

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta**

Title: **Tuesday, June 5, 1990 2:30 p.m.**  
 Date: 90/06/05

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

**Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

**head: Introduction of Visitors**

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly members of a delegation from Indonesia. This delegation is on a familiarization tour of Canada and has had the opportunity to visit a great deal of our province in the last two days. Mr. Speaker, the delegation is seated in your gallery. I would ask them to rise as I call their names, and remain standing. The delegation is led by Governor Lamadijo, who is governor of the province of central Sulawesi. The governor is accompanied by Mr. Soemarno, who is the chief of provincial public works; Mr. Mohad-Sadine, chief of the provincial business council; and Mr. Tomy Tillaar, chairman of the consultant association. Also traveling with the group is Mr. Bob Francis of Agriteam, Calgary. I would ask them all to rise and receive the very warm welcome of this Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, I would like to introduce to you the Speaker of the House of Representatives in the state of Alaska, seated in my gallery: Mr. Cotten. Would you please rise.

**head: Introduction of Bills**

**Bill 48**  
**School Amendment Act, 1990**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in introducing Bill 48, School Amendment Act, 1990.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill contains a number of small amendments that have come to light during the course of the last 18 months and the experience we've learned from administering and governing under the School Act, 1988.

[Leave granted; Bill 48 read a first time]

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Banff-Cochrane, followed by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

**Bill 46**  
**Legal Profession Act**

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to request leave to introduce Bill 46, the Legal Profession Act.

The intention of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is to update the Act and to make it more responsive to the demands of the 1990s. This will be accomplished by increasing the number of lay benchers, by specifying that disciplinary hearings are to be in public unless otherwise directed by the benchers, and by increasing monetary penalties for any member whose conduct is found to be deserving of sanction and for any person or corporation practising law in contravention of the Act.

[Leave granted; Bill 46 read a first time]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 46, the Legal Profession Act, be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

**Bill 261**  
**An Act to Phase Out**  
**the Use of Chlorofluorocarbons**

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 261, being An Act to Phase Out the Use of Chlorofluorocarbons.

This Act will have the effect of supplementing federal legislation in this important area. As we know, chlorofluorocarbons are responsible for the depletion of the ozone layer.

[Leave granted; Bill 261 read a first time]

**head: Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a letter from Norman Dyck, the secretary treasurer, district 1, region 8 of the National Farmers Union. This letter covers the resolution passed in April by the National Farmers Union convention calling for measures to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. I should point out that this was the resolution that the Minister of Agriculture indicated he wasn't aware of.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. A tabling is a tabling, not another opportunity to stand up to do a little conversation. Thank you.

**head: Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly 92 students from the Athabasca elementary school. They are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Golonka, Mrs. Thomson, Mr. LeMessurier, and Mrs. Balay, and their bus drivers Diane Swankhuizen and Harry Panylyk. They are seated in the members' and public galleries. I'd also like at this moment to specially mention a person that's really dear to me, and that's my son Michael, who's traveling with the group. I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

**head: Oral Question Period****Alberta Government Telephones**

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, Alberta Government Telephones is well known to be a very successful company, having invested about \$1.6 billion just in the last five years in its expanded operations and enjoyed, believe it or not, a 6 percent increase in productivity every year for the last 17 years. On top of that, as their audited financial statements prove, this company's a money-maker consistently year after year with only the occasional exception. Mr. Speaker, I know that the Conservatives are ideologically driven. They've got their minds made up and they don't want to be confused with the facts, but yesterday the minister responsible, the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications, said, and I quote, "In fact, it" – referring to AGT – "lost money two years ago for two years in a row." Mr. Speaker, that flies in the face of the audited financial statements which prove that this company's been making money hand over fist, actually, since 1983. My question to the Provincial Treasurer is this: does he concur in this minister's misstatement of audited financial statements?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I did note that the minister made that statement. He is accurate: the company did lose money in two years, 1982 and 1983, and in fact has had thin earnings ever since then based on the size of the entity. I'm sure, as all members know, when you cast your mind back, sometimes you may have a difference in terms of the time. But the minister was accurate: the company did lose money in two years and, despite large revenues, in fact had very thin earnings over the periods.

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, our experts, the ones we've consulted, say that AGT is doing almost as well as that great monopolist Bell Canada; in fact, less than 1 percent difference in the rates of profit during the last five years. So I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer if he's saying that the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications was telling the truth when he said that as recently as two years ago AGT was losing money. Will he now admit that that's not the truth?

MR. JOHNSTON: No. As a matter of fact, the member draws attention to the annual statements, and since she's done that, I'll simply flip to the pages. You will see that in 1982 the company had losses of \$56 million on sales of \$530 million, and in 1983 had losses of \$21.674 million on long-distance revenues of \$571 million, total revenues of \$800 million. Mr. Speaker, I've said already that the minister, I'm sure, would have a chance to correct what he said himself, but the company did lose money in 1982-83 for two years – the facts are here; the statement's been filed in the House – and in 1987 it made about \$19 million on over a billion dollars worth of operating revenues.

Mr. Speaker, the point is that the company lost money those two years. It has not performed all that well, primarily because it's had a high debt servicing cost.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, clearly the Provincial Treasurer is now participating in this propaganda campaign to make like AGT is a losing venture. But the facts speak volumes: they've made a couple of hundred million dollars since 1983, during the recession. My question to the Provincial Treasurer is this: is he prepared now to admit that the problem with the financial statements has nothing to do with AGT's financial statements

but only to do with the financial problems that this particular Treasurer has caused the province?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I know the opposition would like to talk about some way in which the privatization proceeds will assist us in a balanced budget, but we've already been through that debate in the House. We have shown that this government is on course to a balanced budget without the privatization proceeds. The deficit has been reduced by \$1 billion this year, Mr. Speaker, without any money from the privatization of assets. We have debated that already. It's in the budget speech, going back to March. All members are well aware of it; all Albertans are well aware of it.

What is at point here, Mr. Speaker, is in fact that, as the Member for Edmonton-Highlands did point out, there is a difference of view. Our view is that this company can be operated more efficiently, more profitably, and for better service to the consumer if it's in the hands of the private sector. I don't think, with respect, that Albertans are going to believe the kind of nonsense they're hearing from the opposition. They know that these people have never been involved in business decisions; they don't understand how market forces operate. I know that the proof here is going to be in response to the concept and in response to the sale of shares.

MS BARRETT: A desperate government, desperate measures.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate the second question to the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

**Natural Resources Conservation Board**

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. Almost three months to the day from the date that the Natural Resources Conservation Board Act was promised in the throne speech to the date that it was tabled in the Legislature, the minister said outside the House that this legislation was more talked about than any other that he could remember. I happen to know he's been around a long time, so there must have been a lot of talk about this legislation. I wonder if the minister would take the Assembly into his confidence to this extent: would he explain who the government consulted with during the three months and the period presumably prior to the throne speech when the government also thought about what it was announcing?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, if I understand his question, he was asking who consulted on the legislation. Is that the question? Fifty-nine MLAs, Mr. Speaker.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, they grow old together. They grow old.

The Minister of Energy said at his news conference yesterday that cabinet reserves the right to decide which of the projects going through the stream will be put before the NRCB and which ones won't. In the House yesterday he indicated it would depend on how the Assembly dealt with the legislation whether projects currently before the government will go before the board or not. In reality, the government and the government alone decides when decisions are made about projects. I wonder if the Minister of Energy would take this opportunity to give us a straight answer to a straightforward question: has the government decided it will not license the new Al-Pac project prior to hearings before the NRCB?

MR. ORMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to see the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place the moment the tabling landed on his desk rush out to get the media opportunity and make accusations that were totally false and erroneous about how the referral process is to the natural resources conservation board. He comes in here, finally appears to have looked at the legislation, and still he's distorting it. The fact is that there is a mandatory list of referrals to the natural resources conservation board: major water management projects, all forestry projects. Beyond that, if there is an environmental impact assessment ordered on any project, no matter what that project happens to be, whether it's recreation or tourism or whatever – if it is defined in the legislation and an environmental impact assessment is ordered, it is reviewed by the NRCB. In the event that the Lieutenant Governor in Council finds that there is some project that is not defined in the legislation and should be referred to the natural resources conservation board, notwithstanding an environmental impact assessment order it will be reviewed.

MR. McINNIS: Well, there were spurious and false allegations in the answer but clearly not an answer to the question, the question being the Al-Pac proposal which is currently before the government. The government's been fiddling around with this legislation for three months. It's had the Al-Pac proposal on its desk for two months. Now I'm asking the minister: has the government decided whether the Al-Pac proposal goes to the NRCB? You see, here's your Al-Pac; here's your NRCB. Does the one go to the other?

MR. ORMAN: He's something else, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you and all hon. members of the Assembly that with regard to projects that are in progress, the decision has not been made as to whether or not they will be referred to the natural resources conservation board. That has got nothing to do with the legislation. The legislation before us is process. We see today, Mr. Speaker, that he has read the legislation. He has no criticism of the legislation. He's now talking about process, and that's an endorsement of the legislation. Possibly they will refrain from holding up this masterpiece, this ground-breaking piece of legislation, historic on this continent, and get it in place so we can start getting it active and start reviewing projects rather than hearing rhetoric from the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place. [interjections]

I'm glad he's not my critic in the Department of Energy, Mr. Speaker, because I don't know if I could handle this guy much.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark. [interjections] Edmonton-Meadowlark; no one else yet.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While the Natural Resources Conservation Board Act properly establishes a permanent board with the power to approve rather than simply to recommend, what is particularly disconcerting about this Act is that it allows the government to curtail many of the board's very, very important powers. To the Minister of Energy: since section 22 of the Energy Resources Conservation Board Act empowers that board to investigate any energy project which it chooses to at its discretion, why is it that under this Natural Resources Conservation Board Act that board must await on many significant projects the decision of this government to request an environmental impact assessment before the board can operate to do a review?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the development of our energy resources in this province is an integral part – whether it's from the licensing of the wells to the surface leasing to the flow lines to the pipelines to the trunk lines to the tying in of the wells, it is an integrated development of the resource. The natural resources conservation board deals with a range of renewable energy resources, Mr. Speaker, and even projects that are not in the sense natural resources; for instance, recreational projects, tourism projects. So it is not in the same sense a governance Act. We have in the line departments – the Department of the Environment and Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife – the line functions of licensing and permitting, and that will remain there.

Mr. Speaker, we felt that we had to find a trigger mechanism that got projects that had an impact on the environment into the natural resources conservation board for review. That's why we had the triggering mechanism. We could have had the triggering mechanism of the cabinet making the decision, of the board itself making the decision. We felt that that was too onerous and it was too broad. We want to deal with environmentally sensitive issues before the board. That's the nature of the board and the purpose of the board. For them to be charged with the responsibility to look at all initiatives, whether it be a dump or a new subdivision or annexation, we felt that, no, that was not appropriate; there are mechanisms in place to deal with that. So the environmental impact assessment triggering mechanism in the legislation with regard to the Department of the Environment is the trigger, Mr. Speaker. We had a number of options; we felt that was the most appropriate.

MR. MITCHELL: The minister contradicts himself; his answer isn't internally consistent: we don't have a triggering mechanism for certain forestry projects but we need a triggering mechanism for other forestry projects.

Mr. Speaker, my second question is to the Minister of Energy. Will the minister please confirm that this Bill very carefully and very explicitly excludes forestry management agreements from review by the natural resources conservation board?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark's preamble, forestry projects as identified in the legislation are automatically reviewed by the natural resources conservation board whether or not there is an environmental impact assessment. That is clear, and it is enshrined in the legislation: they will be reviewed. If there is a major forestry project in this province, if there is a minor forestry project in this province and it is determined by Executive Council or the Lieutenant Governor in Council that it should be reviewed, it can be reviewed outside of the definitions of the Act. We have that responsibility. That's a responsibility that government should assume and take.

Now, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the second part of the question. I've forgotten; what is it?

MR. MITCHELL: Forestry management agreements.

MR. ORMAN: Forestry management agreements. Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife has been working on a forestry management agreement process, a consultative process, and I'm sure that at an appropriate time he's going to be more than willing to share the details of that process with the Assembly and with the public of Alberta.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, Al-Pac of course is a major forestry project, which the minister says will be reviewed automatically. Since Al-Pac has not received its licences, it would necessarily qualify for review under this Act. Will the minister please confirm that once this Bill is passed in this Legislature in this session, Al-Pac by law must be reviewed by the NRCB unless this government is going to exercise its authority to define as reviewable or nonreviewable this particular project? The biggest fear for anybody . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Thank you. [interjection] Thank you.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the legislation per se as written is not retroactive. It comes into force and effect the moment it receives Royal Assent, and that is following the approval of this Assembly. With regard to projects that are in process at this particular time, they may be embarked on doing an environmental impact assessment. The policy as to whether or not those that are in progress are subject to the NRCB will be a decision made by a recommendation from ministers responsible to cabinet, with a decision made by caucus. I can't respond to that, Mr. Speaker. There will be a discussion about that. This is not retroactive legislation. The only way it can in fact be retroactive is if the government decides to refer the Al-Pac process or any other process to the NRCB. That decision is a policy decision, and it is not germane to the legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: Rocky Mountain House.

### Flood Relief

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this great province we've got many variances, not the least of which is the weather. Currently we've got problems in some areas suffering from drought; other areas with too much moisture. There's an area in west-central Alberta stretching from about Evansburg on down through Drayton Valley, Rocky Mountain House, and to the Dickson dam, an area about 20 or 30 miles wide, that had a problem starting last summer with too much rain and into the spring with a late damp spring and now an early monsoon season. To the Minister of Agriculture: I'm wondering what the government's plans are for this situation given that many farmers don't have any seed in the ground, the fields are covered with water, and it's now June 5.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the member is quite correct when he points out that there are some areas in this province that are getting too much rain and there are others that are getting too little. If I could just wave a wand and move that surplus rain from the west side of the province to the east side, we'd probably have everyone happy out there. But unfortunately, I can't wave that wand. [interjection] The hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche is talking about offering services in rain dancing, and maybe we're going to have to get him working on it.

I should point out to the hon. member that it is only June 5. Normally we don't respond to the weather until we see what the outcome of a crop is. You will recall the northwestern disaster program we announced in February of 1990 addressing problems that occurred during the summer of 1989. The drought modification that we put into the recent Canada/Alberta payments is

in recognition of consecutive droughts, the latest of which occurred in 1989. I should also point out for the hon. member's sake and others that may be interested that as far as the Alberta hail and crop insurance program component that pays out for unseeded acres, their cutoff date is June 20. So while I can appreciate the concern, it's something that we're going to have to watch unfold. Who knows? We may get a week of nice warm weather with some warm Chinooks that dry the land; we may get a late fall and a bumper crop out there.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not only is it affecting the agricultural land but many of the creeks and rivers have jumped their banks and are causing major amounts of damage. To the minister responsible for disaster services: what are your plans to help in this situation?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly not going to take credit for disasters in the province of Alberta, but I will respond with respect to the matter. There's one river in particular in west-central Alberta right now that is overflowing its banks, the Clearwater River. That's not a river that is unique in the sense that flooding does occur. There has been some channel modification or channel revision by way of nature in recent years on the Clearwater River, and it was several years ago that Alberta Environment invested some public money in an attempt to improve channels on the Clearwater. I understand that yesterday the ravaging waters took out the channel improvements. Mr. Speaker, it's a matter that we'll have to assess as we go into the future, but it also points out a very important point as well: nature is all powerful.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Calgary-Mountain View.

### Alberta Government Telephones (continued)

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's been trying to convince Albertans that AGT must be sold in order to raise new and additional money for capital investment in the company. Let's make it absolutely clear, Mr. Speaker, that AGT is a sound company that has consistently paid its own way, unlike many of the private-sector companies this government has been forced to bail out in recent years. AGT does have a high debt including over a billion dollars owed to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, a debt that's come not from poor management but because they've been directed to provide a high level of phone service to all Albertans. I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer, Mr. Speaker: given that the government estimates that its stock sell-off is expected to raise a billion dollars and that AGT will be required to pay off that debt to the trust fund, where is the money for new capital investment supposed to come from as a result of this share offering?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, there are several hypothetical statements made by the member, and let me say two things. First of all, I don't think we've come to any conclusion as to what value will be attached to the company when we make the final prospectus available to Albertans to invest in this entity, and I don't want to preguess the value of

the company. I can say, though, that there are two significant items here. The first is that the General Revenue Fund actually owns the company and has the value of the retained earnings and the surplus profits in the entity. As the member points out, the Heritage Savings Trust Fund by appropriations approved by this Assembly has advanced loans to AGT to assist it on a normal course of operations. As opposed to having it go to the capital markets entirely, we have used the heritage fund to assist it, and that has generated money back to the heritage fund, which I think all members would agree is appropriate.

We have not come to any conclusion on the valuation, and why that's important, of course, is that if you haven't got an evaluation in mind and you haven't adjusted the so-called debt to equity ratios, which have to be done before the company can be privatized, we can't really answer specifically some of the hypothetical questions the member is suggesting. We can say, though, that there'll be some benefits to the General Revenue Fund ultimately; there'll be some benefits to the heritage fund. These, of course, are dependent on two things: the value of the company, the capitalization changes in the company, and finally the rate of sell-off of the entity based on the first opportunity or second or third opportunity. What will happen though, Mr. Speaker, is that when the company is recapitalized, when the debt that's in the company is switched to shares, there will be internal operating efficiencies generated, and therefore the capital tests will be applied to a company with more earnings.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: I can't believe it, Mr. Speaker. They've owned a company for six years, and they don't know how much it's worth? They're going to sell it when they don't know how much it's worth? I think the minister's answers are hypothetical, not the questions.

The minister responsible for AGT has indicated that \$230 million in retained earnings which AGT presently holds will have to be repaid to the government as a result of this sale. All we seem to be seeing is new money recycled for old money because of this privatization. I'd like to ask the minister: if AGT is going to be forced to pay off \$1.1 billion to the trust fund and \$230 million to the Treasury, why bother privatizing AGT when it won't put any new money into the company as a result of that privatization?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, you can see why these people have never been involved with risk-taking, private-sector activities and know nothing about business. I mean, all you have to do is take those few words and show them to anybody in the business sector and they'd understand entirely why this group of people across here, with the exception of none of them, have never been involved in the private sector. Now, they have been consistent to their socialist soul, I agree. They've never taken risk, never taken investment, and know nothing about private-sector activity. That's precisely why they don't understand the concept of this proposal. That's why we think this is the best decision this government has made for some time, and we're very confident that the private-sector response will be that the shares of this company will be bought by the investor in Alberta. They're going to have the first opportunity to invest their dollars, and this company will flourish in a new privatized market-driven regime.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For quite some time the opposition has been trying to get a report, commonly

called the Alexander report, regarding the privatization of AGT. Unfortunately, we've always been unsuccessful because the government has always claimed that this is a sacred document and that the information must remain confidential. The scuttlebutt in the financial industry is that RBC Dominion Securities Pemberton has been chosen as the lead underwriter for the initial AGT stock offering and further that Mr. Keith Alexander, the person who prepared the report and who stepped aside in 1985 for the Premier to run in Edmonton-Whitemud, is in fact currently the head of corporate finance for Dominion Securities. My question to the Provincial Treasurer, dealing with the selection of this, is: considering the ramifications of the privatization of AGT, will the Treasurer now make that document available and table it in the House for all members to see?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, the member knows that the Assembly will be dealing with a motion for a return which is, I guess, in Votes and Proceedings right now and which calls for a debate on whether or not that document will be provided. The minister will be able to provide that information. It is a common rule within parliamentary systems, including our own House, that internal documents used for decision-making purposes are essentially private, because when this information is provided not only do the times change; the information changes and the attitudes change. So there have been a variety of other companies. I can say this with respect to the way in which the sale of shares will take place: there'll be a wide group of Canadian-based investment bankers involved, and along with the normal course of operations one of them will be the lead underwriter.

I should also advise the Assembly and Albertans that to ensure that we have the most objective possible advice, we have also hired an independent group of investment bankers who will not be involved at all with the share sale, who will provide to us an independent view about the valuation, because the valuation is not a precise science. It will be based on market responses and, I suppose, capitalization rates. We have retained an independent group to advise the government as well, because of course we want to have independent advice aside from the selling group.

MR. BRUSEKER: My supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker, is simply this. Does the minister expect Albertans and this Assembly to believe that it's pure coincidence that RBC Dominion Securities is going to be given this licence to make money with the AGT deal? The ties that this company has, between Mr. Alexander and the Premier: is that just a coincidence?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, that kind of misrepresentation is just that. The fact that RBC Dominion Securities is involved is not at all driven by who their key players are. It's based on their expertise, it's based on their professionalism, and it's based on their capability to handle this size of an issue. I make it very clear that there'll be a variety of groups involved in the selling side. We're going to, as a matter of course, make it open to all Albertans to have access to these shares. In fact, if you want to be able to access these shares, you can go to your local financial institution and buy the shares, Mr. Speaker. So it isn't going to be driven by the control of one group in particular. It's going to be a very broad-based sale distribution, and there'll be a variety of companies involved and the general so-called banking group itself.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Foothills.

### **Truckers' Strike**

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Transportation and Utilities. I've had a number of calls about the strike in the last couple of days from owner/operators of large trucks that haul outside of Alberta. In fact, in Calgary today there are approximately 100 truckers that have voluntarily withdrawn their services. My question is: what does the minister intend to do to get these trucks moving again?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, it should be pointed out that the best information we have at the moment is that the independent truckers in the province of Alberta are under contract to the companies they work with and that the dispute is between the independent trucker and the company and not between the government and the trucking companies or the independent truckers. It should also be noted that we understand that they're out in support of those trucks that are in dispute in British Columbia, two of which are independent truckers or union truckers that are working in the greater Vancouver area. So we do not intend and we have not been asked at this particular point to be a part of that.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I guess before this gets out of hand, my question to the minister is: have you been asked by the truckers to get involved, and are you prepared to possibly help name a mediator?

MR. ADAIR: Well, as I said a moment ago, Mr. Speaker, we've not been asked. I have had a number of calls from independent truckers asking what they should do. I've indicated to them that as far as we're concerned, I'm not there to give them advice. They have a contract that they signed between the company they're working for and themselves, and that, if it's at issue, is between the two of them. If someone were to ask, I assume the Minister of Labour would be the one to contact.

### **Cormie Ranch Sale**

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the sale of the Cormie ranch and its potential billion dollar development are being effectively blocked by the government's injunction against Mrs. Eivor Cormie. Yet the Principal investors' lawyer, Mr. Bob White, has stated in court that he could not in good conscience trace the investors' claim to Mrs. Cormie's ranch property, which she bought in 1972, long before the Principal collapse. Dr. Ken Penniford, on behalf of the investors, advised us just this morning that it is their position that Mrs. Cormie be allowed to take her share of any sale proceeds. In short, Mr. Speaker, the investors want this sale to happen. To the Provincial Treasurer: given the investors' position that their interests will be best served by the sale of this land, would the Treasurer agree to consider withdrawing the government's injunction against Mrs. Cormie?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, two things. First of all, this matter is not in the government's hands. This matter is, in fact, in the court's hands. The court is the final adjudicator as to what happens with the disposition of these proceeds. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have to be somewhat careful here, but on previous

occasions I have read into the record excerpts from Mr. Justice Berger's decision; I think it's public information. He said: yes, we will hold these proceeds on a temporary basis. Secondly, should Mrs. Cormie desire to make an application to the court, he would hear it and may in fact agree that all or part of the proceeds could be paid to her. I make the point very precisely that it's not the government that is any longer involved with this process. This process is now before the courts. It is now the courts that decide; it is not the government that decides.

Secondly. . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. The questioner should have realized that it was sub judice. Let's have the supplementary. Let's see how creative you can be.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Mr. Speaker, I think that the skate around the pond is quite lengthy. I would wonder who put it before the courts in this particular instance, since the others claim they didn't.

Mr. Speaker, it's not only the investors who want this sale to go on. The councils of Parkland and of the city of Edmonton have expressed their desire to see this sale go and the development proceed. This is because the economic boon to the province in the form of taxes, tourism, and jobs from the proposed billion dollar development will be just tremendous. Now, given that the citizens of Parkland, of Edmonton, of Alberta in general – and I'll try to phrase this so it doesn't hit the sub judice rule. Could the Treasurer please explain to this Assembly his reasons for continually depriving Albertans of the benefits of a potential billion dollar investment?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, that's just wrong, absolutely wrong. We know and everybody knows the process here. First of all, we have heard all caucus members and cabinet members explaining and expressing their view that this project is a valuable project for Albertans, is one that the government would like to see proceed through the various approval processes, including municipal approvals. We have done everything here to ensure that the process itself is open and so that the process can start, including, for example, the assurance that the order in council proceeded to allow the foreign ownership of land to transfer, which is a very significant step on our behalf.

Second, in terms of facts, Mr. Speaker, remember that the Code report, which these people across the way called for time and time again, said that there was – I haven't got the direct quote here, but Mrs. Cormie in fact was named in the Code report. So I have to say that that is a matter of record, is there. Thirdly, members of the opposition, including the Leader of the Opposition, were up saying that that was the appropriate thing to do and that we should in fact ensure that the court process was the one that adjudicated the outcome of this event, and that in fact is the case. Finally, Mr. Speaker, as I have said before and read into the record, there's a letter from this Penniford gentleman of May 22, 1990, where he says, and I quote again:

We, the investors, must stand up for our legal rights, and if

the end result is that Cormie scuttles the proposed sale of his ranch to the Japanese, that's his problem

I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that in fact the province does not have any legal claim to the land. We cannot make up their minds for the owners of that property. It is entirely in their hands. They are the ones who have to make that agreement. Now, Mr. Cormie has entered into a consent agreement with respect to the proceeds. I must agree, therefore, that he's going to sell it. I have no other information with respect to this

matter, and if necessary I'd be glad to file for the member Dr. Penniford's comments, because it's very clear that he's on exactly the same point as the government is.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

### Abortion

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Solicitor General. It has been recently reported that two Edmonton doctors and seven doctors in Calgary will soon stop performing abortions for Alberta women because of the fear of legal harassment made possible by the recent federal Conservative's new abortion law. The Attorney General has already told us that his department will be adopting a careful policy of restraint to discourage frivolous use of the courts by those who would take away reproductive choice from women. In view of the fact that, like prosecutors, police may also be used to harass doctors by being required to investigate frivolous complaints by these same people, will the Solicitor General also be taking steps to prevent the province's police force from becoming unwitting tools in any campaign to harass doctors by the antichoice movement, and if so what are they?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, it's not the intention of the Solicitor General's department to be taking any action whatsoever in respect to the police forces of this province as it may relate to abortion problems or nonproblems. The actual operation of police forces, with the exception of the RCMP, is under the total jurisdiction of the police commissions that are in charge of the police forces, and in respect to the RCMP, it is from K Division headquarters that they receive their instructions. I don't think it's fair at all, Mr. Speaker, to suggest that there are any circumstances that exist or may exist in which the police forces of this province, either the RCMP or municipal, will harass any doctors at all in this matter.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, the investigation of a frivolous complaint may in and of itself be harassment.

My second question is to the Minister of Health. The minister has said that everything is fine for Alberta women right now, but the reality is otherwise. The fact is that doctors are beginning to stop performing this service, which has always been difficult to obtain in Alberta. What is the minister going to do about the ever increasing difficulty of obtaining abortions in this province, which is recognized as a health . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I don't want to have the record show that I've said that everything is fine with Alberta women. I think there are lots of issues that we need to deal with, and we're dealing with them.

As I've indicated in the Assembly previously, I believe that access to this medical procedure can and should be met within the existing hospital system. I would be surprised and frankly I would be disappointed, Mr. Speaker, if physicians would refuse to perform a medical procedure for fear of some proposed federal legislation that is probably several months from final consideration, and I'm not prepared to prejudge the outcome of that process.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Edmonton-Whitemud.

### Wild Rose Foundation

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Needless to say, I am not what you would call overly confident about the handling of lottery funds by the minister responsible for those funds. I have raised questionable spending in the past, and I am still not satisfied that additional dollars are not being funneled from lottery funds for what I call self-interest purposes or for political gain. Now, from the annual report produced by the Wild Rose Foundation – and this question, Mr. Speaker, is to the minister responsible for lotteries. Will the minister explain why the administration costs per application for applications received by the Wild Rose Foundation have increased from \$747.88 each to \$1,930.50 apiece, or an increase of 158.13 percent, for the period from 1986 to 1989; in other words, a three-year period?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the fifth annual report of the Wild Rose Foundation was tabled in the House several months ago. In the annual report you'll find coverage of all of the grants that had been approved in the fiscal year from April 1, 1988, through to March 31, 1989. The hon. member will also note in reading the report that, in fact, even though the province of Alberta provided to the Wild Rose Foundation a figure of \$5 million for dealing with all the applications that the Wild Rose Foundation would deal with, in the fiscal year from April 1, 1988, through to March 31, 1989, there was a fewer number of projects that were dealt with and approved than there was in the previous fiscal year. Yet the modest amount of dollars that had been allocated and utilized by the Wild Rose Foundation for administration essentially remained the same. If one were to divide the number of projects that were approved in one fiscal year as compared to the number of projects that were approved in the previous fiscal year, and I presume this is what the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has done, and the administration costs remained essentially the same, then in essence he would see an increase per application, I suspect, with that.

There is a very important reason, Mr. Speaker, as well, why the board of directors, which are appointed at large from throughout the province of Alberta, did not utilize all \$5 million: because the government asked them to show fiscal responsibility. It's not the job of the Wild Rose Foundation to throw away money willy-nilly everywhere, Mr. Speaker, but to deal with those needed projects. I have publicly in the past congratulated the board of directors of the Wild Rose Foundation for showing fiscal responsibility, and I would want to do that again in the Legislative Assembly today.

MR. WICKMAN: My supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the minister responsible. Obviously he hasn't looked very thoroughly at the annual report, because he would see that the administrative costs increased by 116 percent in that time frame. Yet the amounts given out in grants were basically the same; the number of applications was actually reduced.

MR. SPEAKER: Question, hon. member.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, through you. Could the minister explain why travel costs went up 494.15 percent in this same three-year time period?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, one of the important objectives of our government is to basically take government to the people in the province of Alberta. This government does not believe that there is only one municipality that exists in the province of

Alberta. This government believes that there are 328 municipalities that exist throughout this province. We do not believe that everyone in Alberta must come to Edmonton to get a decision, Mr. Speaker. We believe in taking decision-makers out of Edmonton and having them visit the various parts of the province of Alberta. In doing so, we also recognize that these are volunteers and that their travel time and the cost of their meals and the cost of the hotel rooms must be borne by the citizen at large. We do not ask volunteers to pay for this out of their own purse. So needless to say, Mr. Speaker, if you want to follow the principle that the Wild Rose Foundation should have a meeting in Whitecourt or in Red Deer or in Grande Prairie or in Fox Creek, then it costs a few dollars to deal with that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Calgary-Bow.

#### Native Artifacts Purchase

MRS. B. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism. Mr. Minister, there are media reports today that the Provincial Museum has broken the American laws by importing native artifacts into Canada and also has not informed the native leaders of this action. Could you explain why the Provincial Museum would do such a thing?

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, there has been, I guess, over the past many, many years efforts by the Provincial Museum and other officials of government to ensure careful preservation of native heritage and cultural material, and the museum is going to continue to do that. I guess one of the biggest aspects of our efforts to do this is Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, near Fort Macleod, in the southern part of the province.

Mr. Speaker, some number of months ago, as a matter of fact something in the order of two years ago, a gentleman in Browning, Montana, decided that he would sell a collection of Blackfoot material that he had amassed over a period of time. The Provincial Museum officials became aware of this and began discussions with Mr. Scriver. There was a danger at the time that this material, very, very important to understanding the native history, might fall into hands of investors offshore, in foreign lands, and would be lost forever. But the Provincial Museum working very, very closely with the federal government, with the government of the United States fully aware of what was going on, managed to acquire this most valuable collection. It's now housed in the Provincial Museum of Alberta, here in Edmonton. It's going to be open to the public in just a couple of days, and it provides an opportunity for all Albertans to learn and to share in this most precious resource.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Calgary-Bow.

MRS. B. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, some native people say that the government through the museum is actually denying them access to this material, material which is so important to their culture and history. Is this in fact true?

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, I've heard the suggestion made, and it's made by some people, that by having a museum acquire this type of material, we are denying access to important spiritual, historical, and cultural material previously in the hands of natives. In fact, the case is exactly the opposite. When material

such as this is lost, for example, to an offshore investor, if it's held in private hands in a private collection, even onshore, that material is inaccessible; nobody can touch it or see it other than the private owner. When it's in the hands of a public trustee, such as the Provincial Museum of Alberta, all people, everyone, has an opportunity to study, to learn, and to regard this material in a very close fashion.

We work very, very closely with native elders, with chiefs, with bands. As matter of fact, we're closely involved with them in bringing the material here. We have made the commitment to them that at any time it's accessible in the museum and that given the proper conditions of environment and security, the material can even be removed from the museum on a loan basis.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Energy, followed by Westlock-Sturgeon, then the Minister of Energy, and then we go to a point of privilege.

#### Irrigation Farmers' Power Rates

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, June 4, the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon asked a question with regard to irrigation and electricity. There were two parts to the question. I can answer the second part, but maybe the member would like to clarify the first part.

The first part is a reference to a misunderstanding on a subsidy, something with reference to \$20,000 to \$50,000 paid by farmers for irrigation facilities. I cannot find anywhere a subsidy for irrigation farmers for electricity rates, and maybe he could clarify that at some point.

To answer the second point of his question, he was asking about rates per se, and the hon. member should know that irrigation customers only pay about 70 percent of the cost of service. Across Canada there has been a movement by public utilities boards to move closer to a 1 to 1 ratio in terms of costs and utilization, a move to full cost recovery to the fullest extent possible. TransAlta has filed to move the irrigation rates to about 90 percent of the cost, which would cause about an 8 percent increase.

I should let the hon. member know that the Public Utilities Board has slotted June 11 of this year to separately review the irrigation rate issue at a public hearing, and that will be held at the Energy Resources Conservation Board building in Calgary at 11 o'clock.\*

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for such a prompt answer. I've waited up to a year for the Minister of Agriculture and still got nothing. So thank you for the promptness.

To go for a further supplemental. You did mention a subsidy when you said that it's 70 percent and is moving to 100 percent. It's that 30 percent that the farmers are worried about. They use power when the power consumption is low in the summer months. Therefore they think the cross-subsidization should continue because of the fact that they have spent \$50,000 to \$60,000 in capital costs and are now trapped with using electricity, and now the government is not fighting their cause to keep the rate at 70-30.

MR. ORMAN: The Public Utilities Board, of course, has quasi-judicial powers in this connection and, as I've indicated, is going to be hearing the irrigation rates as a separate issue. This is a matter of rate design, which is the jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Board, as is their intention to move to a full cost

\*see page 1686, right col., para. 6



recovery service; that is, that the users cover the cost of the facilities and the commodity that is being delivered to them. However, we can argue in this Assembly until we're both blue in the face. The matter will be determined by the Public Utilities Board, and I encourage the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon and other members in the Assembly who have irrigation farmer interests to refer them to the June 11 meeting in Calgary at 11 o'clock.

MR. SPEAKER: Before we proceed, might we have unanimous consent to revert briefly to Introduction of Special Guests.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.  
Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

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

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to all Members of the Legislative Assembly. In the members' gallery today are a number of young people from J.R. Harris junior high school, and accompanying them are teachers Pam Konynebelt and Patty Schulz and another distinguished gentleman in the community Mr. Rod Sturwold. Our friends are in the members' gallery. I would ask them to rise, and I'd ask all of my colleagues to extend them warm wishes.

head: **Privilege**

MR. SPEAKER: Purported point of privilege, Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As all members know, the privileges of this Assembly are generally concerned with our ability as members to do the things that we're elected to do, not least of those, of course, is to debate legislation before this Assembly. Last Friday, June 1, I attempted to debate second reading of Bill 31, the Livestock Industry Diversification Act, during which time I was interrupted not once or twice, four or five but eight times by various members of the government on so-called points of order. Two of those interjections have caused me a great deal of concern, and I would like to deal with them in the context of privilege. Both were by the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. In the first, at page 1588, he states:

May I ask him,  
referring to myself,  
if he would be honest and tell the truth as to what he has said to game farmers that have called him, because it is contrary to what he's saying in this House today.

Not satisfied to do it the once, he went on, on page 1590, to say that he would

ask the hon. member if he did have conversations with those involved in game farming, because I just want to have the hon. member put on the record a clarification of what was conveyed to me by individuals who had talked to him.

Now, there is a possibility that this whole matter revolves around a dispute as to a matter of facts, although it's difficult for

anybody to tell that because the minister put forward no facts whatsoever in relation to those suggestions and allegations, not a name, no reference to what comment he was referring to that I was alleged to have made.

Now, one of the functions of the Chair in relation to this matter is, according to *Beauchesne* 486, to determine "whether the words are meant to be applied to public conduct or to private character." There's nothing on the public record that indicates anything to do with public conduct. If, perhaps, at one point the minister referred to private phone calls – now, I have no idea what access he might have to my private phone calls, but there's absolutely nothing in relation to parliamentary authorities that I can find that entitles the minister to delve into my private phone calls except perhaps in the event of insurrection or war, which doesn't apply here, notwithstanding the citation that was suggested.

Chapter 6 of *Erskine May* and many other references deal with freedom of speech in Parliament. It has been suggested that offering to contradict a member from the gallery might be considered a contempt. Challenging the motives or veracity of a member has also been put forward as contempt. Now, if this is a question of resolution of fact, I think we can resolve that, but if not, perhaps the government feels it's been influenced to table legislation based on a false report of a position I was going to take in the Assembly, in which case that may be a more difficult problem.

However, I feel my privileges may have been violated, and if the Chair agrees, I have a motion I'm prepared to put forward.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to deal with this issue, and I thank the hon. member for raising it, because it is a very serious issue. If one will read *Hansard*, let me first deal with – I pointed it out under a separate point of order – my error when I referred to war and insurrection. It was the fifth edition rather than the sixth edition, and I'm sorry I erred there.

I wanted to give the hon. member an opportunity to clarify what an individual had indicated to me, and that was the reason I raised it. If the hon. member is sensitive as to his position on this matter, I regret that is so, because I should indicate to the hon. member – and I take it very seriously because he is suggesting that my comments were completely false. If you'll allow me, sir, I want to deal with a couple of issues that he related in his speech that if I wished to, I could indicate they are dishonest or not the truth, but I'm not allowed to say that, so I will just say the hon. member is ignorant of the facts. Because if he looks at his own speech on page 1589, he goes through a list of provinces that do not allow the sale of elk meat, and he puts it on public record. Well, I wish to table with the Assembly the dispute of the facts conveyed. What I'm pointing out to him is the inaccuracy which he consistently deals in, as he is doing with this question of privilege, and I'm using this to substantiate it. I will file it with the Clerk of the House. He goes through saying that British Columbia does not allow the sale of elk meat . . .

MR. McINNIS: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

MR. ELZINGA: I listened very patiently to the hon. member a moment ago. I wish he'd extend the same courtesy.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. members. Let's get this

straight. We're not going to have people all standing up at the same time. The Chair's made a note that there will be a point of order in a moment, but in the meantime the member is still responding to a purported point of privilege. [interjection] The Chair will not be shouted down by any member in this House.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I re-emphasize what I indicated earlier. It is a serious, serious issue, and if the hon. member wishes me not to raise the issue in future, whereby I ask simply for a clarification as to the position as it relates to the individual, because I share with him a game farmer – not my cousin; not my cousin, so it is put on record, so that the individuals opposite cannot continuously indicate that we have a conflict of interest, that it was not my cousin – an individual who is a game farmer who indicated he had talked to the hon. member and said that he had some sympathies towards his position. All I ask for, if the hon. member – and he was kind enough to refer to the quotation in *Hansard*. I will reinforce the quotation that he indicated on page 1590, when I indicated to him:

because I just want to have the hon. member put on the record a clarification of what was conveyed to me by individuals who had talked to him.

If that's too much to ask in the course of a debate, to allow the hon. member an opportunity to place the truth on the record contrary to what he put on the record on page 1589 that I just referred to, I will simply say the hon. member was ignorant of the facts rather than attempting to mislead the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The point of order will be dealt with in a moment. We're dealing with a matter of privilege.

Now, the Chair is somewhat bemused, I suppose is the word, about the sensitivity of some members who themselves on various occasions are given to hyperbole in debate. The Chair also has looked at the matter and listened, and with respect to the pages of *Hansard* as quoted by the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, 1588 as well as 1590, the comments really are challenges made with respect to other comments which may or may not have taken place outside of the House. Indeed, *Beauchesne* 31(1) and (3) are relevant:

31(1) A dispute arising between two Members, as to allegations of facts, does not fulfill the conditions of parliamentary privilege. Again:

(3) Statements made outside the House by a Member may not be used as the basis for a question of privilege.

Therefore, this matter fails the test of being regarded as a *prima facie* case of privilege.

Now, let's deal with the point of order, Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: The point of order. I got up on a question of privilege relating to the statement by the member that what I had said to game farmers is contrary to what I'm saying in the House. I mean, that's what he said. It wasn't a question. It was a bald statement. I said that if it's going to become a question of facts, he has to provide a fact, some fact, like something that was said and somebody to whom it was said. As it is now, it's a smear. It's just kind of a broad-brush approach, saying something was said to somebody which is contrary to something else that was said in the House. You know, take it as you will.

My point of order is that under the guise of that question of privilege the minister got up to debate the Bill. That's the point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: There's no point of order. Thank you.

## Orders of the Day

### head: **Written Questions**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that all written questions standing on the Order Paper stand and retain their places.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

[Motion carried]

### head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that all motions for returns standing on the Order Paper, except 212,300,302,304,305,306, 307, 324, and 326, stand and retain their places.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. GIBEAULT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I notice once again that the government has chosen not to respond to my motions for returns 308, 309, 310, and 311. This has been going on week after week, and I have to wonder about the contemptuous approach that the government is holding the Assembly in by continuing to do this now.

I notice the minister for Occupational Health and Safety has just left, but he was here moments ago and sent me a note saying that motions for returns 308, 309, and 310 are asking for confidential material, which he says "cannot be tabled or disclosed." Well, why don't we address that? First of all, why didn't we get some kind of response like that a month ago? Do we have to have delay, delay, and delay, not dealing with these things? I mean, what's the problem with this government that you can't get an honest response in a prompt space of time? Then we could have some debate about how confidential they are. I mean, we had some very serious occupational health and safety instances at the Daishowa plant, at Weldwood, which continues, at Alberta Recoveries & Rentals, and the minister has basically said, "Trust me; we're doing our job." Frankly, a lot of Albertans don't trust this minister, and we just wanted to give him the opportunity to put on the record what, in fact, he has done in these particular cases. I would think the minister would want to ensure public confidence in his work and the work that his department is doing to ensure occupational health and safety in the province. I'm disappointed that he seems to be refusing week after week to do just exactly that.

Then, of course, we had Motion 311, which asked for a list of all employers in Alberta who have been prosecuted for violations . . . administered by the minister responsible for Occupational Health and Safety during the period January 1, 1986, to April 30, 1990.

The minister in his little note says that this is public knowledge once these cases go to the court. "Let me know what you want, and we'll provide as much information as possible." Well, it's as clear as a bell, it seems to me. Why aren't we getting a straightforward answer on the part of the government saying, "Yes, we accept it, and we'll have the information to you within a week"? This is a totally unacceptable process, Mr. Speaker, on the part of the government.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to echo the sentiments and the frustration expressed by my colleague from Edmonton-Mill Woods. It isn't enough for this government to say they're working on these questions or that one day they'll answer them. It is clear that they have a concerted strategy of avoiding and evading the answering of questions. When it becomes particularly disconcerting, and when it underlines a particular cynicism in this government, it does so on days like today.

We saw it last week when the Premier got up in answer to a request for information on AGT and said, "Well, put it on the Order Paper, and we'll answer it in due course on the Order Paper." Again today we saw the Treasurer stand up in answer to a question for information on AGT from my caucus colleague. He said, "Well, put it on the Order Paper; we'll deal with it on the Order Paper." Of course, the height of cynicism is, Mr. Speaker, that they only say that while the TV camera is on them. The moment the TV camera is switched off and we come into this part of the session of the Legislative Assembly, all of a sudden we find that things remain on the Order Paper. The fact is that they want to have their cake and eat it too, and it's time that it stopped. They should start to answer these questions.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, speaking for the government, I just have to respond to the members for Edmonton-Mill Woods and Edmonton-Meadowlark. They seem in many ways to treat this as a lark. They seem to think they can simply put something on a piece of paper and members of the Crown have nothing better to do than to immediately respond to it. On the one hand . . . [interjection] Order please, hon. member.

Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for workers' compensation probably showed some courtesy that I'll certainly advise him not to do in the future. Hon. members can't seem to treat anything in confidence when it's shared with them.

Mr. Speaker, members must understand that once an order is accepted, it becomes an order of the Assembly. Ministers must, first of all, look and see how it applies to them, their departments, and the government, and that takes I think, with respect, some checking. It then depends on their scheduling. Because they're very busy people, are they prepared at that time to respond to it? It's not sufficient to say yes, they'll accept it. If they're going to refuse it, there's got to be some argument.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, I know hon. members don't like to even consider the question of money or the question of cost. If it's been a court case and that matter is public information, I don't know why this House appropriates money for research when members can't go to the courthouse and obtain that information. Frankly, I'm at a loss for the arguments from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods. If they would do more of their homework, they would certainly get more co-operation from the government side of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Point of order, Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, referring to Standing Order 23(f), the Deputy Government House Leader just made a slur about members who are given information and don't treat it in confidence. I took that as a personal insult, and I think it's in direct violation of 23(i).

MR. SPEAKER: Well, with due respect, hon. member, by your own admission and comments you said that a note had been sent to you in confidence with respect to some other items for a

motion for a return, and you then went on to discuss it. So I don't think the comment made in response to that by the Deputy Government House Leader should cause you great concern. So, I'm sorry, I see that as a dispute between the two of you as members.

Now, we have a motion before us.

[Motion carried]

MR. SPEAKER: Now, Clerk, before we proceed, the Chair would also like to point out that in the last day or two the Chair has been absolutely inundated by notices of written questions and motions for returns, and at some stage of the game if the inundation continues, where we have one member putting forth something in the nature of 35 items to overload the Order Paper, that will have to perhaps be dealt with by the House leaders because of the various blocking things that are entailed and the duplication of questions and motions for returns. The Chair has just raised it as a caution. If it will cause some members great offence, so be it, because the Chair has the responsibility as to what is fair for all members of the House, not just for one particular individual member.

Now then, perhaps we can go on with motions for returns.

212. Mr. Mitchell moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a detailed breakdown of government expenditure on the Oldman River dam since the initiation of the project.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, Motion 212 is an interesting motion, and it's one that in many ways the government would like to accept. Unfortunately, there's one word contained in Motion for a Return 212 that is a very subjective word and causes uncertainty on my part as to what its meaning is, and that word is "detailed." So perhaps what I would do, after asking all Members of the Legislative Assembly to reject this motion, is provide the information in a very general yet specific way with respect to expenditures on the Oldman River dam expressed in 1986 dollars through to March 31, 1990. The difficulty with the motion is that I simply don't know what the word "detailed" means. I'm certainly not going to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars tracking down figures, wanting to know where every cup of coffee has been expended or not expended.

To March 31, 1990, as expressed in 1986 dollars, these are the allocations of expenditures on the Oldman River dam project. On the dam and related works there has been an expenditure level of \$170.7 million. On the reservoir-related work there has been an expenditure of \$323 million. On mitigation there has been an expenditure of \$6 million. Administration costs have entailed \$5.7 million, and there has been \$26.7 million expended on land acquisition. If the hon. gentleman and other members of the Assembly are totaling them up, that should come out to \$241.4 million, as expressed in 1986 dollars expended through to March 31, 1990.

I would like to point out as well, Mr. Speaker, that the expenditures related to the Oldman River dam are expenditures done by way of public contracts, contracts that have been issued, tenders provided to any individual contractor in Alberta, Canada, or the world for that matter, to bid on them. Every one of these contracts, of course, has been made public in terms of who the low bidder is and what other bidders have been associated with it.

So, on the one hand, I want to provide the information; on the other hand, I'm asking the Assembly to reject the motion for

a return but for the reason I've given. The word "detailed" is simply something that I don't know. I wouldn't want the hon. member to get mad at me, and after me providing the information to him, he says, "Well, that's not good enough." Because I don't know what that word means, so there's my dilemma in terms of responding to it, but he's got the answer, and I would ask the Assembly to reject Motion for a Return 212.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, the minister said something about him not wanting to tell us who bought every last cup of coffee. I'd like to know why he's buying cups of coffee for this kind of project anyway. Only kidding him. A little bit too detailed.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that I am impressed, I think, by the information that he's given me, and I will look it over and see that it suffices. To this point I would like to say thank you to him for providing us with the information that he has.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark has moved Motion for a Return 212 . . .

MR. TAYLOR: You're a nice guy.

MR. MITCHELL: It makes me really suspicious.

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps the two of you would like to go for a cup of coffee instead of interrupting the House.

[Motion lost]

300. Mr. Fox moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing, for the capital projects referred to by the Minister of Health during question period, Tuesday, April 24, 1990, *Hansard* page 748, with respect to the capital construction of health care facilities,

- (1) for each of the six projects that the minister said will proceed to the point of construction,
  - (a) the name and location of the facility and its rated capacity and
  - (b) the number of people on the waiting list for those projects which are additions to or replacements of long-term care facilities;
- (2) for each of the nine projects that the minister said will proceed to the point of tender,
  - (a) the name and location of the facility and its rated capacity and
  - (b) the number of people on the waiting list for those projects which are additions to or replacements of long-term care facilities;
- (3) for each of the 35 previously approved projects which the minister said will be held in their current phases of planning for this fiscal year,
  - (a) the name and location of the facility and its rated capacity and
  - (b) the number of people on the waiting list for those projects which are additions to or replacements of long-term care facilities.

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. Minister of Health, we accept Motion 300 as placed by the hon. Member for Vegreville.

[Motion carried]

302. On behalf of Mr. Wickman, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing the amount of money allocated to date by the community facility enhancement program by group and by constituency.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the government will not be accepting this motion, but once again I'd like to explain why the government will not be accepting this motion. This is all public information. On the first anniversary of the community facility enhancement program I issued a document, made it public, provided it to all Members of the Legislative Assembly, which outlined each and every project associated with the community facility enhancement program in terms of expenditures on the one-year anniversary. In addition to making that, I also indicated at that time that I would be making that information available on the second anniversary, one 'confabulation' on the second anniversary of the program. I also said I'd be doing that on the third anniversary.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, for each and every project that has been approved, there is a release made available. That is public information for each and every one of the various programs. In addition to that, on a monthly basis we are also issuing a news release outlining which projects have been approved in the previous month, outlining the funding recipient, the location, a summary of the project, the amount, and a contact person with respect to each and every one of these projects. As an example, during March of 1990 the release indicated there were 114 community facility enhancement program grants totaling \$3,661,000. We did one for the month of April as well. In April we had 58 community facility enhancement program grants totaling \$1,777,000, and probably early next week we'll be putting out a news release with respect to all of the projects that were approved during the month of May. I'll tell the hon. member now that there were 85 community facility enhancement program grants totaling \$2,404,000 that were approved during the month of May.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have this information. It's there. Golly gee, there comes a point in time when you have to ask yourself how much more duplication and how much more publication and how much more expenditure is being required of the government. This information is all there. It's all in the public. It's a point of principle with me. We've got to start learning how to control the expenditure of dollars. We simply can't turn around every Tuesday and say, "Well, we're going to spend some more money." This is all public information, so I'm asking the Assembly to reject the requirement for Motion for a Return 302.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for that very detailed answer. I understand that my colleague from Edmonton-Whitemud wanted a current piece of information; in the motion it says, "to date." He wants an up-to-date one. Now, if I understand the minister correctly, there is a public document that is circulated every month that gives the amount for that month, but it isn't cumulative at that point for the year. That is my understanding, and I believe that is the other information the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud would have liked. I would like to reiterate that he would like to know by constituency - I'm assuming that's also in the public document - not simply by project, and that it is, in fact, in the Legislature Library or circulated to all members of the Legislature. I wasn't sure from his answer if in fact that is what happens with the document. I gather no further answers are forthcoming, so I will make my

question directly to the minister.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion lost]

304. On behalf of Mr. Wickman, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing:

- (1) the total cost to the government of the briefcases that were purchased to promote the community facility enhancement program,
- (2) a list of names and positions of the recipients of the briefcases, and
- (3) a copy of the invoice indicating the name of the supplier of the briefcases.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, once again the information required in question 304 has been dealt with in the question period of the Legislative Assembly on previous occasions, and again it's a question of redundancy. How many more times do we have to deal with a matter that we've already dealt with? I provided the explanation, and the answers are contained in *Hansard* of the province of Alberta, and it's a matter once again of redundancy with respect to a question. So I'm asking colleagues to reject Motion for a Return 304.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Additional?

All right. The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, summation on 304.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, again it illustrates, I guess, two points, the first point being that there is not accountability for how lottery dollars are being spent. This is a very straightforward question that supposedly was answered within this House. I remember specifically that the figure of \$6,100 was used. There's a reason now why the minister does not want to come forward with that information. Incidentally, the information I received is that there were considerably more dollars involved than \$6,100. The minister can dispute that. The minister could come forward and show us that invoice, show us what the costs were. It really disturbs me that there has to be this element of secrecy, particularly when it involves the lottery funds, because it's in a situation where – again, I go back to the Auditor General's report where the Auditor General repeatedly states that lottery funds are not being accounted for in a proper manner in that they do not go into general revenue.

Mr. Speaker, whenever a minister of the cabinet refuses to give information that I believe is straightforward, that I believe will not cast a bad light on anyone, there's a reason for doing it. I don't think the reason is simply because I'm a member of a party within the opposition. I think it's for reasons that only the minister knows as to why he feels it's not appropriate that we should receive this information. Again it illustrates – and it's not that many days ago, about two days ago, when the whole question was raised about Alberta Government Telephones, that the Premier of this province stood there and said: "If you want questions, if you want studies, if you want answers, you know how to do it. You put it on the Order Paper." Well, we put them on the Order Paper, straightforward questions, yet we do not get the answers.

It is time, Mr. Speaker, that this government recognized there is a need for a freedom-of-information Act which would force ministers to release information that all members of the Assembly are entitled to do the job properly that they're elected to do, and secondly, to assure the taxpayer at large, the

Albertans who in fact elect us all, that their dollars are being accounted for properly and their dollars are being spent properly. It disturbs me more day by day as I see this going on with the lottery funds, and I don't know where it's going to end, but I imagine someday we'll get to the bottom of it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion lost]

305. Mr. Wickman moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a detailed list of all items presented to each individual Member of the Legislative Assembly that were paid for with proceeds from the Lottery Fund, established under the Interprovincial Lottery Act, or by a foundation receiving its funding from the Lottery Fund, including a brief description and the appropriate value of each item.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, Motion for a Return 305 is one that in terms of its wording is not as clear as it might be, and I want explain why and the difficulty in terms of responding to it. If all members would take a look at the last number of lines in this particular motion, it says, "including a brief description and the appropriate value of each item." Now, a definition in terms of an item is something that's really of interest to me, because presumably if an hon. Member of the Legislative Assembly gets a letter or a piece of paper from someone, that can be defined as an item. I can't believe for a moment that that's basically what the hon. member is suggesting.

The fact of the matter is that to my knowledge there's not one organization that's providing anything to any Member of the Legislative Assembly. But it doesn't give a definitive date either. We've had foundations in this province going back to really the late 1970s, and I don't know how one transpires and one investigates. We've had foundations that don't exist anymore because of a sunset clause that referred to them. We may have had a group or an organization that existed in 1979 or 1981 that doesn't exist anymore. By the very nature of the question, I simply don't know how many hundreds of thousands of dollars I'd have to expend in trying to be factually correct with respect to the response to the question. It's way too broad.

I also want to point out one other thing. To my knowledge, there is nothing that is provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly by any of the foundations established under the Lottery Fund. The only provision of anything that was provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly was a question of briefcases that came under the community facility enhancement program. The program was announced publicly on October 17, 1988, and we've dealt with that matter. But there may be some organization that would provide a lighter or a pen or a cup or something to a Member of the Legislative Assembly if that member showed up at or attended a function of a particular foundation. I know the hon. Member for Stony Plain pointed out to me that during volunteer week he attended some function and somebody gave him a volunteer week sweater – or he gave his away to somebody else; I can't remember what the detail was. Anyway, it was a positive kind of thing. I know the Liberals got a T-shirt and they all gave theirs away to somebody, or at least that's what they tell us they did. Those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker, are very difficult to hunt and find out, by the very nature of the question.

I know that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud will use his common thread kind of methodology of statements that will basically say that's secretive and all the rest of that stuff, but

you can't deal with something you can't put your fingers on, and you can't deal with mercury forever. If the hon. member had a specific that he wanted me to look into, I'd be very happy to do it. But I simply believe that the people we have involved in the administration and performance of all our lottery foundations have a better use for their time than trying to find phantoms in the wind. I want to provide my basic assurance that I've already pointed out before: that to my knowledge there isn't anything that's ever been provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly other than the briefcases we've already dealt with. I talked to you about the community facility enhancement program and the odd little momento that may have occurred at some time in the past. But if there's some grandiose thing the hon. member is looking after, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. TAYLOR: A racehorse, a car.

MR. KOWALSKI: . . . then he or she might very specifically identify what that particular item is. If the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon could go even further and identify the name of the beast, it would help me undertake this very thorough investigation.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to waste the time of the Members of the Legislative Assembly, nor do I want to waste the dollars that are so hard earned by the people of Alberta, so I would ask the hon. members of the Assembly to reject Motion for a Return 305.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Whitemud, in summation.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. The minister responsible for lotteries made reference to the motion, implying, I guess, that it was fairly loose – in other words, not detailed, not specific. He said if it was something specific, possibly he could respond to it. Well, I believe Motion 304 was very, very specific, and the minister chose not to respond to it. Motion 306 is very, very specific, and I'm not sure if the minister is going to respond to it, but it wouldn't surprise me if he doesn't. So the question of needing specific questions: I'm not sure how much more specific I have to get. The minister made reference to several things. He made reference to the briefcases. I'm still not satisfied with the information that has been given on the briefcases as to the amounts of money involved, as to whether the figure of \$6,100, for example, also included the \$30 per briefcase for initialing the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. member. We've dealt with 304. Please stick to 305.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry. I'm trying to point to a list of items contained in 305, and the list of items is the briefcases . . .

MR. SPEAKER: No, numbers 304, 305, and 306. I think we should try to go with respect to the relevancy of the topic. Now, 305, please.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, in terms of 305, what I'm asking for is a list of all items that may have been presented to individual Members of the Legislative Assembly where dollars for those items came from lottery funds. Now, reference has been made to some, yes. There has been no prior reference to the cost of the sweatshirts, for example, the cost of what I term a tangible benefit, the cost of the promotions that were done

under the Wild Rose Foundation featuring the Premier of this province.

Basically the question, Mr. Speaker, is simply a list of items, using a little bit of common sense when we draw those parameters. I'm not asking for the last 10 years. Give me the last 12 months. I'd be happy with the last 12 months, and then from there I could gauge. I'm not sure the minister realizes just how offensive the handling of the lottery funds, the secrecy, is to many, many people throughout this province. If the minister has been following what's happening in the rural areas and some of the columns and write-ups that have occurred throughout the province, there's been a tremendous response – let's use that terminology – by various media objecting to what is happening here. It's not just me that has a concern. It's a concern that is very, very widespread, and I believe this government has to come to grips with it. I believe they have to come to grips with the fact that when you look at the very foundations of a democratic system, you're looking at a free flow of information. Once that free flow of information is denied, then you start tinkering with the very foundations of a democracy.

Again, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I must say I am very, very saddened and disappointed that it is so difficult to get such basic information from the minister responsible for lotteries.

[Motion lost]

306. Mr. Wickman moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing details of the expenditure listed under Travel on page 11 of the 1988 annual report of the Western Canada Lottery, Alberta Division, showing

- (1) how much money was spent on out of province travel,
- (2) the reason for each trip, and
- (3) the individuals who participated in each trip out of the province.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, Motion for a Return 306 is essentially identical to a written request that I received in April from the Member from Calgary-Buffalo. That matter was dealt with.

I would also like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that several weeks ago, perhaps more than a month ago, I had the good fortune of appearing before the Public Accounts Committee. I had indicated at that time, in provision of information to the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, that I would be very happy to deal with any and all expenditures that had been listed in any or all documents that would come under any of the various responsibilities I had. I appeared before the Public Accounts Committee and presented an overview. Then I was prevented from providing all the overview I wanted to the Public Accounts Committee with respect to a number of matters. But at that time, during the Public Accounts Committee, the Member for Calgary-Buffalo asked me questions that essentially were identical to the questions on 306. I provided answers, and those answers are in *Hansard*, the public record of the province of Alberta.

So I don't know what's going on. I don't know if there's conflict or competition from one member of the Liberal ranks compared to another member of the Liberal ranks, but quite clearly this matter has been dealt with. It has already been dealt with. The responses are contained in *Hansard*, the public record of the province of Alberta. They were dealt with in Public Accounts. The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark was not in Public Accounts. He, as all other members, knew full well that I was appearing that day, because it's an advertised meeting.

Also, the various areas of it – I brought representatives from Alberta Lotteries, major exhibitions and fairs, and the Wild Rose Foundation with me to be prepared to answer any and all questions. We answered them all. The committee members said, "Thank you very much." That was it. I also said, "If there's anything else you want answered, give it to me at this point in time, and I'll respond to you in writing." So I really take some degree of exception when the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark uses a constant theme about secrecy and doesn't show up when there's an opportunity to deal with that.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, is it Edmonton-Whitemud or Edmonton-Meadowlark?

MR. KOWALSKI: Edmonton-Whitemud. Oh, I'd never, never want to say nasty things about the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is another one of those cases – you know, we've used it here several times already this afternoon – of redundancy and waste. If the question had been raised and had been responded to and the answers are contained in the public record of the province of Alberta – the minister in question appears before the particular committee at the invitation of the members of the committee and says, "Is this what you want me to talk about?" and the members say, "Yes, this is what we want to talk about," and the minister then says, "Well, fine, I'll talk about that, and I'll give you the answer" – it's there, it's done, it's complete. Now, once again, unimaginative – we find some more questions appearing on the Order Paper. Surely a question of responsibility must be addressed by the member putting forward Motion for a Return 306.

Mr. Speaker, we have to go forward in life. We can't go dwelling in the past, repeating things that have been done and particularly perhaps plagiarizing other members' ideas. I'll make it very clear. It was the Member for Calgary-Buffalo that raised this matter and got the answers. It's in the written record, and it's been dealt with.

I really don't know why we have to go forward again with another Motion for a Return, 306, today, so I'm asking all colleagues in the Assembly to reject this. Let's start becoming more efficient, hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I just want to touch on this. I indeed can sympathize with the minister if he did give a factual answer and it's now coming back at him, but I've been in the House long enough to know that the minister often thinks he's giving an answer when all he's doing is moving his lips and making lots of noise. The fact is there has to be facts, actual facts, involved. To get up and go off as he often does, saying, "It's impossible to find, too much detail; really, I would love to give you everything, but gosh, no, I can't do everything for every cup of coffee" – I would be very interested in reading this, and I will go so far as to write a personal letter of apology for both my members if indeed the actual facts to one, two, and three are answered. But I tell you here and now that it would be the first time in four years I've been acquainted with the minister if he gave a straight answer to any of the three, let alone all three.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Whitemud, in summation.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, speaking to motion 306, let me just back up a bit. The minister is making reference to a response to the Member for Calgary-Buffalo. Yes, I'm aware of

that letter that was sent, and the questions raised by that member were not addressed in the response. As a member of the opposition within this particular caucus, I communicate with a great number of cabinet ministers – a great number. In many instances I'll pick up the phone and phone, or I'll drop by and visit them. With the exception of one cabinet minister, I do not have a problem in at least having that listened to. When it comes to the minister of lotteries, for a simple thing like getting the bylaws to the Wild Rose Foundation, I am told, "You put your request in writing, and you'll get a reply in due course." In due course may be . . . Who knows when that may be? In all my experiences in political life, Mr. Speaker, I have never found it so difficult to get information as from the minister responsible for lotteries. I could name a number of other areas where the ministers go out of their way to try and provide what they feel is acceptable information.

Now, with this particular item in travel expenses, Mr. Speaker, I phoned the Wild Rose Foundation specifically. And let me say that I have a great deal of respect for the Wild Rose Foundation.

MR. KOWALSKI: Point of order, Mr. Speaker: 306 has nothing to do with the Wild Rose Foundation.

MR. WICKMAN: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I didn't catch the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Point of order, Public Works, Supply and Services.

MR. WICKMAN: Oh, did he make a point of order?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, 306 has nothing to do with the Wild Rose Foundation – absolutely nothing.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, if we read Motion for a Return 306, we're talking in terms of trying to get a handle on how many dollars were spent on Out-of-province travel using lottery funds. Now, if the minister wants to get technical, in that annual report he's referring to, it doesn't break down expenditures by, let's say, the Wild Rose Foundation or some other foundation. In fact, that annual report doesn't even show the \$9 million that has been committed to the two football teams over a five-year period, because those dollars were first deducted in Winnipeg from the western lottery division. There's a lot of bookkeeping here that is very, very difficult to track down. So I'm simply trying to point out an illustration as to how difficult it is to get information.

When I phoned around, I phoned many, many areas. I'm sure the minister is aware of it, because in most cases I was told point blank, "You know how the rules work in that department; if you want information, you go to the minister." But I kept at the phone; I was very, very persistent. An example is the Wild Rose Foundation. I asked specifically how many dollars were being spent on travel within that budget and were any dollars being spent to accommodate travel for MLAs outside the province. Of course, the question wasn't answered. The sad part of it to me was that the individual I talked to three days later was part of the junket that went off to Japan. I find it very, very difficult when not only the minister operates his own particular office with that cloak on information but the memos are sent to the agencies, to the foundations, telling them explicitly in writing that they are not to respond to an MLA opposition member for information; that's to be referred to the

minister's office, and his office will turn around and send the request in writing.

If the minister chooses not to answer such basic, simple questions, I draw the conclusion, Mr. Speaker, and many other Albertans are going to draw the conclusion, that he's doing it because there is something he does not want to show up in the books. In other words, something is being hidden from the public. If the minister wants to go on hiding it, fine, let him go on hiding it, but eventually it's going to catch up to him.

Thank you.

[Motion lost]

307. Mr. Hawkesworth moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a listing of all companies, partnerships, proprietorships, or other persons that have received loans guaranteed under the export loan guarantee program, up to March 31, 1990.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, what Motion for a Return 307, standing on the Order Paper in my name, is requesting of the minister responsible or of the government is to give us a list of the companies, partnerships, proprietorships, and otherwise who have received loans guaranteed under the export loan program.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, in the event that members of the House are interested, they can find a schedule in the public accounts. In fact, I would encourage them, if they have their public accounts with them, to turn to two pages and they can see two schedules. Page 1.20 of the public accounts for the most recent year available lists a whole series of companies, groups, and categories of businesses and others that have received bank and credit union loans. Some are named individually. Within that list we find something called the export program. In the consolidated financial statements, which are the ones I'm referring to at the moment, members would find a figure somewhat over \$20 million. In fact, \$20,692,000 has been committed in some form or another under that export program under the consolidated statements.

The interesting thing is that one can also find another schedule in the public accounts, page 236, which is more specific to the General Revenue Fund. Again, a schedule appears, but it's not identical to the one I've just referred to. It also refers to the export program, and there it indicates that something in the order of \$34 million worth of loans has been identified under that schedule.

Now, what interests me, Mr. Speaker, is that the government within that schedule has noted or listed all kinds of other companies and mentioned them by name, but there are no names of any individuals or companies or otherwise that have received assistance under the export program. I'm asking the minister today if he would indicate or provide to the Assembly a list of those companies or others that are not named but fall under that category in the public accounts.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to paraphrase somewhat my colleagues who stood earlier. The Deputy House Leader indicated that if the hon. members would be a little more thorough in their research, the majority of this information is available to them. The hon. member himself referred to the

public accounts, whereby the majority of this information is available to him up to December 31, 1989.

In addition to that, the attachments to the budget have listed additional information that would be useful to the hon. member, and for us to do the additional research does involve additional expenses. Members opposite do have individuals of their own that they can rely on to put that together, plus we also had an opportunity to debate this issue in public accounts. As the hon. member will recall, when we were before public accounts – I believe I was one of the first individuals before public accounts – I addressed this issue with the hon. member.

I do have some concern as it relates to some of the information that is released, because it is termed commercial confidential and it could put a company in a very precarious situation as it relates to their competitors. For that information, I'm going to leave it to the hon. member to do his own research rather than make the additional information public to him. So I am suggesting that we reject his motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, if no other members want to get in on this debate. I tried to make sense of the minister's answer, which might have been an almost impossible task. I don't know; I try very hard to understand what he's saying from time to time. I understood him to say that this is publicly available information if I would only look in the right places, and then on the other hand he said it's a matter of commercial confidentiality and it would be precarious if somehow this information were made public. So I think he's trying very hard to indicate that it is available when in fact it is not.

I want to know, Mr. Speaker, why it is that we have two classes of information made available to the public and to members of the Assembly by this government. I mean, it's okay for us to know, for example – and it should be, in my view – that Alert Disaster Control Inc. has a guarantee from the Alberta government. They were involved in doing work overseas in the form of export of information, as I understand it, through one of our technical institutions in Alberta, yet their name appears here. Did the fact that their name appeared in any way create a difficulty or a precarious situation for them? It may have been a precarious situation, but it had nothing to do with whether their name appeared on a list in the public accounts. It might have had something to do with the kind of endeavour they were involved in. It might have had something to do with the way they went about their business. I don't know. But it certainly didn't endanger their financial or commercial capability to have their name appear in the public accounts.

Why is it a bad thing for a company to get a guarantee from the Alberta government? The minister seems to indicate that if he tells the public that a company has gotten a guarantee from the Alberta government, it's bad for the company. All I've heard from this government in the past is crowing about how good their programs are, and here this minister stands up and says one of his programs is so bad that if it ever became public, it would be a terrible thing for the companies involved. My goodness' sakes alive. What kind of logic is that? I would think a minister would be proud to tell the people of Alberta what it is he's doing and what his department's doing, to take great pride and be happy to put their names forward and say, "Look, here's what the government is doing for the people of Alberta." But no, he wants to hide his light under a bushel, hide his companies behind this export program without letting the public



know what they're about or why they're doing it. I can't think of a weaker argument that the minister could have given.

I had expected something a little more forceful and defensible than what he's given us today, Mr. Speaker. After all, we have Gainers here, for example – their name appears, Gainers Properties Inc. – Centennial Packers Ltd., Fletcher's Fine Foods. We have practically the entire meat processing industry represented on this one column. Did the fact that their names appear on this list hurt each one's individual competitive capability? If all it takes to ruin a company's business in this province is for their name to appear on a list like this, they're in a pretty weak position indeed. The government should have no business giving them any sort of assistance if they can't stand up on their own two feet and let the public know they've received this form of assistance.

After all, it is certainly a risk and a potential loss that the people of Alberta are being asked to take under the export program. It's just a way of hiding accountability for what they're doing within this program, Mr. Speaker. I think the minister's words were more damning than anything I could say in that regard: the fact that he doesn't have – what's the proper word I could use here? – the guts . . .

MR. FOX: Intestinal fortitude.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: . . . the intestinal fortitude to stand up and tell people what he's doing in that program, that he's proud of what he's doing, that Alberta has benefited from it, and lay it on the table to prove how that's the case. The fact that he didn't take the opportunity provided to him this afternoon to do that I think is probably more damning of what's going on in that department by that minister than anything I could say this afternoon.

[Motion lost]

324. Mr. Bruseker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all the government documents, including cabinet minutes and memoranda, relating to the government's out of court settlement with Merran Leeds, Janet Younie, Helen Clark, and Ruth Drew.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, this obviously presents some difficulties to both the government – and I'm sure the hon. minister will respond in a moment. This would really set a precedent in showing something such as cabinet minutes. Now, I'm sure the hon. member, having just experienced his second birthday in this House, is well aware that cabinet minutes, not only by tradition but I think almost by any kind of precedent at all, are secret for some 30 years. But I would leave that, obviously, to the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, who has dealt directly with this matter.

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

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Deputy Government House Leader certainly pointed out a truism of life in our society, that certain documents – and certainly the rules of Beauchesne and other rules clearly cover the importance of a number of these documents. But it's also very important for another reason as well, Mr. Speaker, an extremely important reason. Lands that have been assembled by

the province for the restricted development areas in both Edmonton and Calgary are still in the process of being assembled and concluded. There are a number of ongoing dealings that the province would have with the landowners in the RDAs in both Edmonton and Calgary, which, I repeat, are ongoing, and each and every one of those cases is dealt with on the specifics and the merits of each and every individual case.

There is an opportunity for certain bits of information that, should they become known to any of the individuals involved, in fact would be a deterrent to the taxpayer in the province of Alberta. The principle of commercial confidentiality is an important one. All of this information ultimately will be made public, Mr. Speaker – will be made public – in public accounts and will be filed in public accounts at a time in which it will not have an impact on negotiations that are currently under way at the given time.

It was only a matter of weeks ago that an out of court settlement was reached with the four individuals. That conclusion is now a matter of fact, but there are many similar discussions that are going on, Mr. Speaker, with other landowners both in Edmonton and Calgary affected by and impacted by the restricted development areas.

All members will recall that there was a lot of concern about the restricted development areas in both these two cities through to 1988. At that time the government, and two ministers in particular, the then Minister of the Environment and the then Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, made known a new public policy on behalf of the government: that the government would very clearly clarify what land would be required under the restricted development areas in both of these municipalities and, further, that the government would move as quickly as possible to try and resolve some of the long-standing cases with respect to the restricted development areas. The individuals who are listed in Motion for a Return 324 certainly fitted within that particular policy framework, and there are many others.

Mr. Speaker, each week this minister has to deal with a number of files with respect to it. I want to provide that by way of background with respect to this matter, because it is important; it's extremely important. And I certainly would never want to suggest that through any motivation other than, I guess, the motivation of interest the hon. member would put forward – but there certainly would be a value attached to this information at this time, pending a further resolution of all of the other outstanding cases, if some of this information were to be made known in the public domain. The loser in all of this, Mr. Speaker, would be the taxpayer in the province of Alberta. That's just additional information that I would want to provide to all Members of the Legislative Assembly, particularly to the member raising the motion. There's no intent whatsoever in my words here that there's a self-serving motivation by the hon. member, that he's acted on behalf of anyone else at all in this. I want to make it very clear that's not my intent at all for raising this. I just want to point out the importance of the protection of the public purse.

I'm certainly not one who wants to withhold any information from anyone, but I certainly have an oath of office that says to protect the taxpayer of the province of Alberta, and I would reluctantly ask all Members of the Legislative Assembly to reject Motion for a Return 324.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Calgary-North West, to conclude debate.

MR. BRUSEKER: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I respect the minister's duty and obligation to serve the taxpayers of the province of Alberta. Certainly that is an important and sacred oath, I would have to agree. However, Mr. Speaker, my motive simply here in putting forth this motion for a return and the reason why I'm asking for the information – the minister made some comments that the information would come out in terms of the public accounts. It's true that some of the information will in fact come out in the public accounts, presumably next year when we see the documents representing what's happened over this current fiscal year. But when you look at the motion for a return, really what I'm getting at there is the decision-making process. The cabinet makes the decision collectively with, certainly, input from this minister regarding how a settlement will be reached. What I'm trying to get from the minister is some indication of what that decision-making process is. The restricted development areas that the minister has referred to are in fact reasonably well known, and the persons who have an interest in there – and I must agree: I do not have any financial interest in any way, shape, or form – are reasonably aware of whether they do or do not lie within that area.

But what I am attempting to get at is these four individuals that I've named in here. They've recently gone through a settlement process, and what I'm attempting to find out is: how is it that that decision was made? What kind of negotiation went back and forth with representatives on behalf of these four individuals that are named? What representations were made on behalf of the government? How does that negotiation process occur? That's what I'm attempting to find out with the motion for a return. Since the settlement has been reached and a cheque has been passed from one set of hands to another set of hands, what I would like to get is the information on how it was done.

Now, there is a statement in here, going back to comments made by the Minister for Advanced Education regarding cabinet ministers, and while it says that the government cannot be forced into revealing those documents, it does not say in *Beauchesne*, as I understand it, that they may not release those documents. So what I'm asking them to consider in my motion is simply providing the information for people. The reason, and my motivation for doing this, is that rather than perhaps having many more court suits laid and countersuits and negotiations that may go before the courts, if the people who are involved in the process recognize the manner in which the process can be facilitated, what may in fact end up happening is that they – the concerned individuals, that is – could be saved the cost of court litigation. The government, on the other side, could also be saved the costs of having to have a representative and ministers and legal representation in the courts. So while the minister says on one hand that he's protecting the taxpayers' dollars, I look at it from another angle. If we can alleviate another process, Mr. Speaker, then perhaps we can save some taxpayers' dollars as well. So it's simply a matter of looking at perspective here.

I would conclude my remarks and ask the members of the Assembly to support Motion for a Return 324.

[Motion lost]

326. Mr. Taylor moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of any documents distributed by Alberta Terminals Canola Crushers Ltd. pertaining to the public tender process to determine the firm that would

source seed for the current crop year, referred to by the Minister of Agriculture in the Legislature on May 8, 1990.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am rejecting Motion 326, and the reason is very simple. I've already indicated that this was a public tender process. If the hon. member is interested in the documents, he should go directly to Alberta Terminals Canola Crushers Ltd., request those public documents, and I'm sure he will receive them. He doesn't need me to do his homework. He's got research staff.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I do not think that's a sufficient reason either, for two . . . One, the fact that if the minister was right and such a document was already out there, it would be very easy to file it. What's happened is that I've caught the proverbial minister with his trousers down around his ankles. When he answered one of my questions here awhile back as to why some friends of his had got an exclusive for putting out . . . [interjections]

Somebody asked if the minister can't move with his trousers around his ankles. Well, he doesn't move very fast, hon. member.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that I asked a question about two weeks ago on why the wholly government owned, through subsidies, canola plant in the Peace River country had given an exclusive contract to certain individuals to sign up canola seed growers plus extending interest-free credit on behalf of the indirectly government controlled and owned canola plant. At that time the minister said that no, he hadn't asked for an exclusive. I phoned the gentlemen up there that had the right, and they said no, they didn't have an exclusive on it. Yet the minister said that they had bid, that they had got an exclusive. So what we have is the gentlemen up there in the canola plant who have told me orally and I think are quite prepared to write a letter – I don't know if they'd be prepared to do an affidavit – saying that they did not feel they had an exclusive. The minister – and I hate to use these words – maybe unbeknownst, maybe he doesn't understand, but he either lied or misled the House, Mr. Speaker, by saying that. And I say this after thinking it over: he lied or misled the House, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. The Chair respectfully requests the hon. member to clarify what he is saying. If he's intimating that the hon. minister lied, he knows that's unparliamentary. If he's not, he should make his remarks more clearly.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I can use, I guess, other words like "prevaricate" or "dissemble" or something, but the hon. minister very clearly said in the House that this was put out under bid. I worded the question exactly the way he said it. The gentlemen upstairs have said no, they did not put out any bid. The man that received the right, that's offering contracts around there, said no, there was no right; he did not bid on any rights – he was given. I talked to the officers at the canola plant. They said no, they did not call for tenders. Yet the minister comes up and says, when I asked him where those tenders are – and he knows damn well there weren't any, there are none around – that he refuses to answer. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's as close to lying as it can get without calling it that. He told something that was wrong. Now, I agree that his mental capacity may be such that he does not understand the difference between a tender and giving an exclusive contract. But what I want to drive home here, Mr. Speaker, and want to

drive home to the other MLAs, because I'm not going to let this die, is that you will be supporting a minister who deliberately told you something that was not so. Maybe he's mistaken; maybe he doesn't understand. I know it's not parliamentary to say it's lying. Maybe it's not even parliamentary to say that he was throwing BS around that day, but the fact of the matter was that he was doing a mixture of both and . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member has admitted that it's unparliamentary to use those words, so the hon. member should not use those words.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Withdraw; withdraw.

MR. TAYLOR: Okay, Mr. Speaker; I withdraw the words "BS" and "lie" and say instead that he dissembled, prevaricated, and did not tell the truth. Because the fact of the matter, plain and simple, is that he gave me an answer that he knew was not correct.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, the record cannot indicate that the hon. minister deliberately put an untruth before the Assembly. Now, the word "deliberate" is the crucial word here. The hon. member cannot use that word. You must withdraw it.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, let it suffice that his version of the . . .

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. minister is rising on a point of order.

MR. ISLEY: I believe it's section 484. Would the hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon permit me to ask him two questions?

MR. TAYLOR: Certainly, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Agriculture has your permission.

MR. ISLEY: Question one, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to ask the hon. member if he will follow the advice I just gave him.

Question two: when you get the public documents you're looking for direct from the company that issued them, will you come back and stand up and apologize in this House?

MR. TAYLOR: Certainly. I don't know what the first advice was; I had so much. But certainly if he can find a document put out by the crushers asking for bids for people that will represent them selling seed, as I said here, and extending free credit, I will not only apologize to him; I will carry it over in my teeth and wag my tail and bark.

[Motion lost]

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

211. Moved by Ms Mjolsness:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to recognize it has failed to take measures to address the growing problem of child poverty and im-

mediately take policy and program initiatives and commit the resources required to eliminate hunger and poverty among Alberta children and their families.

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

MS MJOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased this afternoon to sponsor Motion 211.

Mr. Speaker, this motion is before this Assembly because poverty among children and their families in this province is extremely serious. It is clear that children who grow up in families whose incomes are inadequate to provide even their basic necessities experience all kinds of problems that follow them all through their lives, problems that other children do not experience. If you are born into a poor family in Alberta, chances are very high that you will be poor all your life and that you will die poor. As a child growing up in poverty, chances are that very likely you will be ill more often than other kids. You won't get medication for your illness because chances are that your parents will not take you to the doctor because they realize that they cannot afford to fill the prescription. Mr. Speaker, you will go to school hungry. You won't be able to concentrate like the other kids. You will be very tired, even exhausted. You will miss more school than the other kids, and you'll probably fall behind in your school work. Even in kindergarten many of these children that come from poor families are behind the other kids. You will have to stay behind on field trips because you will not be able to afford the fee that it costs to take the bus to go on those field trips. I know of a personal example, where three grade 6 boys came into my office one day and were talking about how they had gone to the Legislature. One boy said he hadn't gone, and when I asked him why, he said because he couldn't afford to pay the bus fee that they were charging. So he stayed home that day.

Mr. Speaker, if you are a child growing up in poverty, chances are high that you'll drop out of school. If you are native, the cards are really stacked against you. Only 20 percent of native students finish high school compared to the national average of 70 percent. Growing up in poverty means that if you do drop out of school, and chances are very, very high that you will, you will not have the skills to obtain employment. As a child growing up poor, you are 10 times more likely to end up living in alternate care, like foster care, away from your family and away from the ones who love you. It's very evident that as a small child born into a family which is poor, you will have a very difficult time in all aspects of your life. What's even more appalling is that babies of poor families die at almost twice the rate of babies from wealthy families, and we're not talking about the Third World here, Mr. Speaker. Even the healthy physical and mental development of a fetus is impaired if the mother cannot afford or have access to proper nutrition and health care. Research shows clearly that babies born into poor families are more likely to be born underweight and premature than babies born to nonpoor families. So it's very sad that children are affected in many ways if they are poor, even before they are born.

During my years of teaching I saw many very disturbing things, and it was a direct effect of these children growing up in poverty. I saw kids coming to school with speech impediments. I had children coming to school with no fingernails because, before they were even born, their mothers were not given proper nutrition. I had children coming to school that had difficulty walking because they hadn't developed properly due to malnu-

trition. These kids had difficulty concentrating, and it was very evident to me that these were direct effects of these children growing up in poverty.

How serious is the problem, Mr. Speaker? How many children and how many families are we talking about? The problem, I believe, is very serious in this province; it's very severe. And I think what is of great concern, Mr. Speaker, is the lack of understanding that exists among a lot of people. There are certain myths out there about people growing up in poverty, and the denial that it exists I think is also a concern.

The Official Opposition met with inner-city agencies a couple of months ago to listen and to discuss some of the issues that they saw as important. During that meeting one of the persons from one of the inner-city agencies expressed a concern that she felt, that one of the biggest problems in trying to address the issue of poverty was that so many people, Mr. Speaker, won't admit that it exists: the invisibility, if you like, of the problem of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, according to Alberta Facts, which is put out by the Edmonton Social Planning Council, in May of 1989 they stated that over 93,000 children in Alberta live in poverty — 93,000 children. One in six children in this province, Mr. Speaker, does not have their basic needs met; 93,000 children are going to suffer the kinds of effects that I've just mentioned. We can't ignore the children and their needs and the long-term costs and the human waste.

What is really shocking, I find, are the comments made by the Provincial Treasurer on March 23 in this Assembly when he said, when he was referring to low-income Albertans, that: "There are not many of them. Most Albertans are so-called middle class." I'm very concerned, Mr. Speaker, because if the Provincial Treasurer feels that 93,000 children living in poverty in Alberta are not very many, then certainly the policies of this government will never reflect the goal of eliminating poverty as it relates to children and as it relates to their families and others who have inadequate incomes and who are suffering the long-term negative effects of poverty. How will this government ever make these children a priority when the person who controls the purse strings in this province feels that there are not many of them? This isn't surprising, however, because I can't think of one Conservative government that has ever made things easier for the poor. If anything, their policies cause the problem in the first place, or at least they certainly make things worse, and their attack on social programs across this country is very clear, Mr. Speaker.

We can't afford to wait to take action in this area. The fact that thousands of children in Alberta are growing up in situations which mean that they will never be given the opportunity to reach the potential with which they were born, Mr. Speaker, I say is unacceptable. Recently a few of my colleagues and myself watched a play put on by an inner-city drama group right here in Edmonton. In this play there were inner-city kids performing, and they talked about their dreams. They made a point of illustrating what their dreams were, and they did it to music as well. They made the point that no matter who you are and no matter how poor you are, you still have dreams. One girl wanted to be a surgeon; another girl wanted to be a dancer. But, instead, they were coping with alcohol and drug problems, they were coping with pimps and with violence, and they were coping in situations that clearly were not meeting their needs.

Mr. Speaker, we owe these children. They have a right to a healthy life and to a healthy future. We need to invest now in these youngsters because it is now that they are developing and growing, and it is now that they need our support. These

children have a right to adequate food. They have a right to appropriate housing and health care. They have a right to education and a safe environment. They need that support now. These children can't wait, because it is now that their minds and bodies are being formed.

Mr. Speaker, we could ask ourselves: who is poor in Alberta? Well, many children who are poor come from female-headed, single parent families. As a matter of fact, one out of every two families headed by a female single parent is poor. If we look at trends, Mr. Speaker, all evidence would indicate that the number of single parent families is going to increase; it's not going to decrease. Obviously, this problem is not going to go away.

Mr. Speaker, who else is poor? Well, if your parents are under 25 years old, you have a one in four chance of being poor. If you have three or more children in your family, you likely will be poor. If you are native, you are more likely to be poor. If your parents are unemployed and on social assistance, you definitely will be poor. And what is sad is that even if you are working, you still have a chance of living in poverty. For example, a single parent with one child earning minimum wage in Alberta has an income more than \$6,000 below the poverty line.

Mr. Speaker, every single MLA in this Assembly has children in their riding that fall into one of these types of families. Each MLA, I believe, has a responsibility to speak up on behalf of these children, because these children are vulnerable, to say the least. As long as this government refuses to take some action to eliminate poverty among children and their families, I believe that these children are being made victims of a government who doesn't care about their healthy development or their future, victims of a government whose policies — and this is very clear — are not responding to the needs of these children and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I've talked about the serious health risks to poor children, the delays in their physical and in their mental development, their lack of education, the number of children who end up in foster care, and I can go on. As long as the government ignores this issue, we are neglecting these children. What action can be taken? Well, the motion very specifically focuses on children and how poverty affects them, because I believe if we're ever going to deal with the cycle of poverty, and it certainly is a cycle, we must focus our attention on the children, although we must recognize that they don't live in isolation, that they do live within families, and that if a family is poor, of course the children will be poor. Solutions are never easy. As the Minister of Family and Social Services has indicated and continually points out to us, it's a complex issue. But I don't believe this is an excuse, Mr. Speaker, for the minister to not take any action at all, because there are a number of initiatives that the government could undertake to at least begin to deal with this problem.

Recently in Edmonton the Child Poverty Action Group within this city put out some recommendations. They had a workshop, and out of that workshop came a document with some recommendations. One of the recommendations, Mr. Speaker, was that the government strike a task force on poverty in co-operation with other levels of government to take a really serious look at this problem. They had other recommendations as well, and it seems to me that it makes a lot of sense to go out and listen to advocacy groups, listen to people who are poor, listen to people who work with the poor and the homeless, and take the opportunity to really solicit some responses to this problem. I don't know why the government won't undertake to do this, but certainly they haven't responded.

Mr. Speaker, we must address the inadequate incomes of these families that I've talked about today. Whether a family is working and is poor, whether they're unemployed, whether they're on social assistance, their incomes must cover their basic costs. This is not happening in this province. People are unable to pay for their rent, their utilities, their clothing, and their food expenses. This is a fact, that they just cannot meet their basic needs.

What has the government's response been? Well, the Minister of Family and Social Services, during the debate on his budget, basically endorsed food banks. And I can see why they feel that they have a role to play, Mr. Speaker, because where their policies fall short, they expect the community to pick up the slack. I was very alarmed to hear the minister say this, because we know that three new food banks have opened up in the last two months in this province, and this is nothing to be proud of. I think it's obvious that the minister and other government members do not understand that poor children are malnourished, and food banks cannot ever guarantee to provide the adequate nutrition that these children need to maintain a healthy development, nor should they. That's not their role. They're not there to supplement the inadequate policies of this government, and they're not meant to. I think government should be ashamed of the existence of food banks in this province, and they should be ashamed that so many children are not having their basic needs met.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about social assistance, we know that in this province the government has cut shelter rates. They have not increased them; they have not responded to the needs of these families; they in fact have cut the money allocated for shelter over the years even in light of the fact that the rents have gone up. Another thing I find alarming is the fact that when we have questioned the government in the past in terms of what criteria they are using to set the rates for social assistance, they cannot come up with an answer. It's very clear that the rates are set arbitrarily, that there's no criteria on which they base the rates. That is reason to be very concerned, because we know then that the rates are not meeting the needs of these families.

We've just gone through a strike with social workers, one of the main issues being caseloads. Again I would say that social workers need to be able to work with these families so that they can better meet the needs of these families, they can support these families, they can spot potential problems with these families. I think this is really crucial. This is what the social workers were talking about, Mr. Speaker, when they had to go on strike. I think if the government were serious about dealing with this issue, they would certainly make sure that caseloads were lower so that social workers could, in fact, work as advocates for these families and their children.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the fact that many single-female headed households were poor. Well, we've had the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore time and time again bring up in the Legislature the issue of pay equity. What better way to start taking some action and ensuring that women in the province earn what they deserve? We can talk about child tax credits, which is a meaningful way, I believe, to support children and their families. We can talk about income supplement programs to encourage working parents that are living in poverty to stay working, because many times parents that are working get very frustrated because they just cannot earn what they want to earn to maintain a decent standard of living. In many cases they say: "Why should I work? I should go on social assistance, and then many of my costs will be covered." They simply give up. So looking at some kind of income supplement program, I think,

would be another initiative to at least begin to try and meet the needs of some of these families.

Also, I must mention the fact that many women are concerned that their ex-partners owe them thousands of dollars. I know when the issue of child poverty came up in recent months, I had a call from one mother saying, "Please mention the fact that maintenance enforcement needs to be tightened," because of the fact that many of these ex-partners are not living up to their obligations.

We have to talk about child care, because again this is a very important aspect of the whole issue of supporting families. We need to make sure that families have access to good-quality child care, not just any old child care but good-quality child care, so that in fact parents who need to go out and work to support their families have some safe place to put their children. It needs to be affordable, because if it's not affordable, again we're presenting another obstacle for these families.

Mr. Speaker, often children from poor families lack the stimulation and experiences needed to ensure their normal development. As I said earlier, oftentimes these children once they reach even kindergarten are far behind their peers in school. So again the government should be supporting and looking at developing preschool programs for children such as some that have been operating already in the city and in the province. Many of you have heard of the Head Start program. Simply speaking, they are early intervention programs. They're very effective at overcoming many of the educational problems that children from poor families experience.

In the brief prepared by the City Centre Church Corporation in response to the workshop on poverty in the schools held in May of 1989 in Edmonton, it stated that

it is estimated that for every . . . dollar spent on pre-school programs there is a \$5 saving in terms of reduced costs down the line for remedial education services, social assistance and other social services.

So it's very clear that support for these programs is very cost-effective and makes so much sense, yet we see no action on the part of this government. No leadership, Mr. Speaker.

We talk about school snack programs. Where is the support here? Kids cannot learn if they are hungry. It's just a simple fact of life. They can't do a lot of things if they are hungry. We've had the Minister of Family and Social Services say: "Well, what's one snack? We can't provide them with just one snack; that's not good enough. If we're going to do anything, we have to provide them with three meals. So why do anything? Because we can't provide them with three meals." And on it goes. In the meantime, these children continue to go to school hungry, and they continue to fall behind in their school work because they can't concentrate.

Mr. Speaker, in the province we've had community groups and the private sector take responsibility in raising funds to provide these snack programs. One principal in an elementary/junior high school observed that a midmorning snack in his particular school was having a dramatic impact on the performance of some of the students. He was quite surprised at the positive effect that it was having on these children. You wouldn't think that one snack would make that much of a difference, but it does. So, again, this is a very important initiative, one that should be supported by this government if we're looking at saving some money in the long term. Also, Mr. Speaker, we can never put a price tag on the human aspect.

I must mention a program like Second Chance for Youth in Edmonton. A lot of kids, I've said earlier, just can't cope in a regular classroom. Many fall behind because they are ill, et

cetera. I've mentioned some of the serious problems that kids coming from poor families experience. A lot of these kids can't cope in the regular school system. Programs like this one, Second Chance for Youth, I think desperately need support from government, because what they do is take these kids and reintegrate them back into the regular school system. Instead of having people getting back into the cycle of poverty where they drop out of school, they don't have the skills to gain employment, you've got these kids going back to school and in fact graduating and, hopefully, getting jobs. It's a wonderful, excellent program, Mr. Speaker. I know a lot of foster children who have gone through this particular program. Again, these programs are not being supported by this government. There are waiting lists, they're constantly struggling for funds, and it just doesn't make any sense.

Mr. Speaker, I have mentioned several initiatives that I feel are very important, and there are, no doubt, many others that the government could undertake to begin to deal with this issue. I can't emphasize enough how important I feel it is that we immediately take some action and address these problems. We have a Minister of Family and Social Services – and I must say, though, that I don't believe it's just his responsibility, because it also goes into the Department of Health, the Department of Education, the Department of Career Development and Employment, and on and on it goes – saying that he is going to announce some social reform. We're waiting and waiting, and in the meantime these kids continue to go hungry, these kids are continuing to drop out of school, they're continuing to get sick. And what's happening? Well, basically, we're just told to wait and things will be better in the future, as soon as the minister gets around to announcing some type of social reform.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I really want to make the point that we can't afford to wait. As I mentioned earlier, it's now that these children are developing; it's now that they need our support. You cannot tell five-year-olds who are hungry and falling asleep in school because they're tired – they're falling behind the other kids – to just wait and hang in there, that sooner or later the government will get around to announcing something. We have to take action now.

Mr. Speaker, in Ontario they put out a report of the social assistance review committee entitled *Transitions*. It's a report from Ontario. It reviews the whole system of social assistance. It's indeed worth reading, and I would really encourage some of the government members to take a look at this book. There are some excellent recommendations in it.

I think that certainly there are a lot of things the government can do, Mr. Speaker, and I would hope they recognize the seriousness of this problem, that they don't go along with some people that won't recognize that it's a problem. I would hope they would make it a priority on their agenda. It's not going to be this session, I think; that's fairly evident. But sooner or later I hope they wake up. I hope they make these children a priority. I hope they see the fact that in the long run we can't ignore the problem; we have to take some action.

Thank you.

MR. DROBOT: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to join in the debate on the motion before the Assembly. The motion calls for the Legislative Assembly to urge the government to recognize that it has not taken measures to address the problem of child poverty in Alberta.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree. The member opposite who introduced the motion obviously has not done any research into the programs and the services offered by this government. But

of course not. As most Albertans are aware, social benefit programs are second to none in this province. Twice before I have heard debate on the issue of child poverty, and during that debate we have heard various statistics and figures thrown about: how many children go to school hungry each day and how many do not have adequate shelter and clothing. But we are not here to debate those statistics or which ones are more valid or whose statistics tell the real story of poverty in our society.

Let's set the rhetoric aside for the moment, and the motion before us today certainly contains a lot of it, and focus on the real question at hand, that being: what is the best approach to solving the problems of poverty in our society? Far too often the issue of poverty has been used as a soapbox or a platform for the politically motivated to jump on, but that's not going to bring the end to the problem. If anything, it only diminishes the importance of the real issues in the eyes of the public. The carpenter is not the best, who makes more chips than all the rest.

Mr. Speaker, poverty is a complex issue and requires a complex solution. History has shown that there is no easy solution to wiping out poverty in our society. The Americans declared war on poverty in the '60s, targeting billions and billions of dollars towards the problem. By any account, today the U.S. is no further ahead in solving the problem. It is interesting to note that the Liberal Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar put forth a motion in this Assembly not very long ago calling for the government to spend and spend and keep on spending as a solution to poverty in society. Perhaps she should speak to her colleagues, particularly the one who likes to wave his wallet in front of the TV cameras, about how much her spending proposals are going to cost Alberta taxpayers.

As a farm boy I know that anyone can kick a barn door down, but it takes a carpenter to build one. There are many reasons why individuals may find themselves in a position whereby they cannot provide for themselves and their families.

Mr. Speaker, when I was a little boy my father gave me a pet donkey. He said, "Son, take good care of that animal." Well, I was in a hurry and forgot to shut the oat bin. The donkey ate too much oats and died. My father gave me a lecture and said, "Son, some day that donkey will come to haunt you when you get up to speak."

Be it sickness, injury, or any number of other reasons, the fact remains that there are individuals in this great country who need our help and our understanding. It's these same individuals who are counting on us as legislators to come up with answers and solutions to their problems.

It has been said that the poor have no political clout or voice in government. I do not accept that statement for one minute. I need only refer to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the General Assembly in November of 1988. Canada played a significant role in the development of the convention and has been eager to ratify that. The working group consisted of representatives of the following Alberta government departments: Family and Social Services, Attorney General, Education, Women's Secretariat, Culture and Multiculturalism, Career Development and Employment, Health, Solicitor General, and Labour. The working group found that Alberta is in compliance with most of the convention's provisions and in many cases expands on them. There are some concerns noted with respect to two areas of the Child Welfare Act; however, that is being addressed. If that isn't an initiative, if it isn't a solid example of the political process working in the interests of the poor, then I don't know what it is.

The problems of the poor are problems to us all. No matter if you come from a rural community or a large urban centre, as taxpayers we have to share the problems, and it's costing us dearly. This government has developed income support programs for those in severe financial need, initiated special assistance for the elderly and for widows and widowers, and started housing assistance programs for seniors and low-income families. But these programs, wide ranging as they are, are only part of the solution. As a responsible government we know that there are other factors that play a role in perpetuating poverty in society, factors such as drug and alcohol abuse, child abuse, and violence in the home. Here, too, the government has initiated a number of counselling and intervention programs which are specifically designed to assist individuals and families overcome these problems which often result in a life of poverty.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Motion 211 suggests that the government "has failed to take measures to address the growing problem of child poverty." In view of the scope of the programs and initiatives just listed, I do not see how it would be possible for anyone to even suggest for one minute that this government is not doing its share and that it's not working towards the elimination of poverty in our society. This government will spend over \$1.4 billion in 1990-91 in Family and Social Services programs. This constitutes over 12.3 percent of the entire provincial budget expenditures for the fiscal year. The answer to the problem of poverty does not lie in spending our way out of the problem; the answer lies in utilizing our existing programs and services in co-ordinating realistic approaches. I believe that is what this government is already doing, and I believe that it is the correct approach to solving the problem. That is why I reject the very premise of this motion and, therefore, cannot support it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I support the motion of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder. It closely parallels a motion that I put before the House a month or so ago, and it met pretty much the same response from government members, which I think is most unfortunate.

Mr. Speaker, to ignore children in poverty when we can improve their circumstances I believe to be dead wrong. I think it's unconscionable. We can, in fact, make a difference. The member who most recently spoke suggested that we should use the programs that are in place. Well, I say: "Fine; let's use them. Let's make use of them." Certainly there are other things that need to be done, but we are not even beginning to use those vehicles that are at our disposal at present.

Mr. Speaker, in the few moments that I have left, I'd just like to comment that last week I asked some questions about this matter of the Premier, and the Premier's answer gave me some real pause for thought. I was disconcerted, I must say, by his answer, in which he suggested that he was not at all certain about my facts, about the numbers. Now, the Member for Edmonton-Calder has repeated some of those same facts about the numbers of children who are in poverty. [interjection] I see a member across says that that doesn't necessarily make them true. I have in fact sent the facts on to the Premier, and I hope he will have a good look at them and respond, because I know he's concerned about families; I know his concern about children is sincere. Therefore, his answer is all

the more unsettling, Mr. Speaker, because the facts of the matter are demonstrable. The Canadian Council on Social Development, the Canadian welfare council, the Canadian Council on Children and Youth, the poverty in schools workshop, the Edmonton social planning workshop, the City Centre Church: facts all bear out exactly the same information. In fact, the latest information I have from Statistics Canada says that poverty in Canada for all persons is at the rate of 14.8 percent and in Alberta is at 17.1, higher than the average across the country. For children the poverty rate in Canada is 16.1 percent and in Alberta is 17.7, which in fact doesn't quite bear out what the Minister of Family and Social Services told us a few days ago.

Mr. Speaker, there's a real handicap here because the constituency we're talking about – children – doesn't have a great deal of credibility in our world. They aren't articulate, and they don't understand the circumstances they're in. They don't understand what poverty is because that's a way of life for them. They can't describe it to you and me, and they can't appear before committees and describe it in a fashion that we can accept and act on, so we have to have advocates. Well, I expect the government to be an advocate for the poor children of this province and the poor children of Canada. To that end I have asked the Premier if he will undertake to request that the poverty of children in Canada become a matter on the agenda of the next First Ministers' Conference. I am very serious about the matter; all members of my caucus and my party are. I would hope that the government takes this to heart and shows some leadership across the country.

Mr. Speaker, investing in children is investing in our future. We do have the tools. We have the vehicles at hand. Our communities are eager to work along with us and help us, and I think they have demonstrated that.

It's obvious what happens: the food money goes to rent; the children go hungry or are malnourished; the family has to visit the food bank. This is only a temporary kind of support, and what we need here is consistent, nourishing food, a caring family, and a caring home life.

Mr. Speaker, there are some moves that can be made to bring immediate relief to the situation of children, and there are others that require far more fundamental change. I have spoken before in the House about the need to adjust and index the minimum wage. I have spoken before about the need for part-time benefits in our labour legislation, about the need for a more stable child care system and better subsidies, about a review of the maintenance enforcement – not only the legislation but the performance of the legislation. I have also spoken about pay equity and the rental tax credit that I think would be of tremendous assistance. In the long run, I think we're talking about universal income support in some form, and I would love to see this government show some leadership there. The quick programs that we can use today, that we can put into effect with co-operation with our communities, are programs within our public health departments of outreach to children and their families who are poor who show up in the schools, programs to address situations where there is family violence and to deal with the violator as well as the victims.

The Member for Edmonton-Calder has talked about Head Start programs and hot lunch or snack programs in our schools. These are operating very, very well with minimum resources through community endeavours in Edmonton and Calgary, but they can reach very few. I think the Edmonton one is now reaching 31 schools. I'm not sure of the number in Calgary, Mr. Speaker; I know it's active as well. But we need to look at the

allocation of social assistance. We've begged for a review of that. We need to look at such things as camp programs, recreation programs, respite programs. We need to look at the high-risk children, and others have spoken to this in reports that have been done at the request of the province. I know that in our urban areas the summer programs for youngsters in disadvantaged circumstances have been cut back due to lack of resources.

Mr. Speaker, poverty is perhaps not visible to most people in this House. I suppose we should be grateful for that, and we shouldn't exploit the idea of it. But poverty is a reality to many of us. We do understand it. I think it has to become a reality to our decision-makers, to every one of us in this House. We have to understand that it is unacceptable. The level of poverty in this province, frankly, I think is a scandal. The circumstances and the outlook of children in poverty is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I expect this government to be the leader, to be the advocate, to be investing in the children of this province. The children of Alberta do not ask to be poor. We are responsible in this House through the Child Welfare Act and other legislation to take care of the basic needs: food, clothing, and shelter. I believe we're in breach of some of our own legislation, from the demonstrable facts that I read and see about me in our cities and towns in this province. I believe the programs are at hand, and I think we should make use of them and extend them in every way possible to save the children.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity of speaking on what I consider one of the scourges that we have on society, and I appreciate the opportunity of discussing an issue that is so close to the hearts of all of us. But

I find it difficult to place the blame on government. I find it difficult to place all of the blame on a group of people that are trying to provide equality to all. There is more to poverty than government, and I think it's important that the time has come that we start recognizing that government cannot be all things to all people.

Poverty is indeed something that we have to reconcile ourselves with, and poverty is indeed unfortunate. There is no group anywhere that is more unfortunate than the youth and the young people who through no fault of their own are afflicted through poverty. I think it's important that we indeed recognize some of the contributing factors to poverty, and we have to recognize that we all have a responsibility, not just one side of the House or the other. I think it's important that these issues have to be addressed.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of items that I would like to discuss. I have a lot of items that I think are important which should be brought forward in this debate, but due to the time I would ask that this debate be adjourned.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the business of the House this evening will be second reading of various Bills on the Order Paper.

[The House recessed at 5:29 p.m.]