expense of the poor and the disadvantaged, who can least afford it. A look at the government's record in this area reveals the opposite. The government remains committed to maintaining the highest quality of medical care services for all Albertans. This is seen through our overall health spending in the years '90-91 of some \$3.8 billion, an increase of close to \$240 million over last year. This amounts to approximately \$4,400 per household in Alberta. The Department of Health itself will receive a 6.1 percent increase to its annual budget, an amount of \$178 million. Our health system must and will provide services and reasonable access to those in need wherever in need no matter how frequent or extensive that need may be. This government will not put a financial limit on an individual's access to health services in this province. The poor and disadvantaged of Alberta will not be subject to less access to health care than any other Albertan. This government is increasingly focusing more attention on those groups through programs such as the Alberta health care emergency financial assistance, the Alberta health care premium assistance program, community health nursing, and illness and accident prevention programs.

A supplementary insurance plan as recommended by the commission would not take away from the essential services now covered by Alberta health care. Instead, a supplementary plan would offer Albertans the option of obtaining coverage for a wider range of nonessential medical services from among a greater variety of medical as well as nonmedical practitioners. Instead of taking coverage away from Albertans, the implementation of such a plan would in fact provide Albertans with an affordable way to access a greater range of nonessential medical services that are currently beyond the financial reach of many Albertans.

Irresponsible rhetoric equating the supplementary insurance plan recommendation with a two-tier health system is nothing more than a scare tactic. The opposition rushes to oppose the recommendation, without giving it proper consideration, on the basis that it will be unfair to disadvantaged Albertans when, in fact, the opposite is quite true. Critics ask us to disregard the supplementary insurance plan option and simply offer expanded care under the Alberta health care plan. While the Alberta government is committed to a universal health care system, health care expenditures make up over one-quarter of the provincial budget, and costs continue to escalate at a time when the federal government has reduced its support. We must control the growth in health care costs to ensure that the system is able to continue to meet the needs of all Albertans.

As stated at the outset that a thorough assessment process involving the people of Alberta will take place in due course. Members opposite would like to pass judgment prematurely and deny the people of Alberta an opportunity to contribute to this decision-making process. The government's commitment to a universal health care system and maintenance of access to basic essential health care services for all Albertans will be maintained with or without implementation of the commission's recommendations.

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

**MRS. HEWES:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. In the time that's left to me, I just want to get on the record as supporting the motion of the Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I was relieved when The Rainbow Report came out to hear the Minister of Health and the Premier state that they certainly support the notion of universality of health care in our province. I hope that also means that they do not support the notion of a two tiered system. I believe that's what that means. I don't believe anyone in Alberta likes the idea of a two . . . I certainly haven't talked with anyone in Alberta who supports the notion of a two-tier system. I'm very surprised to hear the Member for Rocky Mountain House because it sounds as though he does. I think he must be a lone voice crying in the wilderness. I think the intent of this motion is to ensure that this government states without equivocation that a two tiered system is not an acceptable or desirable method to deliver health care services in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the impetus for the Hyndman, I think, was driven in major form by the cost of health care. We waited for two years for the \$4.2 million report. We believed that we would see many results from this report, a realistic and comprehensive plan that would help to rationalize Alberta's health care system in the future, would provide a high quality service for the same or less money. I was disappointed with many things in the report, and I was very impressed and pleased with a number of things in the report. I look forward to the response from the committee of the province that's working at it. I had not understood until the Member for Rocky Mountain House spoke that once again we're going out to consult with a great many Albertans about it. I understood the committee was going to report directly through the Premier to the House, but perhaps we'll find out more about that later.

Mr. Speaker, the puzzling thing is: where did the notion of a two tiered system come from? Because in reading all of the documentation that was submitted to the commission, there's very, very little to substantiate this kind of idea. So one wonders where that idea came from. It came out of the air. As the Member for Edmonton-Centre says: on the contrary, through other provinces, there's nothing to suggest that in anyplace else in Canada people are moving in this direction.

Mr. Speaker, one of the major factors that I believe differentiates us from Americans in a positive way is our medicare system. Canadians treasure it; Americans envy it. Canadians, Albertans don't want to see the integrity of this system challenged or reduced. But I must admit our history in Alberta hasn't been great in this regard. When I came to this House, we still had extra billing. And then we were treated to Bill 14, which was met on this side of the House and throughout the province with great alarm. The Premier was confronted with this and, I think, showed excellent judgment in pulling back the Bill when he realized it was an unacceptable one to the people of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, we've also seen the happening of the reduction of coverage in family planning counseling, optometry, chiropractic, and then we've seen that restored when people simply rose up and said: "Look; this doesn't make any sense. This isn't practical, and in the long run this will cost more money." Now we have the Hyndman report suggesting on page 83 in section 2 that we could

develop a supplementary health care insurance plan to cover, on a pooled-risk but sound actuarial basis, a much wider range of services from approved providers.

Now, that doesn't sound to me like a little add-on to the basics. What they're saying in print is that we're talking about a much

wider range of services. Well, what would happen? There'd be an immense amount of pressure, Mr. Speaker, on the decision-makers. The idea of what is basic would once again be, I suppose, open season. We'd have pressure on the government who are determining the basic services to deinsure some and to leave them open to private insurance agencies. Those who could afford it could have better health care; those who can't afford it: well, too bad.

Mr. Speaker, I have also been critical of the Hyndman report's inattention to some of the health problems that are related to particular groups, those who have the most difficulty in accessing health care and have probably the greatest needs: people in poverty, native people in our communities, and isolated communities. I believe the notion of a two tiered system, an insurance system on top of basic services, would exacerbate that problem, would make it even more difficult. On the contrary, I believe that the insurance system – and this, in fact, was suggested to the Hyndman commission – should be reviewed to extend the coverage. Instead of restricting the coverage and constraining it, I believe it should be reviewed to extend the coverage to cover procedures that are more of a preventive nature: home care and so on. I think these are the creative ways that we should be moving.

Mr. Speaker, I will not ever support a market-driven system in health care. I think there is ample evidence that the American system is lopsided, and I question why on earth we would want to move in that direction. It is apparent to me that Americans certainly don't like this. Community organizations don't like it or want it. Seniors, health care professionals don't like it or want it. I think we should get rid of it. I believe that we need a statement on the part of the minister and the government right now to say that it's not their intention and get rid of this before we go to a great deal of time, trouble, and expense in asking Albertans, "What do you think about it?" and in trying to sell it. I think that's exactly the kind of circumstance that we could easily get into. We need to reinforce the positive aspects, the universality of medicare, and I am very supportive of the motion of the Member for Edmonton-Centre because I think it does just that. I would anticipate that all members of the House, perhaps with one exception, would see no reason whatsoever not to support this motion.

Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments I'd like to make, but considering the hour, I wish to adjourn debate.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Carried.

[The House recessed at 5:26 p.m.]

