

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, June 7, 1990 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 90/06/07

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

### Prayers

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Lord, renew us with Your strength, focus us in our deliberations, challenge us in our service of the people of this great province and country.

Amen.

### head: Introduction of Visitors

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure today to introduce a number of participants in an important delegation from the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. They are here – the first visit relating to the education area following the signing of an agreement between the Russian Soviet republic and the government of Alberta that was undertaken by my colleague the Deputy Premier, the Hon. James Horsman, when he visited Russia in October – visiting with representatives from the Department of Education and a number of school boards around the province to see the number of good things that are going on in our education system and to share with us a number of their success stories in their Russian Soviet republic. I would ask them to rise as I introduce them, and hold our applause until they do: Mrs. Antonina Lyashenko, the deputy minister of education; Mr. Alexander Kozhin, the deputy head of the department of international relations; Mr. Dmitry Petrov, head of the Pskov Oblast department of public instruction. They're joined by their interpreter and a representative from the Department of Education, Mrs. Amelia Turnbull. I'd ask all members to give this delegation a very warm welcome to our Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Solicitor General.

MR. FOWLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House the Hon. Russell Fraser, who is the Solicitor General from the province of British Columbia and whom I am having consultations with, as well as other ministers, in respect to mutual concerns. I would ask him to rise in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and receive the acknowledgment and welcome of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Seated in my gallery today is Mr. Harley Johnson, Ombudsman for the province of Alberta. Accompanying him is Dixie Watson, manager of administrative and information services of the office. I ask that they rise and receive the recognition of the House.

### head: Presenting Petitions

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition today on behalf of 23 farmers and landholders in the Bowden-Olds area, urging the government to halt construction of the Olds Creek storm water management project until such a time that a

complete environmental impact assessment can be conducted and a guarantee be made that the construction of such a project will not damage surrounding wildlife or property and in no way contaminate the communities' groundwater system.

### head: Introduction of Bills

#### Bill 258

#### An Act to Amend Certain Statutes on Marital Status

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to request leave to introduce Bill 258, an Act to Amend Certain Statutes on Marital Status.

This is a companion Bill to the amendments to the Widows' Pension Act and extends, among other things, pension benefits to spouses in common-law relationships.

[Leave granted; Bill 258 read a first time]

### head: Tabling Returns and Reports

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table with the House six copies of a report in response to questions on government travel. This is in relationship to the comments made by the hon. Member for Barrhead, the minister responsible for lotteries, and it clearly indicates that the questions that we had asked . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Tabling is just what you have. Put it in. Thank you.

The Minister of Occupational Health and Safety.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table with the Legislative Assembly today four copies of the 1989 annual report of the Workers' Compensation Board.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, I have the honour of tabling four copies of the 23rd annual report of the Office of the Ombudsman of the province of Alberta.

### head: Introduction of Special Guests

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 55 members of boards of the Alberta Real Estate Association from the 11 different boards throughout Alberta representing over 7,500 realtors in the province. They're in both galleries, and I'd ask their executive to stand as I read their names: Mr. David Crawford, the president; Mr. Del Sveinsson, the second vice-president; Mrs. Bev Andre, the immediate past president of the association; and Mr. Daniel Russell, the executive vice-president. Those are the executive members. I'd now ask all 55 members of the boards to stand and receive the thanks of the Assembly and our warm welcome for their participation in a better marketplace.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly a delegation visiting Alberta from Brazil. It's a Rotary Foundation group study exchange team from an agricultural community in southern Brazil. Along with meeting with other Rotary groups here, they're also doing a tour of a variety of agricultural activities. I'd ask that they stand as they're introduced and that when I finish introducing they receive the welcome of the Assembly: team leader, Reomar Bonauto; accompanying Reomar are Joe

Jisowne, Omeare Ribairo, George Werlang, Vilmar Stimamileo, and Hamilton Vent. Hosting them and assisting them in moving around the province, from the Edmonton downtown Rotary Club, we've got Frank Reid and James Hrabí; doing the translating from the Rotary Club of Edmonton Jasper, Aurelio Fernando; and conducting them on the agricultural tour, our trade director for Latin America, Doug Bienert from Alberta Agriculture. Welcome to Alberta.

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

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly 30 senior citizens who are here to help us celebrate this week that is set aside in their honour. These groups are representative of the Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired as well as the Alberta Council on Aging. My colleague the Member for Bow Valley and I will be meeting with this group shortly after question period. I would ask that they now rise and receive the very warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly two rancher/farmers from the Olds-Bowden area who are here to support the petition I presented earlier to try to get some sanity back to clean water flowing in their streams rather than the sewage being dumped. I'd ask Mr. Jim Kure and Dale Wesser to stand and be acknowledged by the Assembly.

#### head: Oral Question Period

##### Hospital Funding

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I think Albertans have every good reason to wonder if this government cares about delivery of quality services for people when they see our health care system falling apart, when they see chronic underfunding of hospitals and things blowing up as a result of it. Right now there's a one-day protest by hospital support staff, and I think it's just one more indication that our health care system is in big trouble, thanks to this Conservative government. My question is to the Minister of Health, and it is this: how bad does the minister think it has to get before this government accepts responsibility for its part in this mess?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, the health care system is neither falling apart nor is it underfunded, and I'll look forward to whatever is the question that the hon. member wishes to ask.

MS BARRETT: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty clear from the response I just got that this government is prepared to stick around and see if things get worse before it acts.

My question is this: does the minister not realize that it is her responsibility to all Albertans to provide quality health care services, and that means providing the needed dollars to the chronically underfunded hospitals?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I accept that responsibility as Minister of Health, and this government accepts the responsibility to fund our health system in an appropriate way. I think we're doing that. If the hon. member has a specific question, perhaps she'd get to it.

MS BARRETT: I've already asked two specific questions, Mr. Speaker.

I take from the minister's response that she's implying silently that this is the problem of the Alberta Hospital Association, and I beg to differ, Mr. Speaker. It is this government that's happy to build, build, build, put names on hospitals, cut ribbons, but when it comes to funding them at least to meet the rate of inflation, these guys are the first ones to put the running shoes on. Why can't the minister understand that it is this government's responsibility to fund them properly and that workers are fed up dealing with negotiators who haven't got money to settle contracts?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Okay. We've, I guess, finally got to the question, which I'm assuming is with respect to the AUPE negotiations and CUPE negotiations with the Alberta Hospital Association. Of course, the government of Alberta is not a party to those negotiations. The negotiations, it should be recognized, have not broken off. There is an offer on the table that I understand the two parties are working towards. These are clearly very important workers in our health system, and I'm hopeful that the two parties can get back together and reach a negotiated settlement.

With respect to the health issues involved, which certainly is my interest as Minister of Health, I have received a full report from the University of Alberta hospital with respect to how they are managing through this job action. The hospital is coping, and I'm satisfied that the care of Albertans currently in the hospital is not in jeopardy.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate the question to the Member for Vegreville.

##### Alberta Government Telephones

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the things that AGT has managed to do over the years in living up to its mandate to serve the people of the province of Alberta is develop the regions in a significant way. They are a significant employer in centres outside Edmonton and Calgary, and that's something that is surely jeopardized by this government's plans to privatize and sell off this important resource of the province of Alberta. Recognizing that when this company is a for-profit, bottom-line profit for shareholders only company, there will be incredible pressure on them to centralize, I'm going to ask the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications how this government can support selling off this company when he knows darn well it's going to mean a loss of jobs and a loss of opportunities for people living in rural Alberta.

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, firstly, this is not a selling off; this is allowing Albertans to buy into a very, very good company. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. STEWART: Secondly, Mr. Speaker, this is an opportunity for a company in these changing times in telecommunications to exercise its real mandate and fulfill the objectives of establishing a telecommunications industry in this province, being a full-fledged telecommunications company operating on a global basis in a \$300 billion market.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, the minister in his Act saw fit to provide some assurance, limited assurance, that the head office would remain in the city of Edmonton. There's nothing in that Act that refers in any way to the regional offices or the local offices. I'd like to ask the minister why there's this apparent double standard. Why isn't the government prepared to make a commitment to the people in rural Alberta by protecting those regional and local offices?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I think the people in rural Alberta as well as in urban Alberta know that AGT will remain the AGT that we know, plus it will grow. It will give new opportunities for employees in skilled jobs as, indeed, it builds upon the opportunities that exist in the global marketplace. It will carry on business as it has in the past and as it must in the future in order to provide services for all Albertans. That is its mandate. The programs and services for rural Alberta are going to be part and parcel of the new AGT. We have received assurances of that, and indeed I think all Albertans know it.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, the new AGT, as the minister well knows, could provide those services to people by locating all of the jobs in Edmonton and Calgary. I'd like to ask the minister: given that this government has made some phony commitment to what they call local development initiative – that is, moving jobs out of the major centres into rural Alberta to decentralize government services – how can he justify supporting this sell-off of AGT when he knows it's going to take the province in exactly the opposite direction?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's just another episode in the amount of misinformation coming from the other side. This is just not the case. Indeed, the opportunities that will exist will exist in the future for employees throughout Alberta as they really meet the challenge which Albertans want in telecommunications in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Responsible governments make sound decisions based upon, hopefully, quality information. The Alberta Liberal Party believes that privatization, as has been pointed out, of a company like AGT when it no longer serves a useful social purpose is a worthwhile step. We in the Liberal caucus would like to support the government in the privatization, but we must have access to information. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Now I know we're going to have the question from Calgary-North West, right?

MR. BRUSEKER: As long as they're prepared to listen, certainly, sir.

Will the minister commit to responding to all of the questions and requests that we have placed on the Order Paper so that we can have the information that we've been asking? We'd like to ask the minister, in particular, if he can answer all of those requests no later than Tuesday of next week, June 12.

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, when I heard the preamble of the hon. member's question, I really thought history was going to be made in this House, that the Liberal Party was actually going to take a determined stand in caucus. They keep us in suspense, Mr. Speaker. The teeter-totter keeps going: one

member says one thing and the other member says the other thing. One day hopefully we'll see exactly how they really feel about this important initiative for Alberta.

Insofar as the questions are concerned, they have just come on to the Votes and Proceedings, Mr. Speaker; I think there are 23 of them asking detailed questions. We will review those, and we will respond in the normal manner.

MR. BRUSEKER: It's unfortunate that the other two parties in this House are so blinded by ideology they can't see the wisdom of our approach.

Nonetheless, my supplementary question to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Where information is so especially critical is with the privatization and the effect upon rural users. My question is: will the minister agree to sign a binding contract that would ensure that should the privatization proposal go forward the current cross-subsidization ratios would be maintained to ensure fair local rates for all Albertans, both rural and urban?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, if I did do that sort of thing, it would not have any legal effect because the rates and services would be regulated by the CRTC in accordance with the change in jurisdiction. So it's very interesting to hear the hon. member. We're always pleased to hear from him or any other member of the Liberal Party, but I believe they're coming closer to the no side. If it's otherwise, then we'd sure like to hear it.

MR. BRUSEKER: My final supplementary question, then, with respect to rate increases. The Saskatchewan study, of which the minister is aware, predicted increases could go as high as 168 percent. Will the minister tell the House what studies he's done to show what the effect will be on those rates when you add onto that the obligation that AGT will have to pay federal income tax once they become privatized?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Liberal member will utilize the vast financial resources that are made available to the Liberal Party caucus in order to do some research. If he will look at the Saskatchewan report, he will see that indeed it makes no reference at all in respect of privatization. In fact, I don't think the word is even used in the report. The report was based upon a model established upon the application of CNCP some five years ago. That model is not being followed at the present time, as indicated by Unitel's most recent application. The information upon which the hon. member premises his question is misleading and inaccurate totally.

MR. SPEAKER: Highwood.

### Small Business Programs

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Many Highwood communities have, with provincial government aid and assistance and support, established local economic development committees. These committees attempt to diversify and strengthen the local economies of their communities. They frequently run into the barrier of the bank of central Canada's high interest rate policy. My question then is: what is the minister and his department prepared to do to help local businesses to gain financial support now so that they will not delay or cease and desist in their plans for local expansion or for establishing new businesses at the local level?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, this government has consistently indicated our opposition to the federal government, both our Premier and our Provincial Treasurer and a number of my colleagues, to the high interest rate policy that they have continued with: We've attempted to make them aware of the error of their ways, but acknowledging that they were not as responsive as we would have wished, we've come forward with a number of programs.

Number one, we have a specific program as it relates to small communities throughout the province of Alberta. We've had some 57 of those communities access this program to the tune of \$800,000. We've got our small business interest shielding program, of which to date we've had close to some 12,000 small businesses access the program whereby we do shield interest rates, if they do flow above 14 percent, to a maximum of 5 percentage points. In addition to that, I should share with the hon. member that we have our Alberta capital bond program for the small business community; in excess of \$16 million has been committed under that program. Then I close finally with a program that we brought forward in 1986, which was the small business term assistance, of which to date we still have some 8,000 accounts where the small business community has accessed funding at an assured rate of 9 percent under that program.

We are doing a great deal to ensure that the small business community can survive within the province of Alberta. Acknowledging that it is a federal concern, we're going to continue to emphasize the importance of having lower interest rates in Canada and in the province of Alberta.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is again to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Some of these programs that you've just outlined have sunsets or dates on which they will no longer be in operation. Would he commit to extending any or all of those programs beyond their sunset dates?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as has been indicated by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, under whom our mortgage program falls, which expires on February 28 of next year, our interest shielding also expires at that same date. We're going through a period of analysis as to the worthiness of continuing this program, and at an appropriate date we will announce either an extension or a cease to the program. We are examining, though, and we appreciate the hon. member's input and all hon. members' input as to whether we should continue with this or just what we should do. Hopefully within the next short while we will have a statement to make as to the continuance or noncontinuance of the program.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Centre.

### **Hospital Funding** (continued)

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Relations between this government and those in Alberta hospitals continue to sour very badly. Yesterday the president of the Alberta Hospital Association himself said that the pressures on the Charles Camsell hospital to close beds are just typical of what hospitals throughout the province are facing. Then a nurse at the Camsell called me to say that management has told her that the long-range plans that she's heard of are, in fact, to close the Camsell altogether. As we know, both urban and rural hospitals are so short of cash that they're being forced to extra bill patients,

many of them seniors in the long-term care sector, or extra bill patients in acute care who have Blue Cross coverage, as I discussed yesterday, up to \$40 a day. Does the Minister of Health not realize that Albertans and hospitals have just had enough of these unethical backdoor tactics and that they want the minister to put an end to these disguised forms of extra billing now?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Well, I'll deal with the four questions in order, Mr. Speaker. The first one was with respect to the Charles Camsell hospital. I did receive notification from the board chairman of that hospital that they were looking at a schedule and a short-term reduction in their bed count in order to deal with – what they were facing was as a rather large deficit, in their view. Upon examination it's clear that about 60 percent of that deficit appears to be attributable to the effect of a UNA/AHA settlement if the results of the province's review of that settlement do not fund any of it. I'm not ready yet to tell the Legislature what will be the results of the review. I would simply say to this hospital and all others that we are in that process, and I will have word to them, as I've told their association, by the end of June.

With respect to the preferred accommodation charges, which the hon. member referred to yesterday with respect to another facility in our province, there is obviously a misinterpretation of the preferred accommodation charge policy. As a result, I would be pleased to file with the Assembly the directive that has gone out to all hospitals, which was the cause, I believe, of the misunderstanding in the letter from Three Hills that the hon. member referred to yesterday, and perhaps it would be a good clarification for the record.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, the directives and the talk here is one thing. How it's interpreted by officials and those on the front lines in hospitals is quite something else.

The question is about Blue Cross. Given the shifting of hospital costs onto Blue Cross, combined with the increased cost to Blue Cross of brand name drugs and the overmedication of many of our elderly, will the minister now confirm that as it said in the Budget Address, Blue Cross premiums for individual Albertans will be raised by up to 61 percent this fiscal year, another example of Albertans having to pay for this government's mismanagement of the health care system?

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, with respect to preferred accommodation, I think it's important to point out that Blue Cross covers some Albertans and not others. That's clearly a matter of record, and that hasn't changed from yesterday to today. I think it's also important to repeat that preferred accommodation is just that; that is, when somebody goes into the hospital and says, "I would like to be in a hospital private room or a semiprivate room," as opposed to simply one of the ward facilities. In that event the charge can be made. But it's not something that is forced upon the patient. It is something that is indicated to the patient, and there is a charge if that choice is made by the patient. If it's medically required, obviously there would be no charge.

With respect to the second question – I've forgotten what it was.

REV. ROBERTS: Premiums.

MRS. BETKOWSKI: Premiums. There is the statement in the budget that the premiums for Blue Cross will be increased

effective October 1; that is going ahead. But that applies to the nongroup portion of Blue Cross, and it will bring the nongroup premium payers in line with the group premium payers. One of the things we were observing was that people were opting out of the group plans onto the nongroup plans because the rate on the nongroup was so low, so the effect of the charge is to raise the nongroup premium comparable to the group premium rates.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

### Sewage Dumping

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of the Environment. The farmers and ranchers of the province are getting fed up with a slack Minister of the Environment allowing over 300 towns in Alberta to flush their sewage lagoons and storm water once or twice a year into creeks and streams flowing through their land. Amongst the farmers that are being victimized by these sloppy practices are those in the Westlock area, where the minister is allowing dumping into the Wabash Creek, and in Olds, where they're dumping into Olds Creek. The question is: given that on August 9 last year – admittedly the minister was just out of diapers then – the minister, after questions from me, said that he was working on a solution, what is he going to do to stop this befouling of the countryside by the sewage ponds?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess if we were all in diapers, we would have nothing to worry about. Nonetheless, the situation is thus: all municipalities are required to have at least primary treatment, and it occurs from time to time that there has to be a discharge of sludge from the lagoons. Some municipalities put that sludge on the land, and in some cases it's discharged into the river. In the case of the city of Edmonton, for instance, because of an inadequate sewerage treatment system that wasn't addressed by a previous mayor, we're forced to give letters of permission on an annual basis, and hopefully we can clean that situation up, whereby they discharge many, many times into the North Saskatchewan River raw sewerage, a sad, sad situation indeed. We're looking into it. We're trying to rectify the problem, Mr. Speaker. It's a complex one, and we will deal with it the best we can.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, you can't keep looking forever or wearing diapers, even over their heads, as might help the government.

The point is that in the particular case of the Wabash, for instance, is the minister aware that the previous minister, the Member for Barrhead, promised the Westlock area farmers that he would build a pipeline from the town to the Pembina River, bypassing the Wabash. Where's that promise?

MR. KLEIN: Well, I don't want to be flippant about this, but when the previous minister was the minister, I didn't even know where the Wabash was.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, perhaps there could be a supplement to that answer, for honesty and truth.

MR. SPEAKER: The rules of the House prevent me from allowing you to make reference to responsibilities previously held.

Ponoka-Rimbey.

### Literacy

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, this being the sixth month of International Literacy Year and given that governments all across Canada, including our own, heartily endorsed this particular theme and promised in very general ways to improve literacy across Canada and to do something about it, I'm a little concerned to find in a recent publication from Statistics Canada that as of June 4 actually there's really been little change or improvement in literacy levels across Canada. I'd just like to note that the reading skills of 16 percent of Canada's adults are too limited to allow them to deal with the majority of written material encountered in everyday life. I'd like to ask the Minister of Education: have any effective initiatives been taken during this year to counter this particular problem?

MR. DINNING: Well, yes, Mr. Speaker, we have good news, good news in this Assembly about literacy.

AN HON. MEMBER: What a government.

MR. DINNING: What a government, eh? Good news. A report tabled by Statistics Canada last week showed that the basic reading skills, particularly of those in western Canada – we had the highest percentage of adults with reading abilities that would be sufficient to deal with most everyday reading demands. In fact Alberta and Saskatchewan led the country in those abilities. So I'm going to file it with the Assembly so that all members would have access to this good news, so that they can read it. Hopefully, the members of the opposition will be able to find their way to the library and enjoy the benefits of that document.

Mr. Speaker, we are not being complacent, because those numbers still aren't good enough, and they won't be good enough until we can count all of our citizens to be functionally literate across the board. We are working on our curriculum, especially in our language arts area, to make sure that our kids have access to materials that will help them develop their literacy skills. As well, we're going one step further in the diagnostic materials that we're providing to teachers to help them identify those children that are having problems in reading and in writing. The development of that kind of material, especially in the elementary grades, is helping to identify those kids with those weaknesses.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the hon. member has an additional question with which I could elaborate even more good news about what's going on in our schools in the province today.

MR. JONSON: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I do have a supplementary question, but it might be more appropriately directed to the Minister of Advanced Education. Perhaps the most pressing part of this issue of literacy centres around our adult population, where the problem is much more immediate in terms of the lifestyle people are able to enjoy and the employment they're able to obtain. My question to the Minister of Advanced Education is: have any effective actions at the advanced education level been taken in this particular year?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Twenty-nine institutions.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, there are 29 . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: We will now forget the institutions and get on to the answer.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, as hon. members know, this is International Literacy Year, as declared by the United Nations. We have some 200,000 who don't have grade 9 and therefore by definition are illiterate. In response to the Member for Ponoka-Rimbey, we are committing some \$93 million this year alone in this province toward literacy, of which some \$23 million, I believe it is, comes from Advanced Education. I think that we are sincerely indebted to the hundreds of tutors around this province who take on as a responsibility, under the leadership of Advanced Education, that volunteer role of helping people determine the basic skills in life, such as reading and writing. In response to the hon. member, I think Alberta can stand very proud in what they're doing for adult Albertans in the whole area of literacy.

### Special Waste Treatment Centre

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, most Albertans can read. They read government promises, they remember them, and that's why this government's in so much trouble today. This government promised Albertans that the Swan Hills dangerous goods treatment facility would be restricted to Alberta goods only. As of yesterday the Minister of the Environment has indicated his desire to double-cross Albertans on that commitment, in fact went so far as to say that he has recommended to cabinet that the borders be open not just to material from the north but through the southern, populous parts of the province, including my constituency of Edmonton-Jasper Place. I would like the minister to answer: what gives this government the right to impose on Albertans the additional risk that goes with additional miles, additional material being carried so that they can wash away a sea of red ink at that facility?

MR. KLEIN: Which? Transportation or Environment?  
[interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question then. I don't see a minister standing. Let's go.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the transportation of hazardous goods is the responsibility of the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. If something happens to that, then it's the responsibility of the Environment.

MR. McINNIS: If I were the Minister of the Environment, I wouldn't want to answer the question either.

Mr. Speaker, it was the Minister of the Environment who said yesterday that he had recommended to his cabinet colleagues that the policy be changed, that the border be opened to waste from Quebec and British Columbia through the populous regions of Alberta. I just wonder if the minister would undertake today that no such policy will be made until a complete review is done by the natural resources conservation board.

MR. KLEIN: Well, first of all, I think that the hon. member should read and listen carefully. He doesn't do that very often. I said that I would be open to discussion relative to this policy. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we've received a request from the Northwest Territories. We've received another request from Quebec relative to those PCBs that have been rendered harmful through the St. Basile le Grand fire. I have said to my colleagues in the Northwest Territories and British Columbia and Quebec that we would discuss this.

Now, I don't see what is wrong, Mr. Speaker – I'm speaking personally, and I haven't discussed this with my government colleagues, and it's something that will have to go to the government and to the people for consultation, to get a feeling relative to this issue – with stopping off at Swan Hills, especially when you have a big truckload of PCBs coming from the Northwest Territories all the way through the province of Alberta and into the state of Oregon to be disposed of. Why shouldn't it stop off there? I don't know; my sense of economy maybe is way out of whack, but I think it's a lot better than that of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

### Day Care Policy Study

MS MJOLSNES: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family and Social Services has indicated that he is making certain changes in his proposed day care reforms. He has said that he will drop his very regressive proposal to increase the number of infants per worker, and he's also indicated that he's going to change staff training requirements. As Alberta currently has the abysmal record of not having any staff training requirements and in light of the fact that the proposal in his white paper is very limited in terms of training, will this minister guarantee that his changes to his proposal will not weaken training requirements but that in fact they will be strengthened?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, we are currently going through a process of reforming our day care policies in this province. It's a very lengthy and a very exhaustive process, but it's a very helpful process. It's one of consulting and working with parents, day care advocates, day care users, day care operators. I've been very pleased with that process. In fact, I've received over 2,000 responses, some very thoughtful and helpful letters, and, yes, some of them raise some issues with me. They wanted me to revisit ratios. They wanted me to revisit, perhaps, the timing. They wanted me to revisit standards. That's what this process is all about. I've said all along that it's important for Albertans to be a part of finding these solutions. It's important for Albertans to be a part of making sure that we continue to have the highest quality day cares in Canada, that we continue to be able to meet the demands when no other province has been able to do it, and that these programs are not only appropriate for today but will also be appropriate to take us into the next century.

Mr. Speaker, that's the process we're going through. As I say, I've been very happy with the way it's working, and I look forward to announcing the results of this process.

MS MJOLSNES: Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously the minister hasn't made a commitment in terms of what the training requirements will be, so it's hard to say whether or not he believes in quality child care in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the white paper also indicates that operating allowances will be cut but gives practically no information about the levels of subsidies to low-income parents. What is clear is that many parents earning below the provincial average income will not qualify for any subsidies. So to the minister: in view of the fact that so many Albertans have expressed concern about paying higher fees for day care in this province, which they can't afford, why is the minister refusing to address this particular issue?

MR. OLDRING: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, there are some assumptions that are being made. All along we've said that we

want Albertans to be a part of this process, and I'm perplexed why the member opposite has such a difficult time understanding it. We've said, again, Mr. Speaker, that here in Alberta we have one of the best day care programs in Canada. We know that. We said that we want to make it better. We've said that we as a government don't pretend to have all the answers, that it's important for us to work with Albertans to establish those answers. We've gone through an exhaustive process. As I say, I personally have read over 2,000 letters; I personally have responded to over 2,000 letters. I've met with many, many advocacy groups right across this province from up north to down south. I've met with many, many parents across this province, as have my colleagues. We're determined to continue to lead the way as it relates to day care here in Alberta for the rest of Canada. We're continuing to make sure that we meet the demands, and we're determined to make sure that our programs are focused and, again, appropriate not only for today but for the future.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo.

### **Cormie Ranch Sale**

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is to the Provincial Treasurer. On Tuesday the Provincial Treasurer made a statement to this House that is totally wrong. He stated that the injunction with respect to the \$400,000 which would come to Mrs. Eivor Cormie from the Cormie ranch sale is not in the government's hands. Well, I've talked to lawyers who are involved in the issue, and it's clear that the government's lawyers alone obtained the injunction and that they can have the injunction released simply by going to the court and asking the court to release it. I ask the Provincial Treasurer: why doesn't the minister just instruct his lawyers to ask for the government to release and withdraw the injunction and stop fooling Albertans by pretending that this is out of the government's hands when it isn't?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Calgary-Buffalo, across the way, sounds like an attorney that's arguing a desperate case. I want to advise the House, as I've said before, that this matter is, of course, before the courts, that it is a matter which the courts will adjudicate. The appropriate action has been taken already. The government is no longer involved. This is quite a clear statement that we've made before. It does meet all the tests of the Code report itself, because all the people who are named in our action were named in the Code report. It's still, as I understand it, a matter which the courts can adjudicate. The only additional information I have now: I understand that one of the members has now secured legal advice and may be in fact pursuing an action before the court. Again, it's not the province's area of adjudication any longer.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, that's not correct, and since everyone else but the minister is trying to make the ranch deal fly, it's clear that the minister has become too closely and personally involved in battling the Cormies and that it's affected his judgment. I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker, why the minister, then, doesn't ask the Premier to put someone else in charge of dealing with this Cormie issue so that objective decisions can be made that serve the interests of this province.

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, I recall a year or so ago this member in particular clamouring for the government to

move more efficiently against the owners of the Principal Group, crying out for the fact that the province had not moved swiftly and effectively enough, suggesting that we had not taken action against the people involved here. Now, it's convenient to hide in the hills until the war is over and then come down and shoot at the wounded people, and that's essentially what he's doing here. Now, that's typical of the way in which that member thinks. Absolutely consistent with their policy is: don't be consistent. They're on both sides of every issue. We just saw it with respect to the AGT issue. We now know that they're opposed to it, clearly opposed to it. Now we find that they're supportive of the owners of the Principal Group. That's essentially what they are saying here, Mr. Speaker. They have gone from one direction to the other direction in a matter of one year. How convenient and how inconsistent can this group be?

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

### **Alberta Government Telephones (continued)**

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister of technology and telecommunications. It's no secret why a majority of Albertans and possibly the Liberal Party are expressing genuine interest in the opportunity to invest in AGT. It's no secret because it's a good opportunity to invest in a good company. But when a study like the Sask Tel study does come out raising honest questions in the minds of honest Albertans, I don't believe the minister can brush it aside; it needs to be faced head on. I'd like to ask him directly what studies he's done, what numbers he's got to back up the fact that increased competition will not in fact cause rates to skyrocket. What studies has he done in relation to this Sask Tel study to support that?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, I used to believe that the opposition had a monopoly on misinformation, but unfortunately now and again we see it in the press. We saw it today, and that's regrettable. The report with respect to the Sask Tel study was indeed very misleading. I think it's regrettable, because it does in fact conjure up concerns and anxiety among many Albertans. As I say, I think that's regrettable.

I think it's important for Albertans to know that that study was based upon an application made by CNCP five years ago. In fact, the application upon which they based this study and drew their conclusions was rejected by the regulator of the CRTC, which I think proves the efficiency of the regulator itself. That application, Mr. Speaker, was based on a different model totally, and if you compare it with the type of application that Unitel proposes to make at this point in time, the types of conclusions that would come from that are totally different. The fact of the matter is that indeed we are not afraid of competition. Competition is coming in any event. It is not a matter of choice; it's not a matter whether it's privatization or Crown. It's a matter of making sure that there is a fair playing field. That is the purpose of the regulator, and that will happen because indeed the CRTC is a good regulator and has proven that over time.

MR. DAY: Well, Mr. Speaker, that may deal with the area of increased competition, but the area of increased rates is the question. We know that over the years, over a decade or two

decades prices of virtually any product or service do increase. We know that. But will the minister confirm today that the specific action of making shares available for AGT will not be a factor in any increase?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, the decision to allow Albertans to invest in AGT will not result in increased phone bills for Albertans.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Yeah. This guy would believe anything, wouldn't he?

My questions, Mr. Speaker, are to the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications. I find his attempt to trash the Olley report rather distasteful considering that just a few months ago he concurred with it, when he joined Manitoba and Saskatchewan in attacking the federal government, in fighting Bill C-41, which is presently before the House of Commons. Now the minister has given up that fight and seems to believe that Unitel's new application is really a question of the tooth fairy having arrived to bring a better telephone system to this country. What evidence does the minister have — he was asked it once before and he gave no evidence; he just trashed the previous report — that rates will not nearly double, as the Saskatchewan study said, if we allow long-distance competition into Canada?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, as I just pointed out in answer to the question from the hon. Member for Red Deer-North, it is not a matter of allowing competition. Competition is coming whether we want it or do not want it. We welcome it, but it is coming. It is a matter of federal jurisdiction, and the telecommunications Act for the federal government will be tabled in the House, and it's clearly going to permit competition. The point is that we feel it's time to give AGT a head start against that competition. It's a strong company and it must be stronger to meet the type of competition, but through competition will come better service for all Albertans.

MR. McEACHERN: Sounds like a broken record.

Listen; the Premier of this province promised that there would be no cut in services, no increase in costs, and that workers' jobs would be secure. Now we find that this golden share and the legislation don't bear that out. My question is this: why is it that this minister is the only person left in Alberta who really trusts the Mulroney government and the CRTC to do the job of protecting the interests of Albertans?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, we had during the course of several months opportunity to meet with the CRTC, meet with the federal government representatives and the minister and to negotiate along with our colleagues from Manitoba and Saskatchewan to ensure that notwithstanding the jurisdiction that lies with the federal government over telecommunications, such telecommunications policy would be indeed sensitive to the needs of Albertans. We have achieved that in many areas. All of the rates and programs of AGT at the present time, both rural and urban, will become part of the new regulatory regime. Alberta will continue to play a role in the development of a national telecommunications policy. Alberta will continue to play a role in the examination of the current regulating system in order to ensure that if improvements can be made, they will

be made. We will have a presence for CRTC right in this province.

### Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Might we have unanimous consent to revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.  
Edmonton-Gold Bar.

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly Mrs. Joan Cowling. Mrs. Cowling is the hardworking and highly esteemed chairman of the Edmonton public school board. She's seated in the public gallery. I'd ask her to rise and be welcomed by the members.

### head: Written Questions

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I move that all written questions appearing on the Order Paper except 336 stand and retain their places.

[Motion carried]

336. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: What are the names and qualifications of each member of the team appointed by the Finnish firm Jaakko Pöyry to assess the scientific data submitted to the Alberta-Pacific Environmental Impact Assessment Review Board?

MR. STEWART: The question is rejected, Mr. Speaker.

### head: Motions for Returns

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I move that all motions for returns appearing on the Order Paper except 308, 309, 310, 311, 329, 335, and 339 stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

308. Mr. Gibeault moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all correspondence, orders, or other documentation sent by officers of Occupational Health and Safety to Daishowa or to its contractors or subcontractors regarding the construction of the Daishowa plant near Peace River.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker and members of the House, when I took notice of 308 some time ago, I should have rejected it out of hand at that time, but looking at it as a fair and compromising person, I thought: well, let's see what it says. So let me read Motion for a Return 308, and let's put it in the record so we're all clear what it asks for:

That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all correspondence, orders, or other documentation sent by officers of Occupational Health and Safety to Daishowa or to



its contractors or subcontractors regarding the construction of the Daishowa plant near Peace River.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when I looked at that, I thought that instead of rejecting it, I should take some time and ask the department to go through all the records, all the correspondence, all the orders, all the documents to see if there was anything in it that was confidential or personal that should be tabled or should not.

Mr. Speaker, we find that we cannot accept that question because a lot of that correspondence is of a personal nature. Also a lot of that correspondence is confidential.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I had another question put to me by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont, Motion 333, which I'd like to refer to. The question I won't read, but it asked how many welders had made compensation claims, but it didn't specify what for. I went to the member and asked the member, "Do you really want to know if they had an injured thumb or a welding flash or whatever?" He said, "No, I'd be satisfied knowing if they had any respiratory problems." I agreed to supply that information to the member, and that I will.

I sent a courtesy note to the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods telling him that I could not provide information that was confidential or private or personal, and in my absence, which I thought was a disgrace, the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods stood up on June 5 and, in *Hansard* on page 1650, took me to task for taking too much time and not responding to it quicker. Mr. Speaker, I again would like to suggest why I took the time. No one – no one, including myself – wants to withhold any information from any Albertan if that information can be made available and is not of a confidential or personal nature. Finding out the other day that I could not respond to this question, I sent the member the note. Then he goes on to berate me and talk about a number of things, which I thought was disgraceful. He could have at least talked to me. I asked the member at the bottom of my note: would he provide me with what he really wanted to know that wasn't confidential, and I would supply that information to him. That he didn't do.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that, I would suggest that we reject Motion for a Return 308 on those bases.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Mill Woods, in summation.

MR. GIBEAULT: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have to confess a couple of things here. One, it surprises me that it takes this minister and this government over a month to simply say they can't respond because it's confidential. Why couldn't we have had that answer a month ago?

I guess the second question and perhaps a more important one is: how can workers in this province know, other than simply the minister standing forward and saying, "Trust me," that he's doing an adequate job of protecting the occupational health and safety of the workers of this province? Now, we have asked in Motion for a Return 308 for the information to get some indication from this minister and this government about the health and safety problems at the Daishowa plant. Two people have been killed there now. There's been a report, I understand, from an investigation on the first worker that was injured on a construction project. I don't know why the minister might not want to put that forward. Surely he knows that many workers in this province, certainly many of the workers at the plant, were very concerned about this. What assurance is there for the workers who were at the plant, who saw that tragedy, who were there, workers around the province in similar trades and occupations, to know that their health and safety are getting some minimal level of protection by the minister and his

department, who are being paid to do exactly that? For the minister to just simply stand there and refuse to give us any information is simply unacceptable.

Now, at first they say they won't give us information because it's confidential. Then there's a suggestion that that information might be public; why are we asking for it, and it's up to us to get it. So it's a catch-22. You can't have it if it's confidential, and if it's public, you can't have it either; it's up to you to find it. This sort of contemptuous approach to motions for returns I think is totally unacceptable, and the New Democrats are on record as being totally unsatisfied with this kind of response. This is an insult to the workers of this province.

[Motion lost]

309. Mr. Gibeault moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all correspondence, orders, or other documentation sent by officers of Occupational Health and Safety to Weldwood or to its contractors or subcontractors regarding Weldwood's operations at Hinton between January 1, 1988, and April 30, 1990.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, the same comments can be made on 309. I just want to expand on what the member just asked me, and he said, "Trust me." Well, certainly the workers can trust me, but if he could have just put together a question that's acceptable and, yes, if the orders he asked for are something we can issue – if he would ask for that, I would accept it. But when you take the question as written, you have to take the whole question. Now, either he amends the question to something we can supply, or else he asks a question that we can comply with. But to ask a question that entails correspondence that's personal, that's confidential, and then to say that we can give you the balance is wrong because once you accept a question, you have to provide the information on all of it. So I say to the hon. member: do the research, ask the right questions, and the answers will be forthcoming. I will not withhold those answers, but it has to be a question that can be answerable, and this question cannot be answered in the form it's put.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that this minister doesn't seem to be interested in providing the information like some of his colleagues who, when they have some problem with the wording of a motion for a return, suggest an amendment to it. The minister has chosen not to do that, so I can only assume that he really does not want to provide this information in Motion 309, which is regarding the incredible number of occupational health and safety violations, gassings, and primarily ammonia exposure at the Weldwood plant in Hinton. So if the minister is serious and wants to be honest with us, let's have an amendment, and maybe we will accept it, and we'll get some information from this government so we can make some judgment about how good or otherwise they're doing their job.

[Motion lost]

310. Mr. Gibeault moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all correspondence, orders, or other documentation sent by officers of Occupational Health and Safety to Alberta Recoveries & Rentals between January 1, 1988, and April 30, 1990.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, again the hon. member asked me to amend his questions. Now, if the hon. member would take the time of my open-door policy and come and see me and say, "Look, here's what I'd like to have from you" – I don't want to write his questions. If I'm going to start to write his questions, which he's suggesting I do by amending it, then maybe we should take the research funds they have away from them and I'll do the questions for them. Certainly, to say to me to amend his questions: he's got to be kidding. Does the NDP want me to write their questions and then answer them? Maybe I should. But the way it's written, I cannot accept it, the House cannot accept it, because it's asking for personal and confidential matters. Some of it I could, but when you accept the question as written, I'd have to supply the information to all, and that is not acceptable, and I cannot do it, and I ask the members to reject 310.

MR. GIBEAULT: Now, again we have a situation where we had a health and safety disaster, and let's call a spade a spade. In Medicine Hat here we had the minister himself ultimately going down there after there had been some 16 visits by Occupational Health and Safety staff, and we have to wonder: 16 visits. Was it that the first 15 were only coffee chats with the owner, or were they more substantial than that and was there negligence on the part of the operator of Alberta Recoveries & Rentals? We don't know, Mr. Speaker. We're trying to find out where the negligence or blame may lie, so we're trying once again to provide this minister and this government an opportunity to show that they are in fact providing some leadership, some action to rectify health and safety problems in the province. I can only assume – and the workers of the province are left with no other alternative either – that by refusing steadfastly to provide any information like this to justify what the Occupational Health and Safety department's been doing in this particular instance at the Alberta Recoveries & Rentals plant with that lead poisoning situation we had there, this minister is only trying to cover up negligence on his own part, and that's totally unacceptable.

[Motion lost]

311. Mr. Gibeault moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a list of all employers in Alberta who have been prosecuted for violations of legislation or regulations administered by the minister responsible for Occupational Health and Safety during the period January 1, 1986, to April 30, 1990, showing in each case
- (1) the name of the employer,
  - (2) the nature of the infraction, and
  - (3) the amount of the fine, if any.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, before answering this, I'd just like to comment on the words "cover up" in question 308, 309, and 310. All members should be aware that whenever there is a fatality or an injury or something that happens of a nature that happened in Medicine Hat, Occupational Health and Safety does a thorough review of the problems. That investigation is ongoing. So far we've had one investigation completed, and that's on the first incident at Daishowa. That information will be presented to the Crown prosecutor for whatever action is necessary. So there is no cover-up. All other investigations are ongoing, and they can't be responded to until the investigations are completed.

In respect to 311, that could be answered, and it is answered. That information is available. Once an action is taken by the Crown prosecutor and goes through the courts, it's public knowledge. As a matter of fact, it appears in the local press. So all the member has to do is take his research people and go down to the courthouse or wherever he wants to go. That information is there. For every firm that is charged, the name is there; the dollars are there. So I don't know why I should spend public funds to provide information that's already there. So I ask the members to reject this question on the basis that he can find the information himself through the regular process.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With all due respect to the comments made by the minister on the previous three occasions, I could see the possibility of some need for confidentiality if it's talking in terms of personnel records and such, but here without question there is absolutely no reason at all why the information shouldn't be responded to. The minister has said it's public information; run over here; run over there; pick it up. Let me remind the minister that there is an obligation on members within the cabinet to try and comply to the best of their ability, to file information regarding motions for returns. The Premier of this province has stated on many occasions, the latest dealing with the AGT thing, "Put it on the order paper; you'll get your information." Here's an opportunity for the minister to easily provide that information, and he chooses not to.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it's simply a reflection of a mentality on that side of the bench that they are not going to provide anything to those of us over here. We saw that happen in the House here two days ago when I asked questions. I filed additional information showing that that particular minister – not this minister; that particular minister – had not in fact filed the information or answered the questions. Again, we just go around this merry-go-round thing where government members don't want to answer questions, and under the rules they've got the right not to answer those questions, but I think they've being very, very foolish. I think the people of Alberta object to the fear of releasing information that gives us all the ability to simply respond better on behalf of our constituents, the people that elected us to serve them and serve them properly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just briefly, I note that when we receive copies of the *Occupational Health & Safety Magazine*, at the back page of most of those editions there's information that relates to companies that have been fined or charged with any infraction of any statute or regulation in force in our province. That's not a comprehensive list. It's a rather short list, and it certainly doesn't include all the employers or the employees that are fined for violation of statute or regulation. Now, I would hazard the guess that there are a number of infractions that go before courts that are not reported in the media outlets, and that information is not available through the media outlets. Now, indeed I suppose that if one had the time and the wherewithal to go through all the actions that are filed, perhaps then and only then would you be able to find out who is being charged with what. Then you'd have to follow it up with some researcher spending a great deal of time trying to find out what the fine was, what the amount was.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know we can use people's time to a better end than having them sit around looking for information at the courthouse and waiting for other information to come down. This is a request for information that should be readily available from the ministry. It's unfortunate that they chose to deny the information, because here what the minister is proposing we do is have the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods take some of his staff or hire additional staff to go out and duplicate work that is already done, or should be done, for the department. This minister who believes that we ought to be reducing the size of government, who doesn't want to see the duplication of effort and redundancy: I'm amazed, quite frankly, that his response is to go out and have somebody else do the work when his department should have it.

So I would urge that members of the Assembly support the motion so that we don't have to go out and do what the minister proposes.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I have to express my profound disappointment with this minister and his government refusing to respond to this one. Now it's not confidential; now the information is public, and he's just suggesting that he's not going to provide it anyway. It's up to us to somehow go and dig it out. I cannot believe that this minister, who's responsible for the Occupational Health and Safety Act, who works in conjunction with the Attorney General in his prosecutions, does not have at his fingertips a list of the violations and the prosecutions and the fines and so on. Obviously somebody in his department's got them, because as my colleague for Edmonton-Belmont said, there are occasional references and examples of these violations and fines and so on in *Occupational Health & Safety Magazine*, so obviously the department is monitoring this information, as it must in order to make a determination as to whether or not the provisions of his own Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, are effective.

As legislators we need that kind of information to be able to make an assessment of whether or not the legislation currently is appropriate or not, if it's working to give us the results that we want to make sure that where there are violations of health and safety regulations, there are charges brought forward. We need to know what percentage of those result in prosecutions and what the fines are for the respective violations, infractions, so that we can make sure that there is some appropriateness in terms of these fines, to have the effect of reducing health and safety violations and accidents in the workplaces across the province.

If the minister is standing before us today and saying that while this is public information, he's not going to provide it to us, I think that's only an admission of incompetence of his behalf. He must have that at his fingertips. This is information that he must have if he's going to be able to have any possibility of evaluating his own legislation to know whether or not it's achieving the purposes for which it was intended. I'm puzzled. It's just one excuse after another, Mr. Speaker, and this is really, in particular on Motion for a Return 311, a particularly insulting response from the minister to the Assembly, that he's not going to provide us with information that he's admitted is public information and which is absolutely essential to evaluating legislation and which we as legislators need.

I just would encourage all members to support this New Democrat Motion for a Return 311 to ensure the rights of members of the Assembly in our duties, in our capacities as legislators, to have the information we need and we must have

to ensure that we have the laws and regulations in place that will protect Alberta workers in the workplace.

[Motion lost]

329. Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of every report or study on the issue of caseloads for all services offered by the Department of Social Services and the Department of Family and Social Services since April 1, 1985.

[Debate adjourned May 31: Mrs. Hewes speaking]

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

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, thank you. Just to continue my comments on 329. The minister has already spoken on this. It's certainly obvious that the size of caseloads and concern over caseloads was a major cause of the recent job action. Even though that action has ended, there appears to be no resolution whatsoever of the caseload question, and it is a source of continuing concern to communities across the province.

The minister quite correctly indicated the other day that in fact I have seen the caseload study done on child welfare workers by his department, and he also indicated that there are many reports on caseloads that he sees from time to time. Well, we need to see these reports and any other studies that are done. It's hard for me to believe, in fact it's almost impossible to believe, that the department hasn't done or doesn't have in its possession comprehensive studies regarding income security, mental health workers, workers with high-risk children, which have been asked for over and over again, and workers with high-risk families.

These problems have been detailed in this House and elsewhere for years and years now. It's just unconscionable if the department doesn't have studies that will detail the optimum caseloads for specific purposes. If this in fact is the case, then we're in much worse shape than even I imagined. If they don't exist, I'm frightened. If they do exist, I submit that there is no reason on earth why the minister would not table them in this House and allow all the workers in the province and the community agencies in the province and the members of this House to see what in fact the recommendations are.

[Motion lost]

335. Mr. Chumir moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a breakdown of sources and amount of revenue from provincial park concessions for the years ended March 31, 1983, to March 31, 1990, inclusive.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I rise to reject this motion this afternoon, and I will give a couple of reasons. Its intentions are probably fairly good, to have a look at revenues from our park concessions, but the question is poorly worded because there are two areas that our park concessions are run on and one of course is totally impossible to give, the amounts of revenues or source as to what they came from. One is the volunteer groups that operate within our parks, running concessions on special events, or those direct co-operating groups which run concessions on a yearly basis in order to raise funds and donate to the parks. Those types of revenues and that are not reportable at this Assembly.

The other rejection is based on the fact that provincial park concession arrangements and contract details are made between the private-sector operators and the government of Alberta, and therefore they are not subject to public disclosure. Tabling of this information, Mr. Speaker, could violate the confidential nature of tenders and bids submitted in response to Alberta Recreation and Parks' calls for proposals for the private-sector operation of facilities in the provincial park and recreational areas. That would definitely jeopardize our free-market drive in the future in certain privatization of contracts and concessions. So on those bases I reject this motion, 335. [interjection]

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Buffalo is now recognized.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That response is so ridiculous that I want to laugh out loud at the same time as I'm utterly frustrated. This simply requests information with respect to where the government gets its revenues from our park system. It would enable taxpayers to assess the use of park assets. I find it spectacularly inappropriate but not surprising that this minister would consider that to be confidential information. It reflects the attitude that we see time and time again that the assets of this province belong to the Progressive Conservative Party and the individuals occupying the ministries personally rather than being held as a trust for the people of this province. Shame.

[Motion lost]

339. Mr. Chumir moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing

- (1) a copy of the most recent leasing agreement between the government and Kan-Alta Golf Management Ltd. or any other lessee for the operation of Kananaskis Country Golf Course and
- (2) copies of all financial statements of the lessee, Kan-Alta Golf Management Ltd., or any other lessee relating to the operation of Kananaskis Country Golf Course from the original date of leasing to the present.

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, as we move along here, I have to stand again and reject this question due to various reasons, and I'll state those at the present time. A copy of the leasing agreement, as requested in the first part, between the government and the Kan-Alta Golf Management Ltd. was tabled by the Hon. Peter Trynchy, minister now of Occupational Health and Safety, in 1983. There has been an amending agreement since that was signed with Kan-Alta last year, in '89, for the construction of the Robert Trent Jones pavilion, done by Kan-Alta Golf Management Ltd. in support of their operations. The improvements in effect will become the property of the government upon the termination of this lease agreement but do not constitute the original lease agreement, which you can look up in the library when you have time. Also, I could make reference to the recent annual report of the Auditor General – and if you could look that up, if the hon. member would like – there's reference made to that amending agreement in this document in detail.

The second part asks for financial statements of the lessees of Kan-Alta Golf Management or any other lessees. This is a private-sector operation, and to gather these financial statements – it's not the practice of the government to table this information because it jeopardizes the capabilities of these companies to function and in the future would severely erode the con-

fidence in this government and in the province by the private sector as to their operations and their co-operation with this government.

So I therefore reject this on those grounds.

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, it is true that the previous lease was tabled by the former minister in 1983. I've seen a copy of that lease. The lease indicates that it terminates sometime in 1988. Unless the minister advises me that that's not the case, there had to be a renewal document, not simply the amendment to which he referred but a renewal document. I think the members of this House and the taxpayers of this province are entitled to see that renewal document and to be advised upon what terms the golf course is being leased. Now, if the lease continues under the prior document, then I believe the minister should indicate that very clearly so that we'll know that those are the lease terms and the revenue terms and the deal that the province is getting.

Now, these documents, of course, including the amending agreement, reflect the total package financial deal which the provincial government is getting from its park assets. I find it very difficult to see how in any way there's an element of confidentiality in the sense that the lessee is harmed competitively or in a business sense, but it does give taxpayers a way of assessing whether a reasonable deal is being made on behalf of their interests by the government. The failure to produce all of these documents, of course, leaves a suspicion, and there is a suspicion out there already in terms of whether or not this is a lease which is reflective of the best economic interests of this province.

Now, I have other questions that I have put on and will be putting on the Order Paper to try and ferret out just what's going on with respect to that golf course lease, because I have citizens who are raising these questions. They will be reading the transcript of the proceedings here, and they will be seeing very, very closely just the nature of how the government deals with public assets.

Insofar as the financial statements are concerned, Mr. Speaker, I must say that the key information I am concerned with would be the gross rents, the gross income, of the golf course, and I will make sure I get a question to that end to the minister. Under the old lease the return to the province was based on a percentage of gross rents. I will be focusing more precisely on that particular aspect. I have some other questions which will be coming.

I think what we see here is very much an attitude of circling the wagons. It took me three weeks to get a response to written notes to the minister with respect to whether I was going to get these agreements, in what I consider to be a demonstration of unprecedented discourtesy in four years in this House. I've never found myself unable to get a response from another single individual in this House. So in any event, Mr. Speaker, somewhat humorously I would ask the House to support this motion.

[Motion lost]

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

212. Moved by Mrs. Gagnon:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly encourage the government to demonstrate more leadership and responsibility in promoting tolerance and understanding between

people of differing race, ethnicity, religion, language, and abilities.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to sponsor Motion 212 this afternoon because more needs to be done in promoting tolerance and understanding in our province. We must use every tool we have to make sure we achieve a vision of peace and harmony, a vision where all peoples who reside in our province have equal opportunity to fulfill not only their own hopes and aspirations but those of their children. We have to pursue many ways to build a generous community, a community where the human dignity of each individual is respected, is welcomed.

In December 1984 the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding, of which I was a member, presented its final report to the Minister of Education. This report included a number of recommendations which, if implemented fully, would go a long way in fulfilling the purposes of Motion 212. Let me read the first and most important recommendation of the report.

The Committee on Tolerance and Understanding recommends that the Government of Alberta establish a permanent Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly on Tolerance and Understanding, to be chaired by the Premier and be composed of Members of the Legislative Assembly, including the Minister of Education, the Minister of Labour, and the Minister of Culture, with the mandate:

1. To establish ongoing communications, consultation and cooperation with individuals, groups and organizations throughout the province with respect to fostering tolerance and understanding in the home, school, workplace, and the community at large.

The second mandate of the standing committee would be to review legislation and government programs to ensure that they keep pace with social change, including the values, beliefs, lifestyles and expectations of Albertans, and meet the criteria of fostering tolerance and understanding.

A third mandate would be

to direct government departments and agencies, through the appropriate Minister, to act if inequities, injustices or neglect are identified, and review and monitor progress in the area until the situation has been rectified.

The fourth mandate of this standing committee of the Legislature would be

to conduct public hearings on a regular basis throughout the province so that Albertans will have the opportunity to meet with elected representatives to discuss the wide range of issues that are inherent within the topic of tolerance, understanding and the enhancement of respect for others.

This recommendation has never been implemented. Because no action has been taken to establish such a committee, there is no formal mechanism for consultation and communication, no established procedure for reviewing legislation, no provision for providing advice to government departments and agencies, and no means for gathering additional public input. It is not good enough to assign the task of promoting tolerance and understanding to the ministers of culture, Education, and Labour. A standing committee of the Legislature would demonstrate the importance of the issue and would allow all MLAs to be models of tolerance.

Bill 50, of course, goes a long way to addressing some of the areas mentioned in the mandate of a standing committee, but it still is not creating a body which is of the very highest level, chaired by the Premier. The Multicultural Commission fulfilled part of this goal in the recent past, but it is still important to

have a standing committee of the Legislature because this committee, which would be chaired by the Premier, as I said, would be operating at the highest possible level.

Another part of the report . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, could I have a moment? I wonder if I might beg your indulgence and introduce to all members of the House a former Member of the Legislative Assembly from Medicine Hat seated in my gallery, William Wyse, if he would stand and be recognized.

Thank you, Calgary-McKnight.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Another part of the report, the part on public education, has been partially implemented. I will mention some of the positive actions which have been taken. The establishment of COATS, for instance, the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards, was definitely a positive step and has given the teaching profession greater involvement in maintaining standards. But Albertans are still waiting for a new Teaching Profession Act, something which has been talked about, which the committee talked about for hours. It seems as though there are difficult, entrenched positions that are impossible to overcome. But we do believe and we did believe that a new Teaching Profession Act would have gone a long way to assuring that within the school systems only those professionals who have the greatest respect for the dignity of every individual would be kept on staff.

No formal mechanism has been established to review Alberta's goals of education and schooling. Alberta Education has not required that each school jurisdiction develop a written statement of policy, including their philosophy and a code of ethics, to be reviewed and ratified by each new board of trustees. This is a very important recommendation which the committee made and is one that I would urge the Minister of Education take some leadership in promoting.

To its credit, the Alberta Teachers' Association did review its code of ethics and put children at the forefront, and the curriculum branch has been very sensitive to sexism and stereotyping. However, the tolerance and understanding recommendation that Alberta Education establish a task force to examine the extent, impact, and consequences of sexism and stereotyping in the public school system has never been implemented.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Still in the area of education, exceptional children, either the very bright or those with learning disabilities, are still not totally dealt with. Some progress has been made, but the tolerance and understanding recommendation regarding diagnostic centres throughout the province has not been implemented, to the detriment of many students.

The report also asked the government of Alberta to initiate a joint public awareness program throughout all its departments and agencies to sensitize all Albertans to the needs and aspirations of the physically and mentally disabled, blind, deaf, and physically ill Albertans. This has never been done either.

The curriculum audit has been and continues to be excellent, and all curriculum has to be vetted for tolerance and understanding. This indicates that there is goodwill and that it is possible to be responsible and to show leadership. However, I don't believe there's been enough encouragement in the public school boards in the area of providing or making arrangements for alternative programs. It seems to me that where reasonable

demands are made, public boards should offer courses in comparative religions, languages, and culture. This would certainly promote understanding of peoples different from ourselves.

In the area of English as a Second Language, it is crucial that more is done. A lot has been done, and both the Minister of Education and the minister of career development have promised that they would pay particular attention to this area. However, unless there is even more improvement, alienation felt especially by immigrant women who are isolated in their homes, who cannot speak the language, cannot associate with their neighbours and within the community – they are left outside our society, and I believe the fact that they are isolated creates alienation on the part of their very own children. So English as a Second Language is absolutely crucial and even more attention must be paid to it.

The report also strongly recommended that school jurisdictions and private schools initiate programs of shared experiences and that a 5 percent additional grant be given by Alberta Education for the development of interschool liaison and shared experiences involving cultural, recreational, and sports programs and/or cost-sharing transportation programs. This very small grant could truly help break down any barriers which might exist between students and parents in different schools.

The new School Act, with its single category of registered approved private schools, should be clearer in stating that even in private schools the expectations of tolerance and understanding must be met.

There is much work yet to be done in the area of native education. Policy has been developed and the curriculum has definitely been improved, but much more needs to be done in providing liaison workers and preparing test materials which are free of cultural bias. The Department of Education has established a departmental structure to be responsible for the development, co-ordination, and implementation of the native education policy, but so far I have not seen any accountability to the Legislature. The tolerance and understanding report asks that an annual report to the Legislature on the status of native education be made by the Minister of Education, but this has not been done.

These are some initiatives, mostly in the area of Education, which could show a commitment to promoting acceptance, respect, and tolerance between people of different races, ethnicity, religion, language, and abilities. We must realize that every individual has an individual and communal history, an individual and communal story, and that each individual has literature, music, art, customs, all of which are to be respected and cherished by the greater society. We must see beyond the colour of someone's skin, beyond their disability, beyond their language, and look at the common humanity all of us share.

I look for leadership in other areas as well. When issues such as racist pins or the kirpan or the turbans arise, it seems to me that the minister and the Premier should immediately take a strong stand to prevent trauma, to prevent uncertainty, to prevent latent hostility and prejudice from raising its terrible head. We have to do much more than just speak when matters like this come up. We must take action and show leadership. We must stop discrimination dead. When blatant racism is evident, it behooves someone at the very highest level, our Premier for instance, to speak out against it. We must give the message that a multicultural society with many intercultural practices brings benefits to our country and our province.

There is an even greater need for multiculturalism today than there was in 1971 when the concept was first developed into a

policy. As long as we have large numbers of new immigrants – and the trend will continue because we do need skilled people to come to our country and to our province from other parts of the world – we will have need for multicultural policies which work and are effective. We must not only help the immigrant adjust, to maintain self-esteem and pride, but we also must help the members of the broader society adjust and make the newcomers welcome.

We must take action, I believe, to develop an environment in which Albertans understand, respect, and accept one another's cultural heritage. We must nurture cultural traditions and the sharing of those traditions among Albertans. We must promote the linguistic and artistic expression of Alberta's various cultures. We must sensitize the public and private sectors to Alberta's multicultural society in order to effect equality of opportunity and access to services. We must make available opportunities for Alberta's ethnocultural communities to contribute to the cultural, social, economic, and political life of Alberta. We must recognize that Canada's evolving culture reflects changes in population and patterns of immigration. We must provide quality services for new Canadians adapting to their new home. We must acknowledge varied needs within Alberta's multicultural community, and we must co-ordinate government resources serving the needs of Alberta's multicultural community. One of the best ways in which we could do all this would be by implementing a standing committee of this Legislature, chaired by our Premier.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do encourage members of the Assembly to support this motion.

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

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking today to the motion proposed by the hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight, I must say I find that a great deal of what she has expressed to this House is good, is worth while to be discussed, and in fact allows us in government the opportunity to give some indication of what has been going on over the past many years in our efforts to promote a sense of community in this province.

Perhaps it would be useful first of all, though, Mr. Speaker, to provide some definition so we can understand what it is we're talking about. When I see the term "tolerance and understanding," I begin to feel uncomfortable. The immediate feeling I get when I hear the word "tolerance" is: tolerating; putting up with; I can stomach, almost, what it is you are. I don't get a sense of acceptance, of warmth, of friendship, of compatibility from that word. I know from looking at the dictionary that there are several meanings to the word: to put up with, to bear or endure stress, or to be broad-minded. I'm sure the original intent of the word was to be a sense of broad-mindedness, but it seems to me the more conventional use today is one of putting up with, and I'm sure all members would agree that that sort of sense, that kind of flavour, in our approach to people who come from different lands or have different backgrounds or look or sound differently is not the expression we would wish to convey. So as I speak to the motion, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to use the words "acceptance and understanding" as opposed to "tolerance and understanding," and I'm sure the Member for Calgary-McKnight would concur in those thoughts, expressed recently in debate during second reading of Bill 50. So that's where I am.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

The understanding of all cultures, of all peoples, original peoples and everyone else here who arrived from another country – that understanding of one another and the ability to work together is not just a nice concept; it's not just something that is a good idea. It's not just something that forms a policy of a federal or a provincial government or some other body, be it a school board or an association or a business. It's not just a pleasant notion or an idea. Mr. Speaker, the concept of understanding, acceptance, is critical to our success as a society. If we have a society that does not understand one another, if we have a society that is unwilling to work with one another because our last names have several syllables or our skin is a different colour or we spoke a language, as young people growing up, that was different from one of the two official languages in this country, or even one of the other official languages of this country, then we as a society are in deep, deep trouble. I suggest that understanding that, that it's critical to our nation, is something this government has understood and, in fact, has promoted and advocated for an awfully long time.

The government established a department within Executive Council and a division within that department that focuses strictly on the matter that's before us today, on promoting understanding. There was a time called a cultural heritage division. There was a Cultural Heritage Foundation that acquired government dollars, tax dollars then, to do this kind of thing. That evolved over the period of time until today into a renamed department that puts equal emphasis with the notion, the concept, of multiculturalism and all it encompasses right in there. There's a minister in charge. He's speaking right now.

There is attendant to that a commission made up of citizens of this province whose job is to actively promote all that multiculturalism embraces, and we're talking about just one component now, which is the understanding concept. But there are individuals from across the province whose job is to do just that. We're going to help that job be done more effectively by increasing the size of the commission. Mr. Speaker, there's a member of this Assembly, the Member for Redwater-Andrew, whose job is to chair that commission, and he devotes a great many hours each day to ensuring that that job is going forward.

In addition to that and in addition to all the legislation and the commissioners and the commission chairman and all the money we put into that, there are of course all the other pieces of legislation. There are all the other coats of paint or filters. Virtually everything this government does understands that. The Member for Calgary-McKnight talked about efforts being made in the Department of Education. That's just one aspect of our recognition and our promotion of the fact that this is a critical concept. I don't think there's a department in this government and I don't think there's anybody who works for government in any capacity that is not aware of what is required to get on with the job of providing service, of developing the opportunities we all want to have in this province, of making the wheels of government move, that doesn't understand that the ability to work with everybody – everybody – is absolutely critical.

You think of the Department of Family and Social Services and their efforts to help people of different lands get settled. You can go down the benches. Economic development: working with people from other lands, trying to make contacts, business contacts, in the Pacific Rim, in Africa, in the Soviet Union, all around the globe, and using the people here who have contacts, relatives and friends, to get that job done. The forestry initiatives: working with our Japanese and Korean people and using the base of friendship we have developed here with those people to get the job done with people across the

land. You look through the Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. It spends a great deal of time contacting at very, very senior levels of government all manner of different countries, many of whom have representatives here not only on an official basis but as citizens of this country. And you go down the line: Technology, Research and Telecommunications, again involved with many countries around the world. The opportunity we have as Albertans with such a broad, broad base of population to allow us to make those contacts in other countries easily, not just at the official level where a minister calls a minister, and that can be accomplished, but because we have people-to-people contacts down at the working level, down at the private-sector level, someone who can pick up a phone and say, "Hey, I know this person over in that country; why don't you go and see him," and things start to happen. All of that is folded into this understanding and acceptance idea. We've already heard about the Minister of Education and the efforts that have gone on in his department, and we can go all the way down the line through virtually every department. My colleague the Minister of Career Development and Employment works very, very closely with people involved in immigrant settlement services.

As the Multicultural Commission made its pass through the province in 1988 and met with all those hundreds of people, the need for an effective means to have immigrants move from their country of origin into this country and into the mainstream was identified time and time and time again as something that was of critical importance. Mr. Speaker, my colleague the Minister of Career Development and Employment sits on the newly created multicultural cabinet committee, and we have discussions at this level. How can we make this happen in the best possible way? How can we improve what we're already doing? How can we add to it? How can we make it more effective? These discussions go on all the time because we realize that this is absolutely critical.

But despite our best efforts, despite the urging we offer to the citizens of Alberta to look around and work together with folks, there are some individuals who find all of this just too much. The rapidity of change, the ability to accept the fact that not everybody immigrated from the British Isles, is difficult for some individuals. We do see from time to time – and we went through an unfortunate period of time recently when individuals gave expression to their inability to understand through lapel pins, T-shirts, bumper stickers, calendars, and the like, and that is a very, very regrettable situation. Members of this government and government agencies, including the Human Rights Commission, expressed their distaste and disgust with those types of things.

Now, some members of the opposition felt that there should have been a large campaign that focused day after day after day on this, but it was my feeling and the feeling we had as a government from the best advice we could get – not just from people involved in the multicultural community but from people involved in the legal community, involved in human rights, and, of course, those people who are leaders in the community – that to give any additional exposure or credence to those kinds of issues would, in fact, be unproductive. Mr. Speaker, I recall a newspaper article that quoted one of the proponents of one of these pieces of equipment.

One importer Tuesday welcomed any court challenge, saying the publicity will make them richer.

"I'm happy about it . . . this is a lucrative field."

This is Bill Hipson speaking, who is the promoter of one of those pins. It just gives you an idea that the notion of some

individuals that somehow Premiers and ministers getting on rooftops and speaking loudly about the denunciation of this kind of activity would be a help – there's no question we felt it was disgusting and a terrible state of affairs, but to give any additional credence to it, I felt and the government agreed and most thinking people agreed, would be a mistake.

So what to do about it, Mr. Speaker. Well, we've identified a number of initiatives that we want to take forward as a government and as a Multicultural Commission. I'll just give one brief example of something we want to do. During the period of time when the Multicultural Commission was traveling around the province, gathering information, and hearing from individuals, a great deal of good, solid suggestions were made. Many, many good ideas came forward. It was impossible to take all of that and include that in a report. We would have had a report the size of an FMA. But what we have is all that information, and I think it's important that we take that information that was given to us back to the people.

So this fall in Calgary the Multicultural Commission and its chairman, the Member for Redwater-Andrew, will be hosting a symposium called Effective Leadership in a Multicultural Society. We want to make sure that the key decision-makers in this province – mayors, reeves, chiefs of police, chairs of school boards, chief executive officers, people in positions of power and decision-making – understand clearly what we are as a province today and what we're going to be like in a few years. When we think ahead to what we have to do in terms of attracting individuals here to help our economy continue to move and grow and help our population base grow, the demographic and ethnographic makeup of that is going to be quite a bit different than it is today, and we need to be prepared. We need to have people in decision-making places understand exactly what is going to be coming and be ready for that.

MR. MITCHELL: What about your position on turbans in the RCMP? What do we understand about that?

MR. MAIN: I defer to you, Mr. Speaker, to call the member to order, who is yapping on about some old news.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the hour and in light of the unrest on the Liberal benches, I move debate be adjourned.

[Motion carried]

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

**Bill 211  
An Act to Control the Sale of Products  
Which Are Not Made in Conformity with  
Alberta Environmental Standards**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 211, if it was an Act, would control the sale of products which are not made in conformity with Alberta environmental standards. That's the simple result of this type of Bill being passed. The purpose of Bill 211, if I could just put it in a nutshell and then expand on this, would initiate an environmental labeling program that would identify products which were sold in Alberta but manufac-

tured in jurisdictions outside Alberta using standards or methods which are not consistent with our environmental standards. These products would be required to be identified either by an environmental control council or by individuals in the department. Then that would alert the Alberta consumers to which products were made in a way that were potentially environmentally unfriendly. That is the basic purpose of the Bill.

The Bill, I believe, Mr. Speaker, is unique. As we've searched through Canadian and North American legislation and initiatives in this area, we can't find anything that parallels the action which would be required by this type of Bill coming into effect. It's for that reason, it's because of its uniqueness, that I will suggest that the Bill in its present form is not perfect. It could probably use some amendments here and there to make it better. So as I present it today, I am sincerely subjecting it to the members of the Assembly here, including the members of the opposition parties, because I know that they may have some possible suggestions how to make this Bill better. I don't want to formally propose amendments today to the Bill. I don't think it would be fair to other members who are preparing to speak on it if I was to alter the Bill today, but I am asking for help. I'm asking for suggestions from all members of the Assembly, in all sincerity, to make this a better Bill. But I do hope that they support the principle of the Bill. When we look at the reasoning, I think we can have concurrence in the Assembly on this type of initiative.

The current situation basically is that industries which are locating in Alberta are subject to some of the most stringent environmental standards in the world. These strict standards would mean and do mean increased costs to industry. Anytime your industry is forced to rise to certain environmental standards and you have to put machinery or equipment or technologies on line in your product development, that means increased cost to your product. What can happen in situations like that, Mr. Speaker, is that an industry evaluating whether they should start up in Alberta to manufacture certain products in confrontation with our environmental standards may say to themselves, "You know, it would be cheaper for us to go somewhere else where the standards aren't as high and manufacture our product." So we're faced with that possibility, the possibility of that product being manufactured outside of Alberta using standards that are not consistent or do not parallel our standards.

By requiring a labeling of products which are made with standards inconsistent with ours, that empowers the consumer. It gets away from a top-heavy bureaucratic approach and empowers the consumer to make choices. So instead of having to hire thousands and thousands of inspectors, we could empower in Alberta over two million consumers, by the identification of a label on a certain product, to then make a decision: "Do I want to support a company which is manufacturing a product outside of our province which our own province would not allow to be manufactured inside the province?"

The area of environmental concern is primary and a priority in people's thinking today, not just in Alberta and not just in Canada but worldwide, and it needs to be. We need to have that priority. We also need to realize that development can happen and products can be developed that don't harm the environment; that even processes that previously were harmful to the environment can be changed, can be adapted; that technology offers us infinite abilities in terms of being able to alter manufacturing methods and, indeed, produce products in whose process the environment is not harmed. We need to get that message out, I believe, to a world and, in many cases, to a young generation still in school that I believe has a healthy



respect for the environment. Yet in some cases our young people are given the impression, maybe unnecessarily, that any development is bad, any production is bad, and any kind of technology can be harmful. Students need to be aware that technology itself can give us the answers to protect the environment and also improve our standard of living and our way of life. This type of Bill would support that and advance that.

Products that were sold in Alberta but manufactured elsewhere would be investigated. I would see it happening more on a reporting and on a demand basis rather than having members of the department going out worldwide on some kind of search for bad products. I believe that as this type of initiative came into being and became more aware to people, we would have a reporting system that would start in almost a natural way. People would have a product that was suspect made somewhere else and could begin a reporting process. In cases like this the minister or, as the Bill refers to, "a council" could then begin an investigative process and see if indeed the ways in which that product was manufactured were harmful to the environment. Now, this is just an area of suggestion in the Bill in terms of it talking about a council there, and I would certainly be open to suggestion on maybe not a council; maybe there's a more effective means of policing this.

The importance of consumer awareness is something that's been tapped into worldwide, and the concept of environmental labeling itself is something that has also caught on worldwide. Originating in West Germany in the '70s, this concept of environmental labeling has spread to North America, Japan, Norway, Sweden, France. Those particular environmental labeling programs seek to name products which are environmentally friendly in themselves, in terms of the product itself maybe being biodegradable, for instance, or recyclable. So that's a certain type of environmental labeling program that's different than the one that I am advocating through this Bill.

Canada's own environmental choice program was established in 1988, and we as a provincial government certainly support that. Just as an example, some products that carry the environmental choice label now would be reusable cloth diapers, zinc air batteries, low pollution paints, goods made from recycled paper, and those types of products. I'm sure most of us are familiar – I hope we are – with the three doves label on these products, which helps us to identify products which in themselves, after they've been manufactured, are environmentally friendly and not damaging to the environment. That program combined with the type of program that this Bill would launch would give us a two-pronged attack, if you will, Mr. Speaker, on protecting the environment in the manufacturing process.

Now, the goal of the Bill, which is to facilitate consumer awareness and industry incentive, dovetails with this federal program, as I've indicated, but it adds another dimension to this environmentally sensitive consumer marketplace that we're in, in terms of the direct identification of products not produced under the same strict environmental standards which Alberta companies are under. Given its nature, the two types of programs would work very well together.

I'd like to clarify some of the terms in the Bill and also the process and look to members opposite to have that improved upon, or if there are some things in these definitions that are faulty which I haven't considered, I'd like to be made aware of those. Bill 211 refers to goods for sale in Alberta but manufactured, the Bill says, in other Canadian jurisdictions. I think there's an obvious amendment we could look to there that I'm not going to propose formally. The intent actually is not just to limit it to the Canadian scene but in fact to the international

scene. Goods manufactured in the United States or overseas would also come under this Bill – in its finished form, obviously, not in the form it is now. So limiting it, as it says now, to the Canadian jurisdiction would be something that I would have no problem seeing expanded.

Just let me give an example. Let's take a pulp and paper company considering locating a mill in Alberta, but it decides on another province to set up in because of less rigorous dioxin and furan monitoring requirements, for instance. There we would lose some industrial development to other provinces. Our strict environmental standards actually would wind up hurting us economically even though we've protected the environment. The effect would be that the mill would still locate somewhere else, in another province or another jurisdiction without this type of legislation in place. But with this legislation in place, a company thinking of moving to an adjacent province, for instance, to set up their pulp and paper mill would know that their product would be marked and labeled coming into Alberta as being made in a way that was not environmentally friendly or not consistent with our standards. So the company would realize that there's no point in them moving to a neighbouring jurisdiction because they're not going to be able to sell their product the way they would want to, since the consumers would be alerted to it.

Part of the problem in Canada is the variance in environmental standards across the country. Until those are standardized across the country, we're going to run the possibility of actually losing business because we have the good intent of protecting the environment. The priority is to protect the environment. Can we also look at sustaining development? Without these industry standards dictated by Environment Canada, we're going to have the differences. That will continue.

I think, though, that all members in this House can agree – obviously we have our differences in terms of environmental procedures, but I think we do recognize that Alberta does enjoy a reputation of having established industry standards at the high end of the international range. We really believe, in comparing some of our standards worldwide, our standards are indeed the best in the world; if not, at the very high end. Unfortunately, however, lower standards exist in Central America, Asia, Africa, and South America, and industry can be attracted to those particular areas because the standards are lower and therefore the costs of manufacturing the product would be lower.

I've looked at in the Bill, and we've got a term in here, "The Product Environmental Control Council." I've already alluded to the fact that that's a suggestion. I would not want to see something brought into place that would become so heavily bureaucratized that it might drown in its own paper. I'd like to see some kind of a process that's lean and mean, if I can use that, and able to rise to the demand and go out and investigate what needs to be investigated. So I'm suggesting here a product environmental control council, but it could be just an area within the existing Department of the Environment that would be delegated. I'm certainly open to suggestion there. The council format does represent a comprehensive process for product investigation, but I'm sure there are other approaches that would be available.

The Bill talks about a product being "marked with a statement." This is obviously an integral part of the Bill. I'm proposing that a product identified by the process, whether it be a council or delegates from within the department, would be marked with a statement that identifies the product as having been manufactured under conditions inconsistent with Alberta environmental standards. In the case of on-the-shelf consumer

products, retailers would be required to attach a label to the product that the consumer could see.

However, obviously we know that in Alberta we're talking about industry development that is in many cases resource-based, and most of Alberta's environmental standards actually apply to secondary refined products such as chemicals, petrochemicals, pulp: things that aren't found necessarily on the shelf at your local grocery store. It would be impossible, at least from my view, to actually label these products themselves for the consumer to see, since the consumer would be a commercial buyer. So in these cases my suggestion would be that for products coming in in bulk form to wholesale buyers or commercial buyers, there would be a statement from the Minister of the Environment sent to the Alberta purchasers of that product stating that the production of the imported product is not up to Alberta environmental standards. Then the customer could contact the Department of the Environment or the product environmental control council for more information. So there would still be a reporting process so that Alberta companies making large purchases would not unwittingly be buying products whose manufacture hurt the environment.

In terms of a product example, why don't we look at pulp for a minute? The proposed legislation is particularly relevant to pulp, I believe, because of new industry standards and the implementation of advanced technology which I and other sources even outside of Alberta believe make Alberta pulp and paper mills among the world's leaders in controlling the production of dioxins and organic compounds. For instance, just the processes of extended delignification, oxygen delignification, and chlorine dioxide substitution reduce the dioxin formation at Alberta kraft mills, just as examples of technologies that are on the Alberta scene. And here we can take for an example the Daishowa plant at Peace River, which will be installing each of these three new technologies from the start-up of the mill, which is slated for sometime late this summer I understand.

Now, even though Daishowa has only been required to use conventional methods in other jurisdictions where it operates, it is being required to use these methods in Alberta, and yet as a company it operates in other areas where these particular requirements are not in place. Neither Japan nor British Columbia require in-plant extended delignification, oxygen delignification, or chlorine dioxide substitution. Sweden does require some, we understand, but Alberta requires the full-scale use of this technology. So there's a case of an international company the size of Daishowa having open to them the opportunity to manufacture in areas other than Alberta and not being forced to comply with standards which we have in Alberta.

Actually, regarding effluent treatment itself, Sweden requires only partial application of the latest technology as we speak today, and B.C. requires it fully at one stage, but only Alberta makes it mandatory at both the primary and secondary stages. Alberta mills, in terms of effluent goals, require an effluent goal of 14 kilograms per tonne. When you look at Sweden, they are attempting to achieve approximately 2.0 kilograms per tonne by 1992. Ontario is trying for 2.5 by 1991, and B.C. is aiming for 1.5 by 1994. Alberta has achieved it already; we're there now. So a company looking to manufacture might look at Alberta and say: "Those standards are too tough. I think I'll manufacture in a neighbouring jurisdiction or another jurisdiction." We would lose an opportunity for sustainable development and the environment would continue to be polluted in such a scenario unfolding.

Alberta's also the first province to legislate the use of the expensive and highly effective oxygen bleaching process, which

is widely recognized as the only sure way to significantly cut pulp mill chemical pollution levels.

In addition to these advanced technologies being introduced into Alberta pulp mills, the Department of the Environment is increasingly able to perform highly refined testing of both the general state of the environment and of the pulp mills' compliance with development standards. So in light of all these technological advancements, Mr. Speaker, we see that we are continuing to move to a higher and higher standard of environmental protection.

Now, when you look at pulp, with the exception of Alberta Newsprint Ltd., pulp isn't actually used for paper production in Alberta. The vast majority of Alberta pulp is exported. But pulp has been imported into Alberta from other provinces for the manufacture of certain products such as triacetate fibre yarn, which is used, unfortunately, in the production of cigarette filters, and I'll look accusingly at some of my own colleagues here supporting that trade. But there is an example where some pulp is being purchased from outside the province and being used here, and it's being manufactured outside the province according to standards which are not as stringent as the standards here in Alberta. With this Bill in place, that product would be marked, the purchasers would be notified that this product is being made in an environmentally unfriendly way, the force of consumer advocacy would come into effect, the product would cease to be in demand, and the manufacturer would begin to get the realization that they've got to raise their standards. Otherwise, their product's going to be labeled and they're not going to be able to sell it.

In terms of the fertilizer industry, a similar situation is found when we're looking at environmental standards for this industry. Along with the province of B.C., Alberta has the most stringent environmental standards in Canada to control ammonium nitrate, sulphur dioxide, fluorides, and sulphur trioxide pollutants that are emitted through the production of nitrogen and phosphorous fertilizers. We're at the leading edge. Alberta does produce large amounts of high-quality fertilizer, but again about 10 percent of all farm fertilizers that are used in Alberta are produced outside the province with environmental standards not as tough as Alberta's. Last year's sales of imported home and garden fertilizer total over \$11 million: another example of products that would be looked at and possibly labeled. Again a consumer advocacy would swing into effect, the sales would drop, and the companies would then realize they have to raise their standards.

The natural gas industry. When considering environmental standards for this particular industry, we find that Alberta standards are again among the highest in the world. For instance, the processing of natural gas, as we know, consists of the removal of hydrogen sulphide and heavy hydrocarbons from sour gas, and Alberta and B.C. are the only Canadian jurisdictions having sulphur recovery standards for natural gas processing plants. Alberta standards again are particularly strict here. For example, mercury and toxicity water emission level standards are many times higher for Alberta production than in other provinces. Again a case where manufacturer processing could be discouraged here because of our high standards, but a company would know that going to another jurisdiction is only going to mean that their products will be labeled when they come into Alberta and they would lose the sales anyway. They may as well raise their standards or come to Alberta where they could have other natural advantages and still have the top standards in place.

In terms of the process, in some cases I think investigation and verification of environmental standards would simply require a phone call. It could be very obvious that another jurisdiction has standards far below ours. There are obviously other cases where it would be difficult to determine exactly the standards being used, the different methods of production. There would be difficulties – there would be – in the investigation process, and I'd look to members of the House to advise on how some of those difficulties could be met. But I would hope we wouldn't discourage or deflect the principle of the Bill just because there would be some difficulties inherent with it. There would be difficulties with implementation, there's no question about that, but again I would challenge members to say, "Yes, there are some difficulties with this, but let's look at how we can possibly meet those difficulties."

What we need to see – and try and get a picture of this. Just recently, I know members are aware – or I hope they'd be aware – there's been a co-operative regional initiative going on in the Pacific Northwest with the states of Washington, Montana, Idaho, and Alaska and the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta. We had two days of meetings as late as just last week on this. One of the areas identified for co-operation was the area of the environment. It was exciting, as a resident of Alberta, to hear the legislators from Washington, Montana, Idaho, Alaska, and British Columbia look to Alberta and say: "Your standards are in place, and they are significantly high. We need to work in co-operation to get the same level of standards so that when we're shipping or manufacturing to the international world, they identify not just Alberta but, in fact, the entire Pacific Northwest as an area that is looking for and enforcing high environmental standards."

There's an area where a Bill like this coming into effect in Alberta would immediately impact on the entire Pacific Northwest. Because the level of international co-operation in this area is increasing – we see it in many different areas around the world – I really believe that this Bill in principle would catch on, the principle of this. Jurisdictions agreeing together: let's stand together against irresponsible developers who would manufacture products that would hurt the environment. As has been indicated as recently as last week, just as this is going to take effect in the Pacific Northwest, I believe it would move through Canada, through North America, the world, the universe, the cosmos. It goes on and on; the potential is limitless.

The concept of international environmental co-operation was supported in the 1988 Brundtland report titled *Our Common Future*. It's considered to be the most important document of the '80s on the future of the world. I'd like to just briefly quote from that report.

National boundaries have become so porous that traditional distinctions between local, national, and international issues have become blurred. Policies formerly considered to be exclusively matters of 'national concern' now have an impact on the ecological basis of other nations' development and survival . . . This fast-changing context for national action has introduced new imperatives and new opportunities for international co-operation. That's a statement I know we can all embrace. I know personally that our Minister of the Environment embraces and works with that type of statement and philosophy.

I believe that just as this – and I use the word "imagine," because that's an operative word. It's one that of course John Lennon had some say in making operative a number of years ago. But it's taken on a new concept, and it's taken on a new reality. Imagine the concept of not just one province but neighbouring jurisdictions and then countries and then con-

tinents taking on this concept of legislating that it would be required that products that are manufactured in an environmentally unfriendly way would be labeled. The consumer would become aware of it, would not buy the product, and consumer force, the force of consumer advocacy and this heightened awareness of consumer concern for the environment, would take effect. Imagine – imagine. I believe it can happen.

I believe this Bill coming into effect here in our province would highlight, obviously, our own high standards, which are well known, but it would cause irresponsible developers and manufacturers to realize that there's no sense going to a neighbouring province, because as soon as their product hits our border, it's going to be labeled. The country's going to know about it; North America would know about it. The demand for the product would drop.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the members of the Assembly help to refine this Bill. I think there are some weaknesses in it that could be developed and strengthened, but the principle of the Bill I believe is positive, and I would ask for support for this type of initiative.

Thank you.

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

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise in debate on Bill 211. I was pleased and somewhat interested to hear the quotations from John Lennon. The spirit of that song was captured, indeed, by the member. I didn't know before today that he was a Lennonist, in fact. I know we have a Provincial Treasurer who's a Groucho Marxist, and now we have the Member for Red Deer-North who's a John Lennonist. That could be a good thing, although I think he should probably consult some of the rest of the lyrics of that song from time to time as well.

Bill 211 would set up a product environmental control council to look at different products that are offered for sale in the Alberta marketplace, to try to determine which of those would conform to Alberta environmental standards, and to label the ones that do not for the advice of consumers. I support that initiative, and I congratulate the member for bringing it forward. I congratulate him on his concern for the environment and for taking this particular initiative, because my strong feeling is that consumers want to do what they can in the marketplace to try to preserve and protect our planet, to try to do what they can to do their part toward securing a healthy future for all of us on this planet.

That certainly came home to me in the past month. In our constituency we had a couple of seminars where people came to learn, in their roles as consumers and as householders, about the things that they can do in order to try to improve our environment. They were both quite well attended. One occurred on the evening of a hockey game and the other one occurred on the evening of a rainstorm, but nonetheless the people came out. We had, I think, a full house on both occasions, where presentations were made from people from the Environmental Resource Centre. They looked at disposable products versus reusable products. They looked at toxic materials and what alternatives might exist to using toxic materials: corrosives, explosives, flammables, that kind of thing. There is an awful lot that individuals can do if they're armed with the information and prepared to put, in some cases, a little more effort into doing what they're doing; in other cases, not. It's just a matter of shopping smart, of picking out things that – thinking through the

whole cycle.

The member is concerned today with the production phase of the cycle, what happens in the production of products. Are steps taken to try to make sure that these products are made in an environmentally friendly fashion? Of course, people are concerned about the effects of using products, and they're concerned about the ultimate destination of products as well, whether they end up in landfills or they end up in some way polluting our air and water. People are of a mind that they want to do something on a personal, individual basis. I believe that this type of legislation would help them to do that. If you could look at a product and tell from the label that it has been made in a fashion that degrades the environment and possibly, you know, exploits people who work in the process, I think most people would look for an alternative if there was one available. I think that if you had this type of labeling program, somebody in the marketplace would make a product available to compete with that product, and it does go very well with the federal program mentioned by the hon. member, the environmentally friendly product labeling program, which offers the symbol of the three doves for certain qualified products.

Now, there is a bit of a glitch involved in setting that program up, because there are fees involved and some of the businesses are finding the fees to qualify for that program fairly onerous. You have to go through a screening and testing program. I'm not certain, but I think the fees are probably designed on a cost recovery basis. Nonetheless, some of the businesspeople are finding those fees a bit onerous. There may be environmentally friendly products which are not labeled as such because they don't pay the fee or are not able to buy into that particular program. This, as I said, is a somewhat different approach, but I think it's one that would be welcomed, and it would be a great help to people who are attempting to be environmentally responsible in their purchasing habits and in their consumption habits. I think this would give a boost.

I appreciate the comment that the member made about wanting to expand this program beyond Canadian borders and look at a world context, because the environmental problem is an international problem; there's no question about it. We have managed in the last few generations to create serious international environmental problems. There was a time, Mr. Speaker, when most environmental problems were basically local in character. You had a landfill; you had a dump; you had a creek or a river that was polluted; smog in a local area. Well, now we've succeeded through miracles of modern technology to broadcast the pollution in a much broader scale, so instead of smog we worry more about acid rain, instead of river pollution we worry about buildup of toxins in the ocean, and of course we have the problem of ozone depletion, which is caused in the main by chlorofluorocarbons, the release of CFCs into the atmosphere.

There are some such products – I think probably the member would agree that we should go beyond the labeling approach – that because of the harmful effect of their use ought to be banned in the way that DDT, for example, has been banned. I think chlorofluorocarbons should be banned, and I in fact have made that proposal in the Legislative Assembly, as has the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark. Those, of course, are the most successful types of environmental control initiatives. What so often happens with all kinds of issues but with the environmental area in particular: once programs are set up, once legislation is in place, once these things become internalized within a bureaucracy, sometimes compromises are made and things happen that really shouldn't happen or that are maybe a

little bit outside of the wishes and the ambitions of the people who set up those programs. There are all kinds of examples of this, but I think if we look at the history of the Earth Day movement, the point is fairly well made.

In the late 1960s when the first wave of concern over environmental matters came and the first Earth Day was held, some 20 years ago, there was a great rush by governments to move in and do something about the environment. The Environmental Protection Agency was set up in the United States. The Department of the Environment was set up by the Social Credit government in Alberta. The Environment Conservation Authority was set up. All of these things happened at the beginning of the decade of the 1970s. For a time the public concern waned because a lot of people felt: "Well, we have this environmental protection legislation in place; we have these agencies in place. Things are looked after." It seems to me that a lot of people woke up 15 to 20 years later finding that the problems had not been looked after, that in fact the pattern that was developing was still not serving the need and environmental problems were building, sometimes on a more subtle basis, sometimes on an unseen basis, but were real nonetheless.

So by expanding the mandate of the council beyond Alberta's borders, we recognize that this is a global problem, and we as Albertans want to be part of a global solution to a global problem. In that sense the reach of our concern as consumers would go beyond our borders and, I think, would have an influence on the way companies do business, on the way other governments regulate their industries, because if they want to sell in our marketplace, obviously they don't want one of these stickers on there that says that it's being manufactured under less than tolerable environmental conditions.

I daresay that adding that scope would probably make it easier for any government to recruit members to this council. If, for example, you had to go to Thailand in the middle of winter to investigate a situation like this, I suppose there might be more people who'd be prepared to volunteer for that excursion rather than having to go to Winnipeg or some such place at the same time of year. That would undoubtedly make it easier for the government of the day to recruit members on the council, and I'm certain that volunteers could be found to receive fees and remuneration and expenses to carry out this very important responsibility.

I think, though, that the member should perhaps go the next step in terms of this legislation. If we're going to have a process that labels products which don't meet Alberta environmental standards in their manufacture and production, he should go the full step and reform Alberta's environmental standards. That would complete the package to my satisfaction and would make this Bill worthy of a standing ovation, I think, let alone approval by this Assembly. Perhaps if the member might like to start along that journey, I could give him a few pointers on where he could find some information. I would suggest that the first thing he might do – and perhaps every hon. member might look up the report of the environmental law enforcement task force which was published by the then Minister of the Environment, the hon. Mr. Kowalski, in January of 1988 – it was made public January 12, 1988 – an excellent report, Mr. Speaker, and one that I think the member would find very edifying reading. It would indicate why it's necessary to expand some of the provisions of this Bill in order to make it truly function in the way that I'm sure he would want it to. For example, the object of the council in this particular Act

is to advise the Minister of products whose manufacture results in environmental conditions which would, if in Alberta, be an

infringement of an Alberta enactment.

Well, that's exactly what this report is about. It's about the question of how an infringement to an Alberta enactment is treated and how it's dealt with.

Just by way of background, the report arose out of an incident in Calgary on March 29, 1987, when a toxic gas cloud kind of roamed its way through the eastern edge of the city. This was on a Sunday morning when people were getting up to go to church or go jogging or listen to John Lennon, whatever they do on a Sunday morning. Unfortunately, they found when they got up that this toxic cloud was sort of roaming through the neighbourhood, and 12 people went to hospital suffering choking; burning of the eyes, nose, and throat; chest tightness; nausea; diarrhea: not normal Sunday morning symptoms for most people, Mr. Speaker. Now, there were some 300 eyewitness reports available, so the investigators had a fair amount of material to sift through. The minister at the time indicated that he was quite concerned about people being gassed on Sunday morning in the city of Calgary and that he would like to throw the book at them in essence.

Unfortunately, the report came back from the investigators, "Well, we don't really have a very good book for you to throw at them, Mr. Minister." So the minister did the right thing. He set up a panel of experts in the field, lawyers for the most part but some officials from the government as well, who looked at this matter. I think they were appointed in August of '87, and as I said, the report came out in January of '88. The critical finding of the report is that Alberta's environmental statutes are unenforceable. Now, "unenforceable" is their term – it's not mine – but I think it indicates a fairly serious situation. So when this Bill talks about labeling products whose manufacture results in conditions that would be "an infringement of an enactment," it's very difficult to define what that area would be, given that Alberta's environmental laws are unenforceable, contrary to the notes that he read into the record a short while ago.

I think some of these issues were, in fairness, not exactly news to the government at that time. My understanding is that the Environment Council of Alberta pointed many of these deficiencies out to the government in a report dated 1985. For example, look at ambient air quality standards. The Department of the Environment utilizes ambient air quality standards, which measure levels of pollution in the environment. That's what the term "ambient" means. The report of the environmental law enforcement task force finds at page 13, and I quote, "Ambient air quality regulations . . . are not enforceable because it is exceedingly difficult to prove the source." It's, I guess, a question of applying a criminal law standard in an environmental situation, and it doesn't always work very well. So you have data that says, "Yes, this is a toxic gas cloud and, yes, people were hurt by it," but then somebody has to try to make the link between the source of it – now, a lot of people seemed to feel the source may have been Western Co-op Fertilizers. I don't think they're likely to stand up and say, "Oh, yes, it was us." Nonetheless, the investigators found – and this is a problem with the structure of the legislation, pinning the ambient condition to the source – that loophole exists in the legislation. Unfortunately, it would be very difficult under Bill 211 to pin down how you're going to apply that when you're dealing with an Alberta enactment which has the deficiency that I have just mentioned.

On the Clean Water Act the report finds at page 17 that the province lacks – I'm quoting again – "a comprehensive policy for the provincial management of water." The authors are particularly concerned about missing linkages between river basin

planning and the licensing system. We have a planning system that looks at an entire river basin, looks at all of the sources of pollution within that system. They do some water quality work. They don't have standards exactly, they have what they call water quality objectives, of sorts. The report finds that there is no apparent relationship between this river basin planning and the issuing of licences. In fact, licences appear to be issued according to the political needs of the government of the day.

For example, a licence was issued to Daishowa, a case mentioned by the member in his remarks, out of the blue one day. I mean, Daishowa itself indicated publicly that they fully expected to go through some type of a review process before their licence was issued. In fact, they were expecting at least the review process that Procter & Gamble went through, where the licence was issued in draft form and there was an opportunity to comment before it was issued. They were as surprised as anybody when all of a sudden in their mailbox shows up a licence issued by the Minister of the Environment. The explanation was rather an interesting one, because the minister said that the government was in some legal jeopardy if they didn't hand out the licence, indicating to my sensitive ears that . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, the Chair has been listening with a great deal of interest to the hon. member's review of all the ills of the present environmental laws or the application of them, but the Chair is having real difficulty in finding the relevancy to what the purpose of the Bill is: to apply known standards to things that are manufactured and produced. The Chair is wondering whether the hon. member is maybe trying too much in his remarks.

MR. McINNIS: I thank the Chair for drawing that to my attention. I didn't want to indicate that I was talking about Daishowa merely because the hon. Member for Red Deer-North did. That's not my point at all. My point is that the concern in law in Alberta, in Alberta enactments, which is what this Bill is all about – the base purpose of the Bill is to label products which in their manufacture would create environmental conditions which would be an infringement of an Alberta enactment. My reference is to the Clean Water Act, clearly one of the Acts which is referred to by the central object of this particular legislation. The Daishowa permit makes the point of the environmental law enforcement task force, which states that there is a missing link between the river basin planning and the issuance of licences. It makes a recommendation, and I quote, "that effluent standards for pollution sources be established for each watershed," a very important recommendation, a very important principle. If we could get that into an Alberta enactment, if we could get it into Alberta's environmental standards, then Bill 211 would be effective for its intended purpose, whereas it would not be as it's presently structured because of these gaping holes in Alberta environmental law and, in particular, in the Clean Water Act and the issuance of permits.

So as I said, Daishowa was quite surprised that they were handed this permit and completely taken aback by the notion that they might sue the government to get a permit, because they don't operate that way. In fact, they seem to feel that somebody's taking some liberties with the actual situation in the description of how that permit was issued. Nonetheless, it's quite clear that it didn't take place in the context of proper river basin planning and that there are no effluent standards in legislation, no enforceable standards for each particular water-

shed. Alberta currently has no legislative standards for effluent discharge. Such standards as now exist are within the permits themselves. Whatever the Minister of the Environment and his director of standards and approvals write into the permit, that is the standard, so-called.

But then there are a couple of interesting things about putting standards like that in permits. First of all, it's flexible; case by case you can put whatever you want. But, secondly, the government reserves the right to issue letters of permission to exceed those permitted levels. In fact, I put a motion for a return asking that those letters of permission be tabled, because I think it's an important principle in environmental law that if you're going to exceed a permit at any time, the people who are subject to that excess pollution should be notified, if possible before the fact. If possible, they should be notified in such a way that they can take precautions.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

If a company was aware, say, some hours ahead of an upset condition – that they were going to blow a toxic gas cloud or a wad of pollution into a river – they should attempt to notify people downstream and downwind so that they can take precautions. But if they can't – I mean, accidents do happen; we have to face up to that, and that's part of the risk assessment that a prudent government normally does as part of the environmental impact assessment process – they should then notify people as quickly as possible so that they can get out of the way or try to take some measure to protect themselves, some type of precaution, whether it's not swimming in the river or not watering their cattle from that source or even trying to get out of the way of it for a period of time.

But does this government recognize that principle? No. They refuse to make public those letters of permission. Now, I think that's a fundamentally important issue bound up with this question of what is an infringement of an Alberta enactment. If the only standard that exists is the relative standard that's written in the permit, surely you should be able to rely on that. In some measure you should be able to, you know, go to sleep at night believing that these permits are going to be honoured, that they mean something. But they don't, because Alberta Environment can issue a letter of permission anytime they want. We don't even know how many are issued. We do know that Procter & Gamble, for example, was allowed to throw a few hundred thousand kilometres of sludge from the bottom of their settling pond into the river in the summer of 1988 and again in the summer of 1989. Why? Because somebody in Alberta Environment thought it was a good idea, or they thought it was short-term pain for long-term gain, as the Minister of the Environment put it.

But that's not good enough from a public policy point of view, and I don't think it's good enough from the point of view of the objective of this legislation, which is to warn people when products are made in a way that's destructive of the environment. You know, the standard that we apply has to be a high one. I do think that the question of what Alberta's standards for pulp mill effluent are is a very important one. The member brought it up himself in the debate. He said that we have the highest standards in the world. That's what he said, reading from a document prepared for him, no doubt, by the Minister of the Environment. But the reference there, I think, is just slightly incorrect. I think we in Alberta have the highest standard for hyperbole and rhetoric; there's no question about that. I mean, we have the mission statement of the Environment

department, so-called, which says in it that in Alberta, "Polluters pay." So I put a written question on the Order Paper, "How much did the polluters pay for their permits under the Clean Water Act, and how much did they pay for their permits under the Clean Air Act?" The answer came back: "Well, the words that I quoted from the mission statement weren't actually part of the mission statement at all. The mission statement was the few words at the top that said something about wise use of resources now and in the future." The rest of the document, which everybody I know who read it thought was the mission statement of the department, which was described by the minister as the status quo, is nothing. It's obiter dicta, as the lawyers say. So there's certainly a high calibre of hyperbole in the environmental rhetoric, but high standards for pulp mills – forget it.

What we have in Alberta, and I think the member should get this clear, is 1988 Swedish technology which this government has gone to the pulp industry and said, "You must install." In fact, it was indicated by the minister the other day that Alberta Environment went to Daishowa half-way through their construction and they added a piece. He talked about chlorine dioxide substitution, oxygen delignification, extended delignification. These are all 1988 Swedish technology. I did have a meeting with some people at Daishowa once. I asked them what they thought about the idea of the government dictating what type of technology they would use in their production process. It was kind of an interesting answer I got from them. They said: "You know, some days we sit down with our Alberta Environment people and we wonder, well, who's building this pulp mill anyways? Is it us or is it Alberta Environment?" I think this point fits very well in this particular Bill. Why is it that 1988 Swedish technology is something we should grab onto and call the highest in the world? Because it's like any other piece of technology: it's obsolete the moment that it comes off the Assembly line. Somebody's going to come along with something better. You go down to the Provincial Museum one day. Everything in that place was state-of-the-art technology at the time it was introduced, and I think that's also true of 1988 Swedish technology.

You know, the government of Alberta prior to the 1989 election campaign cut deals for seven major pulp projects; two are pending. They essentially locked us into the 1988 technology, and that's kind of where we sit right now. Whereas Sweden – and Sweden was mentioned here – where all this technology was developed, didn't go to the industry and say: "We want you to install extended delignification. We want you put in some ClO<sub>2</sub> substitution and oxygen delignification." They didn't say that for a simple reason: those things didn't exist when they went to the industry and said, "You've got a problem; you clean it up." That's the kind of standards that we should have: "You clean it up. You make it clean." Not that you should have your Alberta Environment controllers go in there and say, "This piece should be hooked up to that piece, and I want you to turn that wrench with both hands instead of one hand," which is what they do, you know, as if they know best. In fact, some things are best left up to industry.

So the Lennonist member opposite comes into the Assembly with a new board that's going to impose something on the private sector. You know, I'm not sure an idea like that would get through our caucus all that quickly, but since he's on the right of the political spectrum, it's all right for him to dream up new boards and agencies and bring them in here. I'm prepared to support this one because I think his heart is in the right place. But, you know, we have to make sure that we're doing what we

intend to do with this type of legislation, and I think that's why we have to be able to say to our pulp industry, for example, not that you have this equipment and that equipment but that you get to a point where you don't put any harmful effluents in those rivers. Why can't we say that to the pulp industry? If we could say that and if we could somehow get that into an Alberta enactment, then we'd have something, Mr. Speaker. Then this would be a model for every environmentalist around the world. Every person on this planet should get behind this Bill at that point in time, because then we'd be saying to the world: "We're going to go for the best standard. We're going to go for the only truly acceptable standard for the pulp industry; that's zero effluent. We're going to go for it." Why don't we put that in the legislation?

What do we have instead in the legislation? Well, what we have in the Clean Water Act is really no comprehensive policy for provincial management of water quality. We have the missing link between river basin planning and licensing, and we have a lack of effluent standards for pollution sources for each watershed. I mean, I feel very much the same way about what's happening on the North Saskatchewan River. On the North Saskatchewan River we don't have pulp mills, but we do have all kinds of sources of pollution. The Minister of the Environment delights in mentioning the fact that the city of Edmonton often dumps raw sewage in the river. That's a terrible thing. I think we in this Legislative Assembly should resolve to do something about it, and if we could do something about it and get it into an Alberta enactment, then it would just so beautifully dovetail with the provisions of Bill 211. That's why I think the provincial government should be doing the river basin planning on the North Saskatchewan River right now and should be setting standards – not objectives but standards: hard and fast standards, rules; a rule of law for the water quality on that river. If we did that and worked backwards from that, we'd find a way to solve the pollution problems that come from the sewage system in the city of Edmonton. We could solve that problem. And if we could do that, we could show other people how to do it. Then I think we would be in a perfect position to hold ourselves up as the type of model that we want to be.

I believe that the Member for Red Deer-North wants this province to be a model. I believe that he is well-motivated to support . . .

[The member's speaking time expired]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, thank you.

Edmonton-Meadowlark is recognized.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of things I'd like to say about this Bill. We're running out of time, but I would like to make one particular point about this. It struck me that in one sense this Bill has something to recommend it, but as I began to analyze it, I knew that the intentions of this member in presenting this Bill had nothing to do with those of Albertans who might, in fact, believe that a Bill like this could do something positive, had nothing to do with that at all.

I added it up. I said that this would in fact inhibit the kind of competition that this right-wing Conservative member would like to see. I added it up. This will not really help the environment, particularly because it's not possible to implement a Bill of this nature, and he knows it. I added it up. It's going to create more bureaucracy, more duplication, more difficulty in streamlining this government at a time when we have to cut costs. I added it up. It's extremely poorly thought out. In fact, what this Bill is is a mockery of some very well-intentioned people in this province who have some very serious concerns about the environment. What this member has been inclined to do is stand up and facetiously say to the people of this province, "Your concerns are not worthy of merit."

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, watch imputation under Standing Orders. Please sit down, and the member please sit as well. You know that's going too far in terms of our own Standing Orders, let alone *Beauchesne*.

(The House recessed at 5:29 p.m.)

