

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Wednesday, May 30, 1990 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 90/05/30

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

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Prayers

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly His Excellency Brian Fall, who is the High Commissioner to Canada from the United Kingdom. He is accompanied today by his wife and by Mr. Peter Johnstone, the Consul General to the province of Alberta. They are seated in your gallery. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

Bill 33

Metis Settlements Accord Implementation Act

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 33, Metis Settlements Accord Implementation Act. This Act being a money Bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides legislation providing for the implementation of the financial and transition commission elements of the Alberta/Metis Settlements Accord.

[Leave granted; Bill 33 read a first time]

Bill 36

Constitution of Alberta Amendment Act, 1990

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I also seek leave to introduce Bill 36, Constitution of Alberta Amendment Act, 1990.

Bill 36 is legislation that will amend the Constitution of Alberta to protect the ownership of the Metis land by the Metis settlements general council until such further time as protection in the Constitution of Canada can be achieved.

[Leave granted; Bill 36 read a first time]

Bill 34

Metis Settlements Land Protection Act

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 34, the Metis Settlements Land Protection Act. [remarks in Cree]

Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of introducing Bill 34, the Metis Settlements Land Protection Act. This ratifies and

confirms the letters patent which grant the lands in fee simple to the Metis settlements general council. This Act places into a legal framework the dream long held by the Metis settlements of securing a land base in Alberta. [as submitted]

This Bill ratifies and confirms the letters patent which grant the lands in fee simple to the Metis settlements general council. The Act places into a legal framework the dream long held by the Metis settlements of securing a land base in Alberta.

[Leave granted; Bill 34 read a first time]

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would seek unanimous consent of members of the Assembly in order that the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake may proceed with the introduction of a money Bill, which requires unanimous consent of the members of the Assembly in order for a member who is not a member of Executive Council to move such a Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Assembly agree with the request of the hon. Government House Leader?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? It is so ordered.

The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Bill 35

Metis Settlements Act

MS CALAHASEN: Mr. Speaker, as a Metis it is indeed a great honour to beg leave to introduce Bill 35, the Metis Settlements Act, an Act which is the first of its kind in Canada.

This is an important day for the people of Alberta and particularly the Metis people of Alberta, Mr. Speaker. Bill 35 establishes the framework required to develop a unique form of Metis local government in Alberta. The general council, eight Metis settlement corporations, and an appeals tribunal will be established under this Bill. The Metis Settlements Act places within the legislative framework the principles outlined in Resolution 18 and the Implementation of Resolution 18, and is a testament to the benefits to be gained through consultation and co-operation.

[Leave granted; Bill 35 read a first time]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism.

Bill 50

Alberta Cultural Heritage Amendment Act, 1990

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 50, the Alberta Cultural Heritage Amendment Act, 1990.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation flows from the report of the Multicultural Commission, Focus for the 90's. It includes a new preamble and objectives to more reflect current thinking on the issues of multiculturalism and to set the tone for our new policy direction and programs. There are also changes in the contact points between government and the public. The Multicultural Commission will be expanded, doubled in size, to give better representation of our diversity in population. As well, a new Alberta multicultural advisory council will seek input from various sectors of society including personnel, health, education, law enforcement, and so on, to take our multicultural policies

beyond ethnicity and to make multiculturalism a concept for all Albertans.

[Leave granted; Bill 50 read a first time]

Bill 44
Dental Disciplines Act

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 44, the Dental Disciplines Act.

This Act encompasses the dental hygienists, the dental assistants, and the dental technicians all under one Act to give them self-governance.

Thank you.

[Leave granted; Bill 44 read a first time]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bills 34, 35, and 44 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table with the Legislative Assembly today the annual report for 1989-90 of the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists, and Geophysicists of Alberta.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table with the Assembly the annual report of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute for the year ended March 31, 1989.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of the Environment.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, they're in my office. I'll table them tomorrow. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the annual report of the Alberta Water Resources Commission for the year 1988-89.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, in March of '87, at the First Ministers' Conference on aboriginal rights, Premier Getty stated that the government of Alberta was committed to implementing initiatives that would lead to proper local government for Metis people and that these initiatives would be placed in legislation. In signing the Alberta/Metis Settlements Accord in July of '89 the Premier again committed that this legislation would be introduced prior to July 1, 1990. Of course, as with any history-making event in the province, it's the people involved that make it possible. The guests that I am about to introduce have put in long, hard hours in developing the flexible, innovative, made-in-Alberta approaches to proper local government and the acquisition of a land base that you will find in the Bills introduced today.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce in your gallery to you and to the Assembly the executive of the Alberta Federation of

Metis Settlement Associations: the president, Mr. Randy Hardy; the vice-president, Mr. Allan Lamouche; the secretary, Mr. Richard Poitras; the treasurer, Mr. Walter Anderson. I would also like to introduce Mr. Larry Desmeules, the president of the Metis Association of Alberta. I'd ask that they all stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, it's also a pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly the Metis settlement chairmen and representatives in attendance here today to witness this historic event for Metis people in Canada. [remarks in Cree]

The representatives of the settlements, Mr. Speaker, have been instrumental in developing a process that has resulted in the needs and aspirations of the settlement members being reflected in the new Metis settlement legislation. As an essential part of the consultation process, their ability to express the views of the settlement members ensured that the legislation addressed the principles set out in Resolution 18.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the settlement chairmen and representatives who are here today to stand and receive the recognition of this Assembly.

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

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to take this opportunity to honour the founding fathers of the Alberta Federation of Metis Settlement Associations. I feel it is important for us to recognize their contributions during the long journey towards achieving the protection of a Metis land base in Alberta. It is with the greatest respect that I ask the Assembly to extend its recognition and appreciation to the surviving members of the founding fathers: Mr. Richard Poitras and Mr. Lawrence Desjarlais, who are in attendance today, as well as Mr. Maurice L'Hirondelle, who was unable to be here. I would also like to ask the Assembly to pay its respects to the founding fathers who unfortunately could not be with us today to witness the realization of their dreams: Adrian Hope and Sam Johnston.

It is also worthy to note that in this Assembly we have a person of Metis distinction: our Sergeant-at-Arms. I'd also like to recognize him.

I now ask Mr. Desjarlais and Mr. Poitras to stand and receive the warm welcome and the recognition they so deserve from this Assembly.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, there is no better way to celebrate Science and Technology Week than to recognize some young honorary citizens of Science City. I had the opportunity to visit with them earlier this afternoon. These are future scientists, future engineers, future technologists, and they have achieved a standard of national excellence. It's a great pleasure to introduce them to you and through you to all the members of the Assembly. These are the Alberta medal winners in the Canada science fair competition recently held in Windsor. As they are introduced, I would ask each to rise and remain standing.

Firstly, a gold winner, Arthur Chan from Fort McMurray; silver winners Faisal Karmali from Edmonton, Kjell Wooding from Calgary, Srimoyee Chaudhuri from Calgary, Tariq Remtulla from Calgary; and bronze medal winners Jason Clifford from Rimbey, Aalim Weljie from Calgary, David Petch from Fort McMurray, Kent Signorini from Grimshaw, Aly Remtulla from

Calgary, Robin Pinchin from Okotoks. Unable to join us today is bronze winner Tim Huang of Lethbridge. I would also ask their escorts to rise while we communicate our congratulations to all these very important citizens of Science City.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater-Andrew.

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's also an important day in Alberta for multiculturalism. The Multicultural Commission has been meeting today, and I would like to introduce to you and to the Assembly some of the members of the commission. They're the ones that have had the input into Focus for the 90's, multiculturalism for the '90s and beyond: a new direction. Firstly, the vice-chairman of the commission, Orest Olineck; members Helen Yau, Laurent Lamoureux; assistant deputy minister Manuel da Costa; and assistant Cathy Finlayson. They are seated in the public gallery, and I ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism.

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to introduce to you and to other members of the Assembly Mr. Uwe Welz, a gentleman who's been very active in multicultural affairs around the city of Edmonton – a member of the German-Canadian business association, a member of the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council – who is currently serving my ministry as the chairman of a transition team which is helping us design the new Alberta multicultural advisory council, which is a component of legislation just introduced today. I should also mention, coincidentally, that Mr. Welz is a constituent of the great constituency of Edmonton-Park Allen. He's sitting in the members' gallery. I'd ask him to rise to his full height and receive the warm applause of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to take this opportunity to introduce a very special person from the Smoky River constituency, a person who serves on the Grande Prairie College board, a very successful businessman, and, most of all, the mayor of Sexsmith. It's my pleasure to introduce Ralph Balisky, if he would rise and receive the accolades of the Assembly.

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

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have in the public gallery a group of 10 students from a very special program called the Edmonton Academy, here in Edmonton-Centre. They're with their teachers Mrs. Donna Machinski and Mr. Richard Wilson. I'd ask that they please rise and receive the welcome from the members here today.

Thank you.

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

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not often I get to speak three times in a row. I would like to introduce to

you and to the members of the Assembly 13 students from Atikameg Sovereign school in Atikameg, who are traveling on their way throughout Alberta. They're accompanied by their teacher Mr. David Sikora and Mrs. Lillian Noskiye and their bus driver, Ted Peterson. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

MRS. BLACK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my colleague the Member for Calgary-Montrose, the hon. Minister of Energy, it is with great pleasure that I introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 87 students from the Clarence Sansom community school. They are accompanied today by their teachers Jean Lee, Valerie Whyte, and Joan Stoes, and parent Ingrid Barnes. They're seated in both the members' and public galleries, and I'd ask that they all rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is also my privilege to introduce 30 young and enterprising children from the Rosedale Christian school in Crooked Creek. They are accompanied by their teacher Mr. Ben Ginther and parents Irvin Klassens, Willard Toews, Adin Klassens, and Mark Friesens. They're seated in the public gallery, and I'd ask them to rise and receive the accord of the House.

head: Ministerial Statements

Metis Settlements Legislation

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the decorum and the time that the House has given to this occasion today.

On June 3, 1985, almost five years ago, this Assembly unanimously passed Resolution 18. Resolution 18 committed the province of Alberta to the transfer of Metis settlement lands to Metis people. During the 1987 First Ministers' Conference on aboriginal rights Premier Getty stated that the government of Alberta accepted the responsibility for its Metis people. He told the conference that native self-government was desirable but not possible until the concept was defined. Premier Getty outlined our made-in-Alberta approach to self-determination for our Metis people.

Mr. Speaker, on June 17, 1987, I tabled before the Assembly a document called Implementation of Resolution 18. It was the product of an intense discussion process between the government of Alberta and the Alberta Federation of Metis Settlement Associations, a federation which has a clear electoral mandate to enter into such an agreement with our government. That document set out the principles and guidelines to be used in working towards a realization of Resolution 18. I commend the association, its president, Randy Hardy, and its executive for their persistence and dedication to the process.

On July 5, 1988, Bills 64 and 65 were introduced. They provided the framework for a system of democratic government and a mechanism for land transfer and its protection in the Constitution. Mr. Speaker, a significant breakthrough occurred at that time: a bond of trust was established between the

Premier and Randy Hardy. Also, the Metis Association of Alberta endorsed the work of the federation. This was a significant achievement in itself: Metis unity on a form of self-determination.

Mr. Speaker, the result of many hours of discussion has been Metis self-determination, a mechanism to provide for self-sufficiency and a form of local government. But it was evident that a financial package would be necessary to achieve this Metis self-sufficiency. The Alberta/Metis Settlements Accord, signed on July 1, 1989, by the Premier and the federation, set out a political commitment to such a package, together with an implementation process which would also extinguish the long-standing lawsuit between the federation and the government.

Mr. Speaker, the four Bills introduced today are the culmination of a unique made-in-Alberta process that demonstrates the immeasurable value of what a provincial government and native governments can achieve when there is a will to work together through consultation and co-operation.

I am proud, Mr. Speaker, that this government has been able to respond to the wishes and aspirations of the Metis in Alberta. Many of the principles that are realized in legislation today are unique to the Metis settlements, but I believe the Metis settlements and our government have set a benchmark that will guide the future development of local native governments in Alberta and across Canada. I ask all members in the Assembly to join with me in making this realization come true.

Thank you.

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

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The ministerial statement today is important because, as was underlined in that statement, Alberta is in a unique situation in Canada intended to give a solid land base to some Metis people in Alberta, a principle that the New Democrats support. But, Mr. Speaker, I think we need to reserve our right to look at the legislation in detail to ensure that the principles outlined in the statement are indeed met by the legislation, and if not, that amendments to that effect could be considered and debated. For example, Mr. Speaker, we want to be sure that aboriginal rights have been handled properly in the context of these Bills. In the past we've wanted to ensure that the long-standing lawsuit between the province and the Metis settlements would not have to be jeopardized by the adoption of these Bills. The price for this legislation apparently is that the lawsuit be dropped, and we understand that that has met with agreement from the Metis settlements.

We trust and hope that history will judge that decision to be a wise one, Mr. Speaker. After all, I think what is very clear and a principle shared by all members of the Assembly is that we are all working towards a new relationship for the future, a relationship that we want to be a just and honourable one. So, Mr. Speaker, it is our sincere hope that these Bills today will meet that test.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before calling Oral Question Period, would the Assembly give unanimous consent to reverting to Tabling Returns and Reports for one moment?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? It is so ordered.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports** (reversion)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of the Environment.

MR. KLEIN: My apologies, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table with the House the answer to Motion for a Return 173 and the answer to Written Question 260.

Thank you.

head: **Oral Question Period**

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

Alberta Government Telephones

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta Government Telephones has served the people of Alberta for decades now. It's been an important public asset in the world of natural monopolies in utilities. It's also been a revenue generator and a leader in technological advancements. Ultimately there is no question that AGT has served its mandate and the people of Alberta. My question to the Premier is this: what assurances can the Premier give the people of our province that this government will not privatize or pirate this important, valuable public asset?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Acting Leader of the Opposition should try not to prejudge what may happen but wait for events to unfold.

MR. FOX: You sound like Pierre Trudeau.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, right.

Mr. Speaker, I may only have been a member of this Assembly for four years and a couple of weeks, but I know enough about Conservatives to know that when they say Alberta Government Telephones reorganization Act, that is a euphemism for AGT privatization.

My question, then, is to the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications, who I suspect would like to sell off the people's assets to a handful of Albertans, assets owned by all people of Alberta for now. I ask him if it is his intention to do so, and if so, why.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Premier answered the question very, very well.

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can always count on the Provincial Treasurer for a lengthy answer, so perhaps I'll ask this question of the Provincial Treasurer. The Provincial Treasurer knows that AGT is an income-generating asset owned by all the people of Alberta, serving its mandate. Will he now admit that the reason AGT is being contemplated for sale from everybody's ownership to the ownership of a few is to cover up the financial bungling that he himself has conducted over the last four years, from the time we had no deficit to the time we've got an \$11 billion debt?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, that's almost inviting debate, but I would simply say that not only was the Premier's answer great, it was quintessential.

MS, BARRETT: Scared, huh?

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate the second question to the Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Gainers Agreements with Province

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Treasurer has said over and over that Alberta Treasury Branches operate at arm's length from government. The Treasurer makes this claim in spite of the fact that in the case of Palm Dairies, for example, Mr. Peter Pocklington got a Treasury Branch loan to cover 100 percent of the purchase price of Palm Dairies plus an operating line of credit on top of it. From where Albertans sit, they see the Treasury Branches being misused to help out friends of the government, like Mr. Pocklington. Will the Provincial Treasurer now confirm that the Treasury Branches were also extensively involved in the \$55 million loan to Peter Pocklington's Gainers companies?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I was going off on Palm Dairies, and suddenly it was switched to a Treasury Branch loan. Maybe the member might just repeat the question for me.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: I'd like the Provincial Treasurer to confirm that the Treasury Branches were also extensively involved in the \$55 million loan to Peter Pocklington's Gainers companies.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, we have a policy that is very clear and one which I have outlined not just on many occasions but also this morning: when it comes to Treasury Branch operations, we will not disclose what happens to the clients. That's a sacred trust. Anyone who deals with a financial institution wants to know that their business is in fact protected. What I will say and make the exception only today is that the Treasury Branch did not advance any money of the \$55 million to Mr. Pocklington or to Gainers.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, on July 17 of last year in the Assembly the Provincial Treasurer said that the Treasury Branches played no role in the \$67 million bailout of Mr. Pocklington's Gainers companies. I'd like to file copies this afternoon of what I understand to be excerpts of the government's master agreement with Mr. Pocklington. Contrary to the Provincial Treasurer's statements, the Treasury Branches were involved. In this document they are identified as the holder of the security Mr. Pocklington provided. Will the Provincial Treasurer finally quit maintaining a fiction, come clean, and admit that the Treasury Branches were a financial institution deeply involved in the Pocklington bailout?

MR. JOHNSTON: Again, Mr. Speaker, what I have said, because it is the fact: the Treasury Branch did not provide any of the \$55 million loan advance. That's the fact.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Treasurer is very careful in his statements, but since the government got involved with Peter Pocklington, what he's done is stonewall and turn down legitimate requests for information about how the taxpayers' dollars were misused in support of this friend. When will he reveal to Albertans the whole story about government involvement in this massive giveaway of taxpayers' money and table the entire master agreement?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, as I have said in this House many times before, if the opposition wasn't just fishing for information and knew how to conduct their research, they would be better informed. It's taken them a year and a half to struggle through the paper and to come up with some kind of a weak approach to what's happened here. I repeat again that the Treasury Branch did not advance money to Gainers, was not involved in the \$55 million loan consolidation, and therefore I stand by that answer.

What I must go on to say, Mr. Speaker, is that the reason the government is very careful about what it's doing with the information is, as I have said repeatedly, that the province of Alberta is suing Mr. Pocklington right now under a variety of actions, both on behalf of the government and on behalf of Gainers. Those actions are now progressing through the courts. I have said repeatedly that we had to seize the assets of Gainers. That was taken back because the loan was in default. We have now initiated action on behalf of taxpayers and on behalf of the company itself to pursue a claim against Mr. Pocklington, the former shareholder. Again, thirdly, I've indicated that we will be launching additional actions against Mr. Pocklington.

That doesn't seem to me, Mr. Speaker, to be anything that's hiding the facts, because we are specifically using the court system to pursue our claim. The court system will adjudicate what has happened, and the court system will make the information public when necessary. My lawyers have advised us, the government, to be very careful about what is said in this Assembly, because it could prejudice the government's position.

Environmental Legislation

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne made much of the new environmental legislation that the government intended to introduce. This was to show the greening of the provincial government. Unfortunately, there aren't even tiny green spots that one can attribute to the government. People in Alberta have become alarmed, because of a number of events, at the attitude and the commitment to the environment that the government has. My first question to the Minister of the Environment is this. We note that the new legislation finally makes the list of notices, but will the minister give us the exact timetable of when this new environmental legislation will be introduced, particularly dealing with the resources conservation board that is intended to be set up, and when it is expected and intended that the vote to conclude this matter will take place?

MR. KLEIN: Well, I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, whether the hon. leader of the Liberal Party is referring to the NRCB or to the environmental protection and enhancement Act, both of which will hopefully come to this Assembly in the not too distant future. With respect to the environmental protection and enhancement Act, I think that he's going to find this very exciting legislation, very futuristic legislation, legislation that is not only going to consolidate a number of laws and strengthen those laws but lay out for Albertans an environmental agenda that will take us through this decade and into the next century. I would just advise the hon. leader of the Liberal Party to be patient, because good things are coming, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. minister didn't hear my question. The question was: give us a timetable. The cynicism that Albertans have towards this government and its commitment to the environment is that this whole process of

new legislation will be delayed so as to allow Al-Pac to sneak by without any kind of proper review. When will the timetable end for both of these new flagship Acts?

MR. KLEIN: Well, with respect to the NRCB, that legislation is expected to come forward very soon. With respect to the environmental protection and enhancement Act, I've stated publicly on many occasions, Mr. Speaker, that this Act, because it's such an important Act and it requires so much public involvement, will be the subject of a full public consultation process that started first with the mission statement. The comments of the public are being taken into account. When that Act is tabled in draft form, certainly not as a Bill, it will then be taken out again for public consultation, and we'll say: "Look, folks; this is what you've told us though the mission statement. Are we still on the right track? Are we setting ourselves the proper agenda?" When we're satisfied that there has been full and complete public consultation, because of the importance of the legislation, we will then draft a final Bill and hopefully bring that Bill back in the spring of 1991 for final passage.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I get the impression that there is a clear attempt to keep avoiding and delaying. Wait; you know, you're going to be excited. Well, this Legislative Assembly has gone on for a long time, and we've not seen any action on the so-called flagship legislation. My last question to the minister is this: no matter where the legislation is in the process of debate or introduction, on both counts, both Acts, will the minister commit that there will be no decision made with respect to the second proposal of Al-Pac until both of these Acts are firmly in place and concluded?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the legislation sets an environmental agenda and in no way relates to a specific project. That project has already gone through a very, very extensive public review process. A new proposal has been submitted, as I explained in this Assembly yesterday. The Department of the Environment in Alberta has reviewed the new revised proposal. We're waiting for the federal government to do the same. When those two thoughts come together and we've had a chance to consult with our federal counterparts, then we will decide at that time as a government how to proceed with that particular project. But it in no way, Mr. Speaker, relates to the legislation.

The legislation is a consolidation of nine or 10 laws. It's a document that will form an agenda and map out a road to take us into the future in terms of protecting and enhancing our environment. It's much, much bigger, Mr. Speaker, than just one project. It's much, much bigger than a single issue. It is so big that perhaps someday the hon. leader of the Liberal Party will be able to understand it. It might take him a long time.

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

Meech Lake Accord

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All members of this Assembly are well aware of all the time and the effort that the hon. Premier has been putting into the matter of the Meech Lake accord through his discussions with the Prime Minister, Senator Murray, and all of the provincial leaders. I heard today that it appears Premier Wells' position on the Quebec issue in general and especially the distinct society clause may be soften-

ing and that that may lead to genuine progress in this issue. My question therefore is to the Premier: is this information correct, Mr. Premier, and do you see genuine progress being made?

MR. GETTY: I suppose, Mr. Speaker, that members of this Assembly would agree, feel like I do, that there is probably no greater cause or challenge we could have than seeing our country become a great nation and knowing, too, that the only way it can do that is to be united. That unity is being challenged right now, as the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane is mentioning, and over the past several days, week, we've been working very hard amongst first ministers and governments to see if we can solve the constitutional impasse that faces Canada right now.

Over the past several days I have spoken several times with Premier Wells, with Premier Filmon, several times with Premier Bourassa, Premier Devine, Premier Peterson, and officials of the federal government and the Prime Minister. What is being attempted is to try and find some way to make sure that our Constitutional Accord proceeds, Meech Lake proceeds, and, if there is some way, bring those who are currently not supporting it to a position where they can. Premier Wells talked to me just shortly before I came into the Assembly, and I think he is making a very honest attempt to try and reconcile his province's concerns about the Meech Lake accord with some means of being able to support it.

The focus now is on what form any addition or companion piece of agreement or accord would take. As you can imagine, if it's going to be a constitutional accord, that would have to pass through 10 provincial Legislatures, the House of Commons, and the Senate by June 23. Members here can understand the complications of trying to do that, particularly with something as sensitive yet as important as constitutional amendments. The other form that we might consider would be something that Alberta has been suggesting as well as looking with an open mind on the Constitutional Accord: some type of declaration of trust or declaration of commitment to principles that all 11 first ministers might sign that would conduct us in our second round of constitutional negotiations and be a commitment and embody in that document some of the principles that would allow us to meet the concerns of those first ministers who don't now support the accord.

All of this discussion is going on, and I can only say that we understand as first ministers how important our discussions are, and I think there's a growing awareness amongst Canadians of the importance of the Meech Lake accord and a growing awareness that they want the first ministers to solve the problem and not have us contemplating the potential destroying of our nation after June 23.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It appears to me that the issue of Senate reform, an issue that's been championed by Alberta throughout the entire Meech Lake process, is the main issue on the table at this point in time, the very issue of equality of provinces. My question is to the Premier: would the Premier agree with that analysis, and does he see a solution to this issue?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's quite a remarkable fact that while it's been lonely over the years being the government of Alberta, myself as Premier, promoting Senate reform, within the last several weeks, perhaps a month, there has been a greater and greater attention to this very important part of constitutional reform. While Alberta, with the hon. Deputy Premier, the

Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, and the task force having crossed this province, has promoted Senate reform at every possible opportunity, at Premiers' conferences and first ministers' conferences, it's now obvious that our entire nation is starting to recognize the importance of this feature. I can only confirm for the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane that the matter of Senate reform and strong equal provinces is now probably the single most important issue that we have to deal with in order to pull together the entire Constitutional Accord, which faces us now, and bring together all the provinces of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, though I've talked about all the work that's going on, I must say that right now I am not optimistic; I am not optimistic that this is going to be an easy task at all. It's a difficult task, but I am very proud of the fact that the government of Alberta is leading the way in this matter.

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

Abortion

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Attorney General. Many doctors fear that the new abortion legislation will make them targets for private criminal charges. The Attorney General has indicated that his department has a policy of not allowing private prosecutions and that third-party action would be prosecuted through the Attorney General's department. My question is: inasmuch as the legislation requires interpretation as to whether a physician has used accepted standards in determining whether the health of a woman seeking an abortion was in jeopardy, on what basis will the prosecutors in the Attorney General's department be making these medical judgments?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member must understand the procedure. The Attorney General of any province is charged with the administration of justice within that province, and through that authority Crown prosecutors are agents of the Crown. If a person, a private individual, has reason or cause and comes forward and lays an information or brings a complaint to an investigative body, it's looked at. If on the basis of that investigation and, of course, being founded on the section of the criminal law held supposedly in breach, a prosecution would be brought forward by the Crown. That policy that private prosecutions are not allowed has been existent in Alberta for time immemorial.

MS M. LAING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I understand the process. The concern is that prosecutors in the Attorney General's department will be having to make medical judgments or judgments as to whether appropriate medical practice has been in place, and that's the difficulty. I would, then, ask the Attorney General: will he commit to providing guidelines to prosecutors to assist them in deciding whether to proceed with charges and making these guidelines available to the Alberta Medical Association, because it is the doctors as well as women who fear frivolous prosecution?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, a Crown prosecutor never makes the determination on medical procedures or anything else. There are investigative bodies of various sorts that make determinations on facts and evidence as to whether there is a possibility of a legal case being brought forward and being

adjudicated by the courts. That will continue to happen. I think we're being a bit speculative on trying to develop an answer to something that, first of all, is not law yet, and even if were, each circumstance will be handled on the basis of that circumstance.

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

Human Rights Commission Chairman's Remarks

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am tabling a letter sent to the minister responsible for multiculturalism from the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council. In addition, I'm tabling a speech delivered by Fil Fraser, chairman of the Human Rights Commission. The Alberta heritage council has taken objection to some of the statements made by Mr. Fraser. My question to the minister responsible for multiculturalism: what specific action has the minister taken in response to the concerns expressed by the Alberta heritage council?

MR. MAIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I've heard from the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council on their concerns, and I have expressed to them as I will to the House that Mr. Fraser does not speak for the government on matters of multiculturalism.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, my second question to the minister of multiculturalism: has the minister had any discussions with the minister responsible for the Human Rights Commission as to whether the chairman has compromised his effectiveness in fulfilling his role as chairman of the commission?

MR. MAIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, conversations between the Minister of Labour and myself, of course, would be of a confidential nature, but in answer to the question, no.

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

Capital Bonds

MR. SHRAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In '87 we had an issue of Alberta capital bonds, which I guess Albertans all over this province bought, including some of my own constituents. I guess it was very successful. Mind you, since 1987, our prophets of doom and gloom over here have kept prophesying doom and gloom. On the issue of the 1990 capital bonds, could you advise us if you have any preliminary information on how the sale of our 1990 Alberta capital bonds is going?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, the 1990 campaign ended officially on May 26, and I think Albertans certainly signaled their faith in the future of this province. You make the right comments. They have an optimistic view; they believe in investments in the province and in the government.

MR. McEACHERN: An extra 1 percent interest . . .

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the number is seven oh seven: \$707 million worth of capital bonds.

MR. SHRAKE: Well, Mr. Speaker, as one of the hecklers mentioned there, I guess it has a 1 percent better rate. It's a very good rate.

Some of my constituents have raised some concerns now. They have the 1987 bonds and they mature in June, but the deadline, as I understand it, for the 1990 bonds was May 26. Some of my constituents would like to roll those over and get in on it, but the 26th is gone. Is the Provincial Treasurer going to do something to assist these people who had the previous bonds to roll these over and get in on the 1990 bonds, because they want to participate?

Would you call on me later for a point of order, please, Mr. Speaker?

MR. JOHNSTON: I hope the point of order wasn't directed at me, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I must apologize. When we were selling the 1990 bond issue, it seems that people who had the 1987 issue, coming to maturity on June 1, did not realize that they had to do something to roll those bonds into the 1990 issue. The member is correct, and other colleagues have come to me indicating that the 1987 bondholders feel that they lost a few days in terms of the rollover. What I would like to recommend to my colleagues in caucus is that the government extend the closing deadline for 1987 bonds into June somewhat. Now, I'm being somewhat vague here, because I haven't got all the details down, but I think it's important to allow the '87 bondholders to roll them over because it's the end of a bond issue. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we would have to ensure that they were '87 rollovers only, for the same person and of the same denomination. I can confirm today for the member that we will extend the date for the rollover of 1987 bonds into this very popular, successful 1990 bond issue.

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

Ski-Free Marine Inc.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As long as a year ago, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade stated that the government was pulling back its financial involvement in the private sector. However, we see that the minister seems to have made an exception of Ski-Free Marine Inc., a company that makes unmanned, remote-controlled, jet-powered watercraft to pull waterskiers. This company received \$3.5 million in loan guarantees, \$1.5 million of it just recently, in January, plus the Treasury Branch has just agreed to a three-month interest abatement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, my question to the minister is: how does he justify this extension of a loan guarantee to such a ridiculous enterprise?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as the Provincial Treasurer indicated earlier, the transactions with the Treasury Branch and individual companies are within the jurisdiction of those two partners, and we cannot respond or offer advice as to what might happen there. As it relates to our involvement, yes, we are involved with an export loan guarantee and backing of Ski-Free Marine, because they are a very unique company in Calgary. Presently they have some orders for 390 Ski-Free watercraft, representing some \$2 million worth of sales. They are going through some difficulties. We are going to do some

work as it relates to restructuring, but to indicate that we're going to offer additional support is completely untrue.

MR. McEACHERN: I didn't say you were offering additional support. In fact, that was my next question, but I'll just put a couple of other points in between. [interjections] No. This government has lots of money when it comes to its friends like Peter Pocklington, General Systems Research, and now Ski-Free Marine. But how come this government can't find the money when it comes to easing caseloads for social workers or quality day care or postsecondary education? Now, my question to this minister is: how much more good money are you going to throw after bad to such a frivolous enterprise?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member consistently and on every occasion forgets the good work that we have done for the small business community with our capital loan guarantee program, with our interest shielding, with the interest shielding that we have for the farming community. We can go on and on, and he picks out the occasional company that we do encounter some difficulties with.

This is one of the occasions whereby they are experiencing difficulties. We are working with them to restructure some of their debt, as has been indicated in a press release by Ski-Free, recognizing the unique nature of this company and the exportation of this product, which creates jobs in Calgary. And I'm happy at another time, recognizing your instruction earlier, to go through with the hon. member the multitude of programs that we have for everyday Albertans within this province so that we can continue with the economic growth we've experienced over the last number of years.

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

Court Caseloads

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a question for the Attorney General. Delays in youth and family court in Calgary and Edmonton have become intolerable, with juveniles waiting, often in custody, six or seven months for trial dates. Young people are actually pleading guilty when they have defences in order to avoid the delay. Now, over the past six years youth and family court charges have gone up about 50 percent – yes, 50 percent, Mr. Speaker – and cases have become more complex because of the Charter, yet funding in Calgary and Edmonton has gone up in the range of 20 percent or so. I'm wondering whether the minister will undertake some quick action to deal with this scandalous problem which is denying quick justice to our young offenders and treating them in many cases more harshly than adult offenders.

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I will acknowledge that there are some difficulties in getting quick access to courts in Calgary. A recent occurrence: a two-month delay, which is a panacea in comparison to the rest of Alberta, has recently – and I say recently – slipped to a five- to six-month period. That's not to cast it off. That's a very, very serious problem. But the young offender offences have a 100 percent increase since the '86 year. We have an initial report, but I find it to not have adequate information. We are trying to analyze as to what is happening in this area, and I don't think there's a quick fix. Appointing a number of judges or building brand-new courtrooms is not in itself the fix. In fact, I'd refer the member and his leader to the

great campaign of flipping the wallet around. It seems that since the election at that time it's just spend, spend, spend. I undertake the hon. member's representations, to give him and this Assembly an analysis and to do that as quickly as possible.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, talking about spend, spend, spend, since the government had money to build a Taj Mahal of a courthouse in Medicine Hat with fountains and atriums, which sits unused, when are we going to get some action by the government to deal with the courthouse facilities, particularly in Calgary, which are in scandalous disrepair and shortage?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the rhetoric and innuendo from the hon. member is not his customary way of conducting himself. I can assure the hon. member that the courthouse in Drumheller, which was completed in 1983, and the courthouse in Medicine Hat, which was complete in 1986, were both needed and are both being used.

Calgary is an exception. We, in fact, have under way in our planning process in public works a process that will add another seven courtrooms to the family courts, but you don't do those overnight. We also have to take very, very good analysis as to why we're having the increase in young offenders. Are the police picking up people more, on different kinds of charges? Is the Young Offenders Act itself not working the way it should, which I think is definitely one of the situations. But that analysis is under way, and once we have the details, I can assure the hon. member and the people of Calgary that the problem will be solved.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Smoky River.

Health Care in Rural Areas

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend I've had the opportunity of meeting with three different groups who shared their concern about adequately meeting the health care needs of rural Alberta. I can certainly share their concerns. I represent a constituency of over 20,000 people that has four doctors; all four have been educated outside of Canada. Their concern basically is the fact that local doctors will not service rural Alberta and we seem to no longer be able to access doctors who have been trained in other countries. My question is to the Minister of Health. Could she perhaps give us some insight as to just how this situation has developed and where we are at the moment?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, it's coincidental that the hon. member was meeting this weekend because I, too, was addressing the conference on rural health care in Drumheller over the weekend to deal with exactly the issue the hon. member raises. Certainly the issue of licensing requirements for foreign-trained physicians is one part of the larger issue of the supply and the distribution of physician manpower throughout the province in order that we can provide necessary medical services to all Albertans.

We've discussed on several occasions the responsibility – the fact that the licensing of physicians has been delegated by legislation to the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and I have indicated that my first interest is to ensure that the licensing process is fair. As members may recall, the Human Rights Commission reviewed the licensing process of the college and found that the process of licensing foreign-trained physicians was in fact discriminatory because there was preferential treatment

being given to some foreign-trained physicians because of their country of origin. So I believe the college responded appropriately when they recommended to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that changes in their bylaws make the process fundamentally fairer.

However, the issue is not just one of fairness, as we well know, because the needs have to be assessed to ensure adequate physician manpower supply in rural Alberta. The special register that the college has maintained has been very helpful as a source of physicians to some rural communities.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My concern still centres around adequately meeting the needs of the rural constituents, so my next question is to the minister. What is it that you are planning to do? What changes do you foresee that may alleviate the present circumstances and the conditions that we are caught up in at the present time?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, we have one component of the package; that is, the assessment that the procedure will now be fair to all physicians in Alberta. But I want to assure Albertans and this House that I will not be proceeding with the bylaw changes recommended by the college until I'm in a position to implement a package of initiatives that I believe is going to result in a better distribution of physicians throughout the province.

Our challenge is clearly one of distribution, not of supply. Therefore, I currently have a task force on rural physician manpower, which includes the two deans of medicine in our province as well as the Council of Teaching Hospitals and the rural health care association. I anticipate their recommendations to me in June. Managing the transition between the current system and any new initiatives that we will undertake is going to be very important to prevent any disruption of the delivery of health services in rural Alberta.

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

Agricultural Assistance

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It took almost two months of persistent questioning by the Official Opposition to get the Minister of Agriculture to agree to participate in a joint federal/provincial program designed to put new money on the table to address the real income problems . . . [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. members, please, could we have some order? We were making pretty good headway in this question period until now.

The hon. Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: This program is designed, Mr. Speaker, to put new money on the table to address the real income problems that are confronted by Alberta farmers in the 1990s. Now, the Minister of Agriculture's been around long enough; he should know that the \$35 million that he used and that the federal Minister of Agriculture accepted as part of Alberta's portion represents nothing more than an off-loading of federal government responsibility for funding crop insurance premiums. It doesn't put new money on the table to address the real income needs of farmers. I'd like to ask the Minister of Agriculture how he justifies including that bogus figure in our share of the money

when he recognizes that it doesn't put a penny – doesn't put a penny – of new money in the pockets of farmers in the province of Alberta.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the last time I checked, that \$35.1 million was coming out of the budget presented to this House and was Alberta taxpayer money. I think the hon. member should know that the agreement to cost share crop insurance was done to get certain improvements to that insurance. If we had sat back and let the producer pay the full increased costs, they'd be worse off at their bottom line. I think the agreement, although we got recognized for a number of programs that this government is doing to help the bottom line, still did not recognize a number of other programs that our farmers certainly are aware of and appreciate.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, the \$35 million does not put one penny into the pockets of farmers in the province of Alberta in the form of new money. The minister knows that.

I'd like to ask him if he will agree to reinstate the 2 cents a litre benefit taken from farmers in the Provincial Treasurer's March 22 budget, recognizing that that would put \$20 million of direct assistance into the pockets of the farmers who need it most, those in the grain and oilseed sectors, without them having to apply and having to wait.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think I again should remind the hon. member that there are new dollars in this year's budget to cover the expanded lending in the farm credit stability program. That is certainly helping the farmers' bottom line. There is a farm credit stability program out there that is currently shielding at the 9 percent rate \$23 billion worth of agricultural debt in this province. There is another big program through the Ag Development Corporation shielding interest rates at 9 and 6 percent for over \$1.1 billion. There is the best fuel rebate program that you will find in Canada. There is the best fertilizer rebate program that you will find in Canada. The hon. member knows very well that his farmers know and appreciate those programs, and if he wishes to debate with me in the Vegreville constituency, all he has to do is invite me out.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn.

Liquor Sales in Hotels

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in response to my questions the Solicitor General talked about rationalization – and that's his word – of retail liquor sales. I'm sure the people of rural Alberta would be interested in knowing which ALCB outlets are on his hit list. However, today I'd like to ask about phase 3. Phase 3 of the Solicitor General's scheme to privatize liquor stores would see hotels in larger communities extend their off-sales to hard liquor. So my question is to the Solicitor General. Could the minister tell the Legislature why this change is needed when these communities are already served by ALCB outlets with extended hours?

MR. FOWLER: In many of those areas, Mr. Speaker, the stores that are there in fact are not open six days a week in any case. We feel that where we are dealing with one set of hotels by population, it may not in fact be entirely fair to all of the other hotels, and for that reason we are making it available right across the province.

MR. PASHAK: Well, Mr. Speaker, there's a fundamental difference between being able to purchase and consume liquor in a hotel room, as the minister suggested the other day, and driving around in the middle of the night to buy a bottle of hard liquor. I'm not concerned about the bar keys; I'm concerned about the car keys. To the Solicitor General: why is the minister so concerned about propping up hotel liquor sales that he'd like to see people buying hard liquor at 2 o'clock in the morning?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, again the hon. member makes an assumption that to my knowledge is going to be incorrect. Possibly the hon. member would advise me what hotels are going to be selling at 2 o'clock in the morning so that I can do something about it, because that's not the intent at all, and that time will be developed. I feel that in all probability the greater concern is the fear of lost jobs to members of the Alberta Union of Public Employees. [some applause] Thank you, hon. member.

I wish to advise the House, Mr. Speaker, that I had a good meeting with the president, Mrs. Wocknitz, of AUPE yesterday, who does her very best to lead this union in these more difficult times. She and two other members of her executive, one from local 50 of the ALCB employees as well as one other executive – and I felt that she put forward a very strong position, as was expected by her, on behalf of local 50 members. It was my assurance to her that we in fact are not intending on privatizing the whole of this industry, and that wasn't the intent when we brought about this new policy. We are trying to catch up with the rest of western Canada and in fact Canada, Mr. Speaker, because what we are putting in is still less restrictive than what occurs in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair had some indication that there might be a request to revert to the Introduction of Special Guests, but some members have sent notes saying that their people have left because of the delay in getting into Oral Question Period today. Is there anybody who desires to do that?

Well, before calling Orders of the Day, I'll just remind members that we backslid one question today. We were making good headway, but something happened, and I hope we can get back to yesterday's production tomorrow.

Point of order? Is there a point . . . No. The hon. Member for Calgary-Millican has withdrawn his point of order.

Orders of the Day

head: Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 19 Financial Consumers Act

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

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Others have spoken on this already, and this is second reading, so my remarks will be brief. But I'd like to say that this Bill is in general a compliment to its author – I mean by that the minister – because it fills a gap which existed when there was a need for a code of fairness such as we find in the Unfair Trade Practices

Act. Yet that Act does not apply to the sale of securities, and the attempt has been to bring that code of fairness into the sale of securities. The Bill is good in principle, and if I may take the chance to say something in our benefit, I suppose, it does resemble the recommendations we made in 1988 when we dealt with the matter ourselves.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the minister should have a look at the part that deals with the responsibilities of consumers. There are some who think there is no need to set out requirements for consumers to exercise common sense in making the right inquiries and so on, that that smacks somehow of blaming the victim if it's to be taken into account in cases of compensation. But it seems to me that common sense must require some minimum, some minimum acumen or inquisitiveness or common sense on the part of someone that purchases securities. My concern about the part as drafted – and I'm not getting specific here; I'm dealing with the principle of the part – is that it seems not to have clearly stated whether you're dealing with an absolute standard or a relative one. That's to say: is there a standard for everybody that's the same in point of what they ought to know? If they do know, there's no argument. It's what they ought to know that worries one. Is the standard the same for the businessman as for the little old lady at the corner who has \$10,000 that she wants to do better with in terms of yield than in a savings account? I believe there should be work done to make that clear.

I think that in the application of the Act there must be a look at the unduly restrictive definitions of "financial planning" and "financial planner."

I also hope that at least the draft regulations will be before us when we proceed to Committee of the Whole. I'm afraid I complain about their absence all the time, but I'm in good company because the Conservative government of the day in 1973, after having previously complained about this when they were in opposition, brought out the recommendation that always, unless there's good reason to the contrary, the regulations, providing they are a substantive part of the scheme of the Bill, should be drafted and laid before us at committee stage.

So I ask that those three areas be looked at, and I'll be glad to send our proposed amendments to the minister so that he can have a look at them too.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank all members who participated for the support that they've indicated for the Bill in second reading and for the comments that they've made with respect to possible changes and various areas of policy related to the Bill. I'd like to particularly welcome the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, glad to see him up and around, as I'm sure all members are, and wish him the very best over the next while.

Mr. Speaker, all three members who've spoken on this particular Bill have made reference to the section of the new Bill which refers to consumer responsibilities, and that is as it should be. This is an innovative and a new section with regards to legislation in a general sense. The Member for Calgary-Buffalo in particular had some concerns with regards to this section, and I might say that if I believed this section would be interpreted in such a way as to manage to make those practitioners in the field, those sellers of financial products, not responsible for other actions under the Act, I would not support the inclusion of this particular section. However, I do believe we have accounted for

that possibility in the Bill and have, rather, made this part of the balance we're trying to achieve in both education of consumers and of suppliers and with respect to the very necessary concentration that all partners in this marketplace have to have in terms of ensuring that they take a look at the complexities that are there in this fast-moving marketplace.

I want to draw a couple of things to members' attention with respect to the responsibility section. The first is that this is only to be taken into account – not to be a judgment of, but taken into account – when an arbitrator or a court is making a decision on the basis of a complaint that's been raised regarding contraventions of this particular Act. Perhaps more important, section 16 quite clearly states that in terms of business practices an individual could not, for example, take advantage of a consumer or mislead a consumer or withhold information from a consumer. Any contravention of that particular section – by all legal advice that I've received regarding this particular Bill, those items would be taken into account when judging how the consumer carried out their responsibility in a particular case.

Even more important, perhaps, is section 38 of the Bill, which I could state because it is a very brief section, entitled "Failure does not permit avoidance":

38 The failure of one person to comply with this Act does not relieve any other person from complying with this Act.

So regardless of whether or not a consumer did not fulfill a particular portion of the responsibility section, if it was found that a salesperson or a company contravened the Act, they would be guilty by that section by all interpretation that I know of. Having said that, it is a new section; we will take another look at it to try and ensure that indeed that fairness, that balance, that concept of having both parties involved and involved in a fair way, is there. I would say one other thing regarding the responsibility section, and that is that these are responsibilities related to new responsibilities on the part of the supplier and the business and the company, responsibilities that have not existed before. So in terms of adjudicating this particular system, these particular requirements, I think it is even more important that there be that balance achieved. We have had support in development of the Bill through its lengthy consultative process from the Consumers Association of Alberta, from various industry groups, and others who have been involved with it for that concept of consumer responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, another section raised by the Member for Calgary-Buffalo was with respect to arbitration. He suggested that this might contravene the Charter of Rights or federal jurisdiction. We have referred the Bill to the constitutional law section of our Attorney General's department and are advised that that is not the case, that it is in keeping with those rights. In fact, as opposed to any legal interpretation, I believe very much that this provides for quicker, better justice than we could achieve for the citizen if one has to always go through the lengthy and potentially expensive court process. So we have tried to provide that alternative.

Now, the Member for Calgary-Buffalo rightly raised the fact that there are not in fact some of the details in the Bill regarding arbitration. That's true. This is a system that will take us a year to two years to evolve in terms of the detail. We will need that time to make sure there's a list of effective arbitrators and to make sure that that justice is there.

In that respect, I also refer to the section on financial planning. The Member for Edmonton-Strathcona is quite correct. There are not details related to this here. I am unable to table regulations because this very complex area, which tries to encompass individuals who give advice regarding financial plans,

has been looked at in some depth over the past year and a half by this government. Other governments across Canada have attempted this as well, and we feel that the best direction related to this is to in fact allow individual consumers to choose a financial planner who has that title, knowing that there are certain ethics, certain qualifications, certain ways of operating that that person subscribes to. Once again, in working out the details with various industry groups and with the Consumers Association, this will require some more time and is, in fact, enabling legislation in that regard.

So there are the three areas that would not come into effect immediately, that would take some time for consultation and evolution of the regulations. I would invite the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, other members who have spoken, and members in general to give me any advice or suggestions or evolved concepts they have as we go through that process. The financial planning is one that will take perhaps as much as a year to finalize. The arbitration process and the plain-language documentation will take up to perhaps two years to come into place, because obviously we will have to give the industry time to evolve the new forms to make sure they're in place and to have an understanding of what is required in that respect.

Mr. Speaker, there were some other detailed suggestions given by members, particularly the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway in his remarks last evening. We will review those and address them in Committee of the Whole stage of the Bill. We'll consider all the remarks made by members. Once again I would say that I appreciate the positive comments made, the input given, and also some of the thinking that has gone into previous suggestions, by the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona in particular.

[Motion carried; Bill 19 read a second time]

Bill 22

Agricultural Development Amendment Act, 1990

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, in general, the changes proposed in Bill 22, the Agricultural Development Amendment Act, will provide the necessary framework for program and administrative flexibility to respond to agrifinance needs in the '90s. This is the first major rewrite of the Act since the corporation was created in 1972. The changes are designed to include client service to Alberta farmers and agribusiness, to bring ADC's lending and guaranteed limits in line with current-day demands, \$1 million before requiring an order in council approval, similar to the Alberta Opportunity Company. The changes will also provide the ability to offer more financing options to farmers, such as our new vendor mortgage program, and advance the diversification, development, and value-added processing areas of agriculture; for example, our venture capital endeavours.

Amendments also bring the Art more into synchronization with the way ADC is structured and now operating and reflect changes recommended by legal counsel. ADC has operated since 1972 under the purview of the Public Service Act. This was probably a carryover from the days of its predecessor, the Farm Purchase Board, which also operated under the Public Service Act. Amendments to the Act provide for ADC to opt out from the jurisdiction of the Public Service Act. This puts the corporation on the same basis as other major provincial Crown corporations in Alberta. It allows us to address some unique personnel operational situations, management issues such as position classifications, recruitment, and payroll problems.

The bottom line is better service by ADC to farmers and agribusiness clients.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

The amendments also delete what was referred to as the Agricultural Development Fund. This was a standard clause that was put in the legislation back in the 1970s. Since ADC gets its funds advanced from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, this clause is redundant, has never been used, and as a result is being deleted.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 22.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In speaking on Bill 22, second reading, the Bill that amends the Agricultural Development Act, I think it's fair to note that I may well have been one of the first young farmers in the province of Alberta helped by the Act the minister refers to that was brought in in 1972. I have no qualms about mentioning that and expressing my appreciation for what I think was a forward-looking piece of legislation designed to facilitate the entry of young people into agriculture at a time when governments recognized that we had a rapidly aging farm population and there was some need for the province to be a little more involved and a little more aggressive in terms of providing funding for people anxious to get involved in agriculture, people willing to take the risks to try and build a future in rural Alberta. We were helped; we appreciated it. We paid it all back, every penny, and for that I'm thankful.

The minister notes that the Bill has not changed since 1972, and I think that's a reflection of some of the things that went sour along the way. I think the minister would agree that the ADC, in terms of its lending practices, has been too slow to adapt to changing circumstances. And I'm not sure anyone could have predicted what was going to happen in the '70s. It was a time of turmoil to be sure, Mr. Speaker. We'd gone through several years where prices of farm commodities, the cost of inputs, the cost of interest had all been relatively stable. We were in an industry that was relatively predictable, but moving into the middle '70s, inflation was a word that people were hearing for the first time. You'd pay – I don't know – five bucks for a gallon of antifreeze one year and it was 25 the next, and the value of farm commodities increased appreciably: rapeseed, \$9 a bushel in 1973. So there was a sudden upturn in the agriculture industry that resulted in tremendous enthusiasm in the industry, Mr. Speaker, both in terms of people wanting to get into agriculture, people anxious to expand, and in terms of the attitudes displayed by the provincial government and their lending agencies. Hence the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation.

During that time there were a number of people who were persuaded by the government lending institutions to get in over their heads, who were turned down when they submitted what they thought were reasonable plans, reasonable five-year projections for operating their farms based on realistic figures and were told: "Well, we want a viable economic unit here. We don't want you to borrow \$80,000 from us to buy a secondhand tractor, a combine, and a quarter of land and rent a quarter from your neighbour and try and get established and maybe work off the farm. We don't want you to do that. In fact, we don't want you to work off the farm at all; we want you to build

a viable economic unit. So we'll lend you \$200,000, and you buy a new tractor and a new combine and two quarters of land and rent some." When faced with decisions like that, Mr. Speaker, people would – you know, "Do I forget about farming altogether or do I take the extra money they're offering me." Most people opted for taking the extra money.

Now, that doesn't absolve them of the responsibility. I've never suggested that it has, because those people signed on the dotted line. Those people made a commitment to the ADC, but that commitment was based on pressure that wasn't too subtle and on predictions made by this government and their Department of Agriculture of just unrestrained growth and optimism in the agriculture industry. "There's a hungry world out there beating a path to the door of Alberta farmers, ready to buy whatever we have to sell, and they're going to pay anything for it." So there was this mood in the industry, and we got trapped by it, Mr. Speaker. When the downturn came, when commodity prices fell, when interest rates – I believe it was thanks to a Liberal government – went up to 22 percent, it really jeopardized . . .

MR. TAYLOR: At least we've been in government rather than in the backhouse all the time.

MR. FOX: Well, you'll never be in government again at that rate.

Anyway, the result was that a depressing number of farm families in the province of Alberta were forced to abandon their futures in agriculture. They ended up so deep in debt they couldn't possibly make the payments based on the value of commodities they had available for sale, and even those established farmers found that their asset base was eroded by declining land values in the face of rising interest rates. It jeopardized the liquidity of a number of existing farmers in the province of Alberta. A lot of bad situations, some of which were beyond our control, Mr. Speaker, I admit that. But I do think the government has some responsibility to bear in terms of encouraging people to get into agriculture based on some rather optimistic projections and because of the lending practices of the ADC.

I think that when we discuss any solutions to those problems in terms of trying to cope with the massive amount of debt held by farmers in the province of Alberta through ADC lending, we need to recognize that it's a shared responsibility, that it's not enough to say, as some ministers in this government have said, that it's the responsibility of the farmer who signed on the dotted line; there's a loan, and to heck with them. I think the lending institutions, both Crown and private, and the government have to recognize the shared responsibility in coming up with solutions that have as a goal revitalizing agriculture and maintaining healthy rural communities.

There's also something to be said for problems with the lending practices of ADC in terms of this requirement that you couldn't have off-farm income. Now, that may have been a noble purpose in the beginning. I don't know what caused that to be a condition, but that was a condition in the beginning. Again, it was something . . . Circumstances changed and the corporation was too slow to change to meet those circumstances, Mr. Speaker. I know of farm operations where young, aggressive, talented farm operators had loans with ADC, were making payments on their loans as full-time farmers; commodity prices dropped and they went out and got jobs. So instead of working, you know, a 12-hour day as a farmer, they were working an eight-hour day as a roustabout or rig hand or something like that

and 12 hours a day as a farmer trying to make their payments. And the ADC would call their loan on them: "You can't have that loan because you've got off-farm income; we won't give it to you." We lost some valuable people from the industry and from rural communities because of that unnecessarily restrictive condition, admittedly a provision that's changed now but one that didn't change soon enough.

One of the major provisions of this Bill, one of the major principles, I think would have to be described as the enabling legislation for the vendor lending program that the minister announced just before session. Again, I think it's fair to point out that that's an example of a government and its agency being too slow to adapt to changing circumstances. Now, the vendor lending program is a good program, the idea that we as a government should be able to facilitate private-sector capital held in the form of equity in land by parents or neighbours and access that capital so young farmers can get into farming. We guarantee the loan at a certain percentage in exchange for a less than prevailing interest rate on the loan. It's a good arrangement.

Again, something I should point out to hon. members is that we in the Official Opposition were advocating a vendor lending program for farmers as long ago as 1982. What goes around comes around. Another example of concrete, positive, forward-looking suggestions made by the Official Opposition, rejected out of hand by the government and then brought in a few years later by the government of the day. It reminds me of my hon. colleague the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona talking about Bill 19, having just gone through second reading. Many of the provisions contained in that piece of legislation are based on recommendations made by us years ago, things that should have been done years ago. If they'd only listened to us when we raised the concerns, perhaps we could have saved the taxpayers of the province and some investors in the province an awful lot of money.

The vendor lending program, Mr. Speaker, is one that we support wholeheartedly; we think it's a good idea. But it's one that would have been a lot more effective three or four years ago. I submit there aren't that many young people in the province of Alberta clamouring to get into agriculture at this point in time, faced with the kind of income prospects that are there, looking at rising interest rates, looking at commodity price projections, looking at what the free trade deal's done to undermine the future of agriculture. There aren't a lot of people standing in line waiting for this vendor lending program. So although it's a good idea – we'll certainly support the parts of this Bill that are, in fact, enabling legislation for that worthwhile program – it's an idea that I wish the government had responded to sometime earlier.

I remember even the Member for Cypress-Redcliff advocating a program of this nature two or three years ago. Even if it had been brought in then . . . It's not a complicated program, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Cypress-Redcliff and I could have written the regulations over a one-hour meeting and implemented this three years ago. Perhaps it took a change of ministers to bring that in. That might be the case. But I think the ADC and the government responsible for its administration have to bear some of the responsibility for that corporation being too slow to change in changing circumstances.

Basically I would have to describe Bill 22 as a housekeeping Bill, Mr. Speaker. It seems like a pretty straightforward piece of legislation, designed, as I said, to facilitate the vendor lending program and in part eliminate the Agricultural Development Fund that the minister points out is redundant. Several portions

of the Bill that I've read through merely redefine or clarify the specifics relating to the lending of money to qualified borrowers and the acquisition and disposition of farmland by the corporation. I hope the minister will have an opportunity to tell us, either in summing up debate in second reading or during committee, just how much land the ADC now has title to. I know that's changed over the years. There were fairly dire predictions made in the snappy little report on ADC they put out, Options and Opportunities, that projected that, you know, the ADC would soon hold title to hundreds if not thousands of quarter sections of land. I just don't have the figures at my fingertips, but I understand there's been some progress made in that regard, and if the minister would provide that information to us, I think it's relevant to the debate of this Bill.

The sections about the ADC lending money to qualified borrowers is an interesting one. It's something that came up when the minister announced that the ADC was providing some loans or loan guarantees to a company in southern Alberta to process waxy barley. Somebody came to me and said: "Well, can they do that? How can they do that? They're supposed to lend money to farmers." But clearly that's in the mandate of the ADC, and it's properly in the mandate of the ADC, because what they're doing is lending money to businesses that are involved in agriculture and supplement agriculture, provide further processing opportunities for Alberta – well, in this case not an Alberta agricultural product; hopefully in the future it will be – but provide a processing capability. I think that's positive and supportable.

As well, one of the principles of the Bill is to change the lending limits on loans or aggregates of loans, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's something most members will surely support. The circumstances have changed – farms are larger; generally the amount of capital required to operate a modern farming operation has increased – and changing the limit on loans or aggregates of loans from \$500,000 to a million dollars is, I think, positive and supportable.

There's part of the Bill as well that prevents the corporation from acquiring or disposing of land for the purposes of withdrawing land from agricultural use without the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Now, that may seem like a minor adjustment, a minor change in principle, but again, I think it's a positive one, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't mean that ADC land can't be acquired by or disposed of by the corporation for purposes that would withdraw it from agriculture. It means they would have to jump through a few hoops in order to have that happen. They would at least have to go to cabinet and seek approval for that kind of thing. I think that's a positive inclusion.

When I read through the Bill, I referred to that as the Cormie clause, Mr. Speaker, because I think that comes into play when we're looking at the potential sale of the Cormie ranch out near Tomahawk. What we would need to do in examining the merits of such a proposal is make sure – I mean, that's not ADC land, but I'm just using this as an example – that that land that is currently in agricultural use, if it's going to be withdrawn from agricultural use, does not jeopardize the industry. I think that's clearly the case out there. The land in question is not particularly productive. It doesn't pasture that many head per quarter, and the developments out there sound positive. I think requiring that the corporation get approval from the Lieutenant Governor in Council before either acquiring or disposing of land for the purposes of withdrawing it from agriculture is positive.

I'm anxious, however, to see the Bill tightened up, and if the minister is not intending to introduce amendments in committee,

then I signal my intention to do so. In fact, I've discussed this with him, Mr. Speaker, and that is to make sure that the corporation does not have the ability to dispose of ADC-held land to foreign interests, interests outside Canada, without getting approval from the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Now, the regulations that are in place, the Citizenship Act and the Agricultural and Recreational Land Ownership Act, outline regulations respecting the ownership of agricultural and recreational land in the province. They've got quite a few restrictions on foreign ownership of land, well described, but on the first page of these regulations it clearly exempts Crown land.

The minister and I have had some disagreement as to what constitutes Crown land. I believe it's his opinion that ADC land is not Crown land. That may be his interpretation, but I submit that it could easily be determined by someone that it is. The ADC is an agent of the Crown. When the ADC acquires land, it acquires land on behalf of the Crown. I don't know how it can be interpreted any other way, and if these regulations are interpreted correctly, land of the Crown in the right of Alberta is exempted from the regulations here. In other words, these regulations apply to privately held land. Land people own in the province of Alberta can't be sold to foreign interests without an exemption from these regulations from the Lieutenant Governor in Council. But that does not apply to Crown land, and I submit it does not apply to ADC land, and I'd like to see that provision tightened up.

I think we need to make sure that some of the predictions that were made when this Options and Opportunities report came out a few years ago do not come to fruition. I might remind the hon. minister that one of the recommendations included in that report was that the regulations respecting foreign ownership of land be relaxed. That was a recommendation in the report. That, taken in tandem with the free trade agreement – the sort of eventual wholesale integration of our economy with the American economy – taken along with an agency of the Crown holding title to hundreds of quarter sections of land, along with a Provincial Treasurer desperate to sell off anything the province has title to in order to try and pretend that his books are balanced and indicate to the people of the province of Alberta that he's anything other than incompetent as a Treasurer, causes me some concern that there may be the temptation, perhaps not on the part of this minister but down the road, to dispose of ADC-held land, Crown land in my estimation, to foreign interests. Admittedly, putting in an amendment that would require approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council before that could happen, require a cabinet rubber stamp for that to happen, is not a stringent restriction. It doesn't prevent it from happening, but it at least requires that a process be followed and the review that takes place is done in cabinet with supposedly a broader representation of opinion than just the boardroom of the ADC or discussion between the minister and his cohorts over there. So I'd like the minister to think about that a little bit.

I've checked with several eminent legal authorities, including the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona and the Member for Calgary-Buffalo and some other people whose opinions I respect very much in this regard. They think ADC-held land is Crown land, I think it is, and we're going to have to deal with that in terms of the Bill.

I think we have to support the role of the ADC in the agricultural industry, Mr. Speaker. There was a time when I and the Official Opposition were advocating that the ADC be wound down, that the ADC was perhaps an expensive and unnecessary bureaucracy in terms of providing lending assistance to farmers,

that we had the necessary expertise out in the country in the form of Treasury Branches and credit unions to provide that lending assistance. To make sure the will of the provincial government was exercised in the farm community, we had the vehicle there. Did we really need this extra structure of bureaucracy? I do think that the ADC has changed its mandate sufficiently and targeted enough programs towards beginning farmers and trying to encourage diversification that there's an important role to play there. I'm going to support this Bill, retaining the right to make suggestions for improvements and judge the impact at some later date.

But I did find it interesting. I was reading a little article that the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon sent to some rural papers, and although I had trouble getting the drift of that article, it seemed to me he was complaining about the fact that the provincial government was lending money to farmers. I don't know if that meant he didn't support the ADC lending money to farmers or support the fact that the Alberta farm credit stability program had lent money to farmers, but he was pointing out at some length that the provincial government had, I think, almost \$5 billion of the \$6 billion in . . . I think that's the figure he used. I don't think that would be an accurate figure, but anyway he had a substantial portion of the almost \$6 billion in farm lending under the auspices or the jurisdiction of the provincial government through one form or another. Compared to other jurisdictions, he suggests we're out of whack, that the federal government, the Farm Credit Corporation, has a much greater portion of the loan portfolio in provinces outside the province of Alberta and somehow that meant something was amiss. I didn't quite comprehend that.

I think that, you know, we do have some good farm lending programs in the province of Alberta. The farm credit stability program, though I tried without success to amend that in several ways – and I won't debate it here because it's not relative to Bill 22, Mr. Speaker. I won't ask the indulgence of the House to go over the history of the debate of the farm credit stability program, but it is an instrument of the provincial government that has provided some important lending assistance to the farm community. I think it could be improved, needs to be improved, but I don't understand the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon's objections to the fact that the province has a substantial . . .

MR. TAYLOR: Sit down and I'll explain it to you.

MR. FOX: Well, the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon says he's going to explain it to us after I sit down. I think it fair to suggest that not very many of us will understand it after he explains it to us, Mr. Speaker, but we'll wait for that explanation.

Anyway, I just signal my intention to introduce amendments at committee stage failing the minister's decision to do so – he's got time to make that decision – and express support on behalf of the Official Opposition caucus for Bill 22.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Cypress-Redcliff.

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened with interest to the hon. Member for Vegreville, and I'm sure that once the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon gets up and explains to us what he said in that article, we'll still be confused.

Mr. Speaker, in wanting to participate in second reading of the Bill, I should say that the hon. Member for Vegreville described some of the problems that have existed with ADC

through the years and indicated they were problems because ADC didn't act and didn't change their views. I would suggest some of the problems that occurred in the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation were problems because they did change. They changed the amounts that they would lend; they changed the down payments that we had to have to borrow from ADC. These were all changed because a number of young farmers had applied and were getting refused, and they thought it was unfair. So they came to the politicians of all parties in the House, and we went to the then ministers of Agriculture, and they went to ADC to get the policy changed.

So some of our problems occurred because we did change. We maybe changed too dramatically in some cases, though there is no question about the ability of only being able to borrow a portion of what you asked for. At one stretch along the way the corporation got on the need for a total unit and that you couldn't work off the farm, and that again was changed because of feelings some of us had about that being unfair. We went to the Minister of Agriculture and got the minister at that time to ask the ADC board to review the situation and again make a change to let people work off the farm and supplement their income and not have to borrow the full \$200,000 from the corporation. So ADC has been changed through the years, Mr. Speaker.

The other interesting version that the hon. Member for Vegreville commented on was that vendor lending was his idea or the ND Party's idea. That's interesting, because I can remember – I believe it was in about 1980 – having a motion on the Order Paper of this Assembly debating a system of financing that the Alberta Cattle Commission had done a great deal of work on, a system that exists in the United States, and how they fund purchase of their farmland and exchange of their farmland. I can remember – I believe even the present Minister of Agriculture may have debated that motion as a new MLA and participated in that debate and talked about the need to get such a system, which is very, very similar to vendor financing, where the seller takes an active interest in the farm and supervises the farm.

It wasn't three years ago, hon. member, that that motion was put there. That was put there the second time three years ago. The first time it was there was a number of years ago, and I guess I would have to go back and check the record of how his party voted relating to that motion or how they spoke in support of that motion. I do remember the Member for Little Bow, in the Representative Party, speak in support of the motion, but I don't remember the ND Party supporting the motion. So to say that it's your idea or it's the idea of the party, you're just about five years late. Your research didn't go back far enough to find out that that idea was introduced into the Legislature by myself and supported by the Cattle Commission and the then Minister of Agriculture to get debate to see if we could go ahead or if that kind of a system would work in Alberta.*

I think if we had gone with that early, maybe we wouldn't have had the same problems with the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation, that the seller would have been still involved. I think that's one of the strong points of this legislation, that it allows that to take place. With the changes that have been made in the Agricultural Development Corporation as of late where young farmers can either go to lending institutions for beginning farmers or go to the development corporation and all these kinds of things, I think we'll see that ADC will be making rapid changes and keeping up to date with the needs of the farmers in Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*see page 2098, left col., para. 1

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

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find myself mentioned so often there that I thought I was part of the national anthem for a while. For instance, I can see why the hon. member, the agricultural critic for the NDP, and the hon. cabinet minister agree. They sort of scratch each others' back a little bit and say that, outside of minor imperfections, everything's perfect.

Second reading is on principle, and this is what I want to go after, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. Member for Vegreville touched on it: that I don't think the government should be lending the money. I actually think that in a free enterprise society with half a dozen banks out there and a dozen trust companies, there's no need to be putting a bureaucracy together to administer farm loans. We can in a policy way make it easier or maybe fill in a gap, but we don't have a bank for economic – well, we have one with the Opportunity Company, I'll agree, but we don't have a bank for the railroads; we don't have a bank for the oil companies. We don't have a bank for every industry that's in Alberta, but we go out and do one for the farmers.

It may pause a moment to understand why such a socialistic practice crept in, and it might pause why it came about. Although the government over there, or the people on the government side of the benches, quite often are accused of having maybe a little less than a full deck to play with, they really are not at fault on this issue. Because what appears to be a socialistic policy now of direct government interference, government say-so, and government domination in a field that would be better handled by the competitive nature of many banks and many financial institutions thinking up different packages for the farmer really came about in the early days of this government because of the plethora of wealth that filed into the coffers of the provincial government. There were literally millions – nay, billions, Mr. Speaker – coming into the Treasury, and the government was trying to figure some way of getting rid of it. Everybody said, "Well, instead of lending it to New Brunswick and Quebec or putting it in short-term bonds and letting the international banking community put it out and return money that way, let's put it to work in Alberta." Well, there was no way that . . . So, in effect, they came into being – the ADC, the Alberta Opportunity Company, and some of these others – as methods competing with private enterprise, trying to put more money into our economy. But now things have changed; we're short of dough. If anybody has read the Treasurer's report or if anybody is familiar with any government in Canada, regardless of its political faith, they're in trouble financially. Consequently, now it's to try to make the taxpayers' dollars go as far as possible.

Now, I've talked to many of the agricultural people around Alberta. One of the things that's concerning them is that more and more power is being acquired by the Agricultural Development Corporation. We have our own bank here, but did we really need it? I think there was a need for the Treasury Branches way back, but is there really a need for a farmers' bank called the Agricultural Development Corporation? I don't think so. I think a small group, the Minister of Agriculture and with the Provincial Treasurer, could easily define a system of subsidizing interest rates or handling vendor mortgages. It's not necessary for the government to be in the lending business to have vendor mortgages. Vendor mortgages are just a form of guarantee. We go out and guarantee everything from remote waterskiing devices to inventions on how to make new types of

diesels burn Mazola oil and salad oil. But those are guarantees; we didn't feel we had to put a bank together.

What we have here today, Mr. Speaker, is direct interference in the marketplace, which is very, very surprising from this government. In other words, I think this government should be taking a very serious look at whether ADC should exist at all, or if it exists, it should exist in an advisory, marginalizing, financing type of organization through the banks. One of the problems now is that ADC and FCC – the federal is the same thing, and it may be socialistic too, because it was started by the Liberals and Conservatives down there – control over 70 percent of agricultural debt in Alberta. Is that a good thing? Wouldn't it be better for our farm community to see the Royal competing with the Montreal, the Nova Scotia, Crown Trust, and all those?

No, what we're getting here from the hon. Member for Vegreville is the same type of worrying. We're cheering for the expansion, which the Minister of Agriculture has innocently fallen into, as we get in the questions day after day on the liquor stores. They're all worried about the liquor store employees not getting enough work to do. Now the hon. Member for Vegreville is worried that ADC, this huge pile of bureaucrats, might not be given enough work to do, but we have the . . .

MR. FOX: You know, the banks don't donate money to the NDP. They donate money to the Liberals.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think it's the appropriate time to remind hon. members that we are at second reading and that we are supposed to be debating the principles of the Bill. Hon. members have made some interesting comments on history and other parties' policies, but perhaps we could now move back to the Bill.

MR. TAYLOR: Okay. Well, that's exactly what I'm talking about. What we're talking about is the principle here. I know I've done some good, because when you touch the NDP cage and the whole bloody cage comes after you, you know you're doing all right.

But the principle here that I'm getting at is that we have a whole bureaucracy which the minister is expanding instead of cutting back. I think some of the aims that he's after here are quite commendable: vendor financing, helping young people to get farms, leaseback procedures. All those are things that can be run through the private sector, and think of it from the farmer's point of view. You notice that how the ADC is set up, it's becoming now that we're getting regional – the word they used to use was satraps. Those were regional governors, Mr. Speaker, that had all power in Roman times, and if you fell out of favour with the local satrap, you had no chance of doing business or keeping your land. This is what we're doing here with these ADC directors that have the right to accept, to reject, to go on. And don't forget this: government has 70 percent of the loans going out to agriculture. So that's a power that we're giving which we should not be giving, and, amazingly, from a Conservative government. I can't understand why they're not looking at it.

If I may go on a little bit more on the principle thing. The hon. Member, for Vegreville, as did the hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff, said that they didn't understand something I put out a short while ago. This has something to do with this, Mr. Speaker, so be patient with me. What I pointed out was that under the Alberta Development Corporation's aggressive lending policies, you know, more and more bureaucrats are employed getting more and more money out. What we've done

in the last 10 years is replaced a lot of the FCC money, the federal money. What I pointed out in these graphs – and I had hoped that the Member for Vegreville had gone to school enough to know how to interpret the graphs – was that the ADC, in its desire to expand and lend, had pushed the FCC out so that what we have done over the last number of years is that instead of more farmers borrowing money – because there weren't. The debt load per Saskatchewan and Alberta farmer was still the same, but the FCC carried nearly triple, two and a half times, as much debt per capita in Saskatchewan than it did in Alberta. Why? Because Alberta has carried much more debt.

Now, that's a funny thing to be bragging about: the ADC is so successful. I can see a socialist bragging: "Boy, aren't we something? Our state-owned company loaned a lot more money than your state-owned company, because we're better." Well, what a silly way – what kind of a race are we in here? So this is the point that I was putting out in a graph, and this is what the ADC is doing here.

MR. FOX: So you want the state-owned bank in Ottawa to lend more, eh?

MR. TAYLOR: If the Member for Vegreville with the paucity of hair covering will listen, there's an old Arab saying that if the camel's nose gets in the tent, then soon the neck, the first hump, the second hump, and you know what gets in too. Well, what's happened here with ADC is that the neck has gone in, the first hump is in, and the second hump is halfway into the tent.

So I can see why the Minister of Agriculture is getting all kinds of accolades from the Member for Vegreville, because what we have is rank interference with the free market structure, and not, as far as I can see, to the benefit of the farmer. The farmer is very worried if he upsets one of these local satraps, because they're the only ones lending money anymore. The bankers have said: "Well, to hell with you. If you want to run the thing, you can go ahead." But the point is that we've had some experience under the former Minister of Agriculture, God bless his pointed little soul. But he did invent a system where the government wrapped around private lending, wrapped money around private lending, used the banker's money and gave them a couple percent. That was done with a minimum of effort from the ADC. It was a good program. So all I'm saying here – and in the next readings, Mr. Speaker, I will be going on to that, because unless I get this Bill upset in second reading, on principle, and it gets defeated, then I will have to sit down and realize that indeed the NDP and the Tories are in bed together, and I'm going to have to learn how to make a quilt with the two of them. In which case then, Mr. Speaker, I will go to work and try to give constructive suggestions, and they have some that could be added.

But what I'd like to do now is just attack the whole principle that the ADC is becoming more and more the only source of farm financing and that this government has given up trying to work around the private competitive sector. I'm disappointed indeed that a government that calls itself conservative, let alone Progressive Conservative, would be sitting here expanding the bureaucracy in an area that we don't need more institutions in. Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Hon. minister, to close debate.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, one of the negatives of the rules of our Assembly is that you sometimes have to sit and listen to a

speech that is based on no logic or reason. On the other side, though, one of the positives is that you don't have to respond to it, and that's all I have to say in response to the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

The Member for Cypress-Redcliff I think responded historically to a number of the comments made by the Member for Vegreville, so there are just about three I'll comment on briefly.

First of all, I think the Member for Vegreville was suggesting that at some point in time, if farmers took off-farm income, ADC was calling loans. I think a little check of the record may show that that is not true. They may have been withholding beginner farm incentives, but to my knowledge a loan was never called because of off-farm employment.

I do not share the pessimism of the Member for Vegreville as to how many young people are looking at agriculture. Our records would indicate, both through ADC lending and through the farm credit stability program, that there's been a pretty significant increase in the optimism of entering the industry in the last few months.

I will promise to check out the figures on the amount of land that ADC currently holds, but I can say that it peaked at over 700 quarter sections a couple of years ago. I'll check this figure, but I believe today we're at less than 300 quarter sections. We've moved a significant amount of land right across this province by the public auction method, starting last fall. It has worked very successfully and came in relatively close to appraised value. I'm of the opinion, as I shared with the member before, but I will double-check it, that since ADC land or any lands that they may hold – and the only time they'll hold land is if it's either quitclaimed or foreclosed upon; we're talking about patented, deeded land. To the best of my knowledge, any deeded land has to get through the order in council process under foreign land ownership before it can be sold, but I will double-check that.

Having said that, I will wait for committee debate.

[Motion carried; Bill 22 read a second time]

Bill 23

Agricultural Statutes Amendment Act, 1990

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, Bill 23, the Agricultural Statutes Amendment Act, 1990, actually amends three Acts and repeals one. Most of the amendments are fairly straightforward.

The Hail and Crop Insurance Act required an amendment because, as you're aware, commencing this year we are sharing 50-50 with Canada: 50 percent of the crop insurance premiums. This Act permits that to occur. In other words, it permits the Alberta government to pay part of the premium as well as the administration, which was the case under the old Act.

The second Act amended is the Livestock and Livestock Products Act. Basically, we're making two changes here. One is to allow the money in the Livestock Patron's Assurance Fund to earn interest and have that interest returned to the fund. The other is to remove the limit of \$1 million that is in the Act now and put that in regulation so that it can be more quickly responsive to the marketplace.

The third Act that has a number of changes is the Weed Control Act, and basically it's a streamlining of the Act. It's coordinating it with the Agricultural Pests Act: making penalty levels stronger and more consistent with the Agricultural Pests

Act, giving a little bit more authority to enforcement officers to keep weeds under control. It repeals the Seed Control Areas Act, which is a redundant Act that has not been used for years.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 23.

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

MR. FOX: Age before beauty.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you. This time I'm going ahead, and then he can take a kick at me later on.

This one actually doesn't look too bad as the minister, in second reading, talked in principle.

The Hail and Crop Insurance Act. I think that I, like other members of the opposition, both left and right – of course, the right is now sitting over there. There's a cabinet minister over there, but it used to be left and right on both sides of me.

AN HON. MEMBER: Left and right's right there. You're all over the place.

MR. TAYLOR: Now I'm all over the place.

We have recommended for some time that the province get off its assets and put money into the Hail and Crop Insurance Act, and now they are doing so. The only complaint I have is that the federal government withdrew some of the money it's putting in there, so the protection to the farmer isn't as much as it should be. It'd have been nicer to see the federal government keep its contribution at the same amount and the provincial government match it. What's happened is that instead of a third, a third, a third, we got 25, 25, and the farmer with 50, which is a little bit tough. Nevertheless, I don't have any great suggestions on the Hail and Crop Insurance Act. The principle of having a crop insurance Act; I think, is quite valid.

The principle of the Livestock and Livestock Products Act is long overdue, and I congratulate the provincial government for sort of being dragged into the 1990s – it appears willingly, though – although I question whether the \$50,000 is enough now. One of these big cattle liners full of cattle, I think, would run more than that. But that's a detail, Mr. Speaker, I could bring up in the amendments later on. I think they're a little low there.

The Weed Control Act puzzles me a bit in that I don't know why nuisance weeds are no longer subject to control, because noxious weeds and nuisance weeds – and I know that the minister is looking a little puzzled. These are the weeds that grow in the field, not the ones that you smoke. These two weeds are not defined in the Weed Control Act. I think we could do more in the definition, because certainly you take some nuisance weeds like wild barley, crabgrass, quack grass: things like that, I think, should be looked at pretty good.

I think that reducing the power of the inspector who could formally give notice for destruction of crops may not have been a wise idea. The appeal process has to be made within 10 days rather than 15 days. That's a compliment. But I'm getting into more details now, and I think I would be better to bring those up in the estimates or in the committee stage. But I repeat again that . . .

MR. LUND: Not in estimates; in Committee of the Whole.

MR. TAYLOR: Okay. Committee of the Whole. I'm sorry. The hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House is quite right. I stand corrected.

But I don't believe the Weed Control Act, which is the basic philosophy behind this, is well enough worded to really go ahead with the housekeeping, and I would suggest that maybe before it gets to committee stage, some amendments be brought in by the government.

Thank you.

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

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to bat cleanup after the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon. The wisdom he imparts on us talking about Bill 23, the Agricultural Statutes Amendment Act: he's saying he's glad the province is assuming a larger share of the responsibility for paying crop insurance premiums and that the federal government's reduced their share. He made exactly the opposite argument only two minutes ago in debating the ADC Act when he was trying to talk about his concerns relative to the fact that the provincial state-owned bank had a greater share of the agricultural lending portfolio than the federal state-owned bank. It was one of the more interesting defences of the major lending institutions in the country. The banks donate so generously and so willingly to the Liberal Party that I can understand why he'd want to get that on record. Perhaps his leader can shop that around corporate Calgary when he's collecting donations for the next election. Anyway, I found it most entertaining and always enjoy the presentations by the member.

In terms of Bill 23, most of what's included in here is quite innocuous, as opposed to noxious weeds: an innocuous Bill. It is housekeeping seeking to amend a few statutes that need a little bit of cleaning up. The one that I would like to deal with at some length is the changes to the Hail and Crop Insurance Act, and it flows from concerns that I raised today in question period, Mr. Speaker. The provincial government bragged in the throne speech delivered in this Assembly early in March about a major new commitment to agriculture in the province of Alberta. Symbolic of that commitment to a diversified, strong family farm sector was a new \$35.1 million commitment to funding for crop insurance. People reading that could be forgiven for assuming that that might mean that farmers get something as a result; that, you know, farmers would enjoy a greater benefit; that the incomes of farmers would be improved; that the opportunities of farmers would somehow be enhanced. However, Mr. Speaker, if you look through the details, some of them included in Bill 23, the amendments to the Hail and Crop Insurance Act, you find out that that is indeed not the case.

I will endeavour to paint a more thorough picture of this intriguing little attempt to muddy the waters and convince farmers that the government's doing something that they're not when we return to debate on this Bill, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to move that we adjourn debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the motion of the hon. Member for Vegreville, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. So ordered.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor will now attend upon the Assembly.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker left the Chair]

head: **Royal Assent**

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order! Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

[The Honourable W. Helen Hunley, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, took her place upon the Throne]

HER HONOUR: Please be seated.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has, at its present sittings, passed certain Bills to which, and in the name of the Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

CLERK: Your Honour, the following are the titles of the Bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed.

No.	Title
2	Department of Transportation and Utilities Amendment Act, 1990
9	Electrical Statutes Amendment Act, 1990
11	Petroleum Incentives Program Amendment Act, 1990
21	Financial Administration Amendment Act, 1990
39	Appropriation Act, 1990
40	Appropriation (Alberta Capital Fund) Act, 1990
41	Appropriation (Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, Capital Projects Division) Act, 1990-91

[The Lieutenant Governor indicated her assent]

CLERK: In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour The Honourable the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these Bills.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

[The Lieutenant Governor left the Chamber]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

[At 5:07 p.m. the House adjourned to Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]

