

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, June 26, 1990 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 90/06/26

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

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Prayers

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

head: Notices of Motions

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to give oral notice of a motion under the provisions of Standing Order 40 for the Legislature to examine the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta convey its deepest sympathies to the people of Iran who have lost loved ones in the devastating earthquake that took place recently in that country and urge the government of Alberta to offer its assistance to the government of Canada in efforts to provide material and financial assistance to the ongoing relief effort in affected areas.

head: Tabling Returns and Reports

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with pleasure that I rise today to table the annual report of Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife for the fiscal year 1988-89.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table the annual report of the Department of Transportation and Utilities for the year 1988-89.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table with the Assembly the response to Written Question 337 and as well table with the Assembly the annual report of the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services for the fiscal year 1988-89.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in tabling with the Assembly today copies of the annual report of the Department of Education for the year ended March 31, 1989, and as well, Mr. Speaker, a new document, a review to file with the Assembly: the first draft of a discussion paper entitled Special Education Review, May 1990. This is a review that's been undertaken in co-operation with other departments of government as well as outside partners in education, focusing on special education, its cost, its funding, its mandate, the co-ordination, as well as the evaluation of the services that are provided.

MR. SPEAKER: The Solicitor General.

MR. FOWLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table with the Assembly through you the 66th annual report of the

Alberta Liquor Control Board for the fiscal year ended January 2, 1990.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the 1988-89 annual report of Mount Royal College.

head: Introduction of Special Guests

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce today two special guests from the thriving community of Lethbridge. The Minister of Health is having meetings today with hospital board chairmen and presidents, and seated in the members' gallery is the chairman of the Lethbridge Regional hospital, Mr. Shaun Ward, and the acting president, Mr. Doug Schindeler. I would ask them to rise and be recognized by members of the House.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to my colleagues in this Legislature a special guest I met in the hallway a few moments ago: Mr. Dmytro Pavlychko. He is a member of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukraine and also chairman of the international relations committee. He's accompanied by two persons, one the head of Ukrainian studies with the University of Alberta, and also Peter Savaryn. I'd ask the three gentlemen to stand and be recognized.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and the members of the Assembly this afternoon some 26 students from St. Clement school, in the constituency of Edmonton-Mill Woods. They're in the public gallery today with their teacher Mr. Leonard Tannas. I'd ask them to rise now and receive the warm welcome of the House.

head: Oral Question Period

Game Growing Industry

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Vegreville on behalf of the New Democratic Party.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. People involved in the Alberta Wilderness Association and the Fish & Game Association have expressed strong concerns about the danger posed to animals in the wild by their commercialization and production for profit. The government continues to call these thoughtful Albertans scaremongers and insists that there are regulations in place that will prevent any problems of genetic pollution or disease transfer from commercial herds to the wildlife population. My question is to the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. About two weeks ago 25 captive elk raised on a game ranch near Lloydminster escaped. Apparently nine of these animals are still at large and all efforts to recapture them have thus far been unsuccessful. I'd like to ask the minister, who I'm sure is aware of this unfortunate incident, to tell this Assembly exactly what steps his department is taking to recapture these animals.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, yes, it's true that there is an unfortunate incident out in the Lloydminster area at one game farm where there were 25 elk that – I don't say escaped. There's some investigation under way right now with respect to vandals who opened up a gate, and we don't know much other than doing that investigation at this moment. Of the 25 elk that escaped, there were nine or 10 that have not been recaptured. The elk that did escape were vasectomized,* and also they had

*see page 2300, right col., para. 2

gone through vigorous inspection for the red deer strain as well as any other disease. Now that they are in the wild, they are considered wildlife and will be out there, and if they're not recaptured, they will certainly not cause any problem whatsoever to our wildlife in the province.

MR. FOX: Well, the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that these animals did escape and his ministry is doing nothing to recapture them. I'd like the minister to admit that the reason his department is doing nothing to recapture them is because they lack the procedures, the mandate, the staff, and the resources to do just that and that they have no plans to increase staff and resources and develop a procedure for capturing elk in the future that escape from situations like this.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, the only loser in this whole process is the game farmer himself that loses those animals. We are adding more wildlife officers this year, as per our budget process announced. Of course, we could always use more wildlife officers, and one thing that's going to be very helpful to us in the transfer to Agriculture is that the Department of Agriculture will be and are fully involved in working with us.

With respect to capturing these elk back, we are monitoring the situation, but we're not deploying any of our staff to try and recapture the elk. As I stated, there is absolutely no risk to wildlife stocks in this province, and the only real loser is the game farmer.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, mistakes are made, accidents can happen, and they will surely happen with increasing frequency if this government's dream of here an elk ranch, there an elk ranch, everywhere an elk ranch comes to pass. I'd just like to ask the minister, with this unfortunate incident fresh in his mind, if he would now agree to conduct a thorough and open environmental impact assessment process on this so that we can get an independent scientific analysis and have open public hearings on the impact of the commercialization of elk on our precious wildlife resource.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, since the legislation is before the House right now and receiving a full and open debate, I know that that's an area that the hon. member has raised. He'll certainly have an opportunity in the other stages of the Bill to raise that and convince the Assembly that that's the right course.

MR. SPEAKER: The second main question, Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Well, the government continues to show contempt for the opinion of Albertans at their peril, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to designate the second main question to the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

Biological Research at CFE Suffield

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government has decided to build a level 4 biohazard containment facility in conjunction with a proposed incinerator at the Defence Research Establishment, Suffield. This containment facility would provide for the testing of genetically altered microbes which produce diseases for which there are no known cures. My question is to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. Does the minister have knowledge of the

commitment to build this level 4 biohazard containment facility, and where does he stand on it?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, there were two questions there. The answer to the first question is that there have been consultations between the Department of National Defence and my department with respect to the Defence Research Establishment at Suffield. We have been advised that all the procedures which are undertaken there are done in the utmost safety and for the purpose of defensive mechanisms only. My answer to the second part of the question: we believe that Canada and the free world must have a defensive system in place, and it has been our policy as a government to support the federal government in its defence activities on behalf of Canadians.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether germ warfare is defence, but it's certainly offensive.

Mr. Speaker, residents of the Medicine Hat area deserve to know the potential dangers of this facility and have a say in any plans for developing and testing these dangerous organisms. The U.S. department of national defence had planned to build a similar facility near Salt Lake City, Utah, until a public outcry forced the military to back down. To the minister: will the minister insist that all Albertans get full information and the same opportunity as Americans near Salt Lake City did for a public process before any further action is taken on this containment facility?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member's concern for the issue of biological, chemical warfare. It would be a tragic thing indeed if we ever saw it occur where Canadians could be affected by it. That is quite clear. That's been the position of the federal government of Canada as part of our treaty obligations with NATO and NORAD: that we are only interested in defensive mechanisms. We are not as a country and never have been aggressors in terms of seeking other people's lands or property or peoples, but at the same time we do believe that this country must be defended. Therefore, it has been the policy of our government to support the federal government in its defence policies.

With regard to the question of public hearings, that is a matter which clearly must be dealt with by the federal government and the Department of National Defence. But I will make sure, as I'm sure the hon. member will, that the Minister of National Defence, the Hon. Bill McKnight, is made aware of the concerns expressed in the Assembly by the hon. member today.

MS M. LAING: Well, Mr. Speaker, the information developed through research at Suffield is shared with the Americans, and their uses sometimes are suspect. This type of facility is so dangerous that the Americans don't want it on their lands, and I'm convinced that Albertans don't want it here either. Why is the minister not speaking out against the development of biological warfare weapons right here in Alberta?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am against the production of chemical and biological warfare aggressive elements. That is quite clear, and the hon. member, in her enthusiasm, I think got carried away. What we are trying to do in Canada is to provide a defence against those types of offensive weapons. That is what the purpose of the Defence Research Establishment is all about: to provide a defence for Canada and the people who live in this country and our military forces, and that purpose I wholly and fully endorse on the part of the defensive forces in this country.

I know the hon. member holds dearly to the belief that there should be no military forces. It would be wonderful, indeed, if that could be the case in the world, but it is not. Until such time as it is, it would be folly for us to abandon defensive methods and to allow the people of Canada and our armed forces to be subject to the mercy of unscrupulous people in other parts of the world. That's a tragic set of circumstances: that there is war, that war weapons are being produced. But we do need to have a strong defence, and we are committed to that.

Goods and Services Tax

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the fate of GST legislation is now in the hands of the Senate. A representative of the federation of small businesses in Alberta indicated just yesterday that a number of Alberta businesses will go bankrupt because of GST. We know from the government's own statistics and findings that many thousands of Albertans will lose their jobs because of GST. Now, Mr. Speaker, during the time that I was in Ottawa with the hon. Premier, I had the occasion to speak to a number of Senators who indicated that they are reluctant to use the power that they have because they're not elected. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is this: given that Senators are expressing some concern over using the power that they have but given also that they are prepared to use that power if they get an expression from Albertans that they should use their power to kill GST, is the hon. Premier prepared to agree to support a resolution of this Assembly, as was done in British Columbia, calling on the Senate of Canada to kill the GST legislation?

MR. GETTY: No, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to give any additional credibility to the Senate as it presently exists. I think it should be changed and changed dramatically.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I find that rather hollow in the arguments against GST when the last opportunity for Albertans to have GST killed is in the Senate and the hon. Premier continues to play games and to walk away.

My second question is this. Given that the standing committee of the Senate that's looking into this GST matter will be in Alberta on July 26 and 27, will the minister responsible for Alberta's Treasury agree to appear before that committee and indicate clearly that Albertans don't want GST, don't like GST, and want the standing committee to convey that back to the Senate: to kill GST?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I want to re-emphasize what I said in the first answer: I don't want to do anything that gives more credibility to the current Senate. This government and this Assembly believe in a reformed Senate, a Triple E Senate. The current Senate is appointed and has no right or responsibility to frustrate elected individuals in our democracy. It may be that there will be some opportunity through correspondence or something to make sure that this Senate committee is aware of the Alberta government's position, but I will not have our government going before a group made up of the current Senate the way it is selected.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to get this straight. Just because of the hon. Premier's petulance, is the hon. Premier saying that he's prepared to sacrifice small businessmen and businesswomen in Alberta and the thousands of jobs that are going to go down the tubes because of GST? Is that what he's saying?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, that is one of the most hypocritical questions I've ever heard of in my life. It has nothing to do with what I said, and for the hon. leader of the Liberal Party to try and twist words around like that is kind of a joke. Here we have a bunch of Liberal Party hacks going about the country, appointed mainly by Pierre Trudeau, who's no friend of this province. And to think that they're going to stand up for Alberta – what a lot of garbage. Now, there's one Senator who's there and who can stand up for Alberta, and it's because this government and this Premier got him appointed.

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North.

Parole Policy

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Solicitor General. All Albertans certainly share in the grief and the shock of the recent slaying of an Edmonton police officer in the line of duty, and our sympathies clearly are with the family and friends of this man. It gives rise to the whole question of parole once again and of mandatory supervision, as apparently it was related to the suspects involved in this slaying. Mr. Speaker, Albertans have tolerance for situations, but they don't have tolerance as related to violent crime and as related to the public not being protected from violent criminals. I'd like to ask the Solicitor General if he or his department was involved at all in any of the decision-making process regarding parole or mandatory supervision as related to possible suspects in this case?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the hon. Member for Red Deer-North indicated the sympathy of I'm sure all members of this House to the family of the deceased policeman who died most violently yesterday on the streets of Edmonton at the hands of one or two gunmen, one of whom in fact was on parole and the other on mandatory release.

The whole of the parole release program is conducted by the federal appointee of the federal Parole Board, and there is no provincial involvement in who gets parole or when parole is given. What we do have is the involvement of my department in supervising parole, and there has been an immediate inquiry set up as to the supervision of parole on the one person who was, in fact, on parole. In respect to the person on mandatory release, all of the institutes in Canada of course are guided by the federal Penitentiary Act, and in this instance that release was, in fact, mandatory at a certain time in the person's sentence.

MR. DAY: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Jurisdictional lines unfortunately aren't going to bring a whole lot of peace to those in sympathy over this incident.

I'd like to ask the Solicitor General if he would communicate the feelings of Albertans, because we know and it's been reported in the last little while that because of the Gingras case the Parole Board was beginning to tighten up in terms of the areas of parole and they were chastised by one or more federal officials for responding to the public outcry. I'd like to ask the Solicitor General: though the parole decision, then, isn't his jurisdiction completely, would he please communicate to his federal counterpart and to the Parole Board that as related to violent criminals Albertans clearly want to see that Parole Board move in the area of tightening up and not loosening up? Would he communicate that message to his federal counterpart?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, to the Member for Red Deer-North and also to all members of the Assembly. This again, as he has stated, has given rise to the profile of the whole parole question, and as soon as we have conducted our inquiry into the actions of the parole officers who supervise a parole, he and this Assembly may be very certain that we will again be taking it up with the federal authorities as to these releases and the legislation itself which demands release at a certain period of time prior to full service of the sentence of the convicted person at the time. We are most concerned about it and have been concerned even prior to this matter, and we are saddened by the incident which again gives rise to this whole matter in the public sector.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

Alberta-Pacific Project

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night I dreamt I was giving a speech in the Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta and I woke to discover that I was indeed giving a speech to the Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta. But in my dream the Minister of the Environment finally made public the new Al-Pac proposal, which has been in his possession since early April, and the minister did reveal that the government has decided that Albertans would have a right to all such information in the future, that there would be a right to an independent scientific review and of full public hearings. Will the minister clarify if he's really decided to do these things, or is this merely legislation by exhaustion?

MR. KLEIN: Are you still dreaming?

MR. FOX: We're asking the questions here. We ask and you answer.

MR. KLEIN: Oh, is that the way it works? Oh, I see. Okay. Right. Well, basically, I haven't made anything public. I don't have that document in my hand. I have said that there's been a scientific assessment of the material contained in the report by both the provincial government and the federal government, and I have said that at one point or another there will be a public review of the revised technology. It's a very difficult situation, and I'll explain why.

The original Al-Pac proposal went through probably one of the most extensive reviews applied to any pulp mill project in the world: 27 days of hearings that stretched all the way from Edmonton to the Arctic Circle, hearings that cost some \$2 million, hearings that resulted in some 8,000 pages of evidence, and hearings that resulted in about 92 recommendations in all. One of the recommendations dealt with chlorinated organics. As a result of that one recommendation, Al-Pac brought back a revised proposal that in their minds would virtually eliminate chlorinated organics. So the issue comes down to this very narrow focused issue, and that is the issue of chlorinated organics. We are now preparing our responses to all the other recommendations, and those will be addressed. So what my government is considering right now is how we deal with this issue as it relates to the revised proposal, and when we have made that decision, it will be announced.

MR. McINNIS: I suppose it would be convenient if the issue did narrow down to one of the minister's and the company's choosing. But since he mentioned it, I think the minister should

perhaps address the fact that the government has chosen – unwisely, in my opinion – to set aside the key recommendations of the EIA review board report; namely, that a series of studies be done, baseline studies on the river, on the habitat, and on the timber harvesting before the government even considers licensing a pulp mill at Athabasca. That's the key recommendation. I think the minister should probably face the fact that the fate of this key recommendation will determine whether Albertans can take seriously the desire of Alberta Environment to consult on such other matters as policy and legislation. So in view of this important matter, I wonder if the minister would take a second stab at convincing his colleagues in cabinet to keep faith with Albertans and complete the requisite studies before he signs for more pulp mills and more pulp mill permits.

MR. KLEIN: The hon. member again was not listening, refuses to listen. If he is listening, he obviously then doesn't understand. So I'll try and explain it again. There are something like 92 recommendations in the report. One of the recommendations, a key recommendation – and I believe it is the key recommendation – deals with chlorinated organics. There has been a revised proposal by the company, the proponent Al-Pac, to deal with that particular issue, and we will have to review that. All the other issues, the 91 other issues, are being responded to not only by Department of the Environment officials but by Environment Canada officials. We will co-ordinate all those responses, present them to the company, and a course of action at that time will be determined.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway, followed by Calgary-Buffalo.

Telecommunications Regulations

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications. In a public notice on June 11, 1990, the CRTC asked for comments and proposals from interested parties regarding the appropriate scope of the proceedings related to Unitel's application to horn in on Canada's long-distance telephone services. B.C. Tel and Bell Canada have already responded indicating a number of concerns, particularly including long-distance and local rate rebalancing, much as I dislike that word. Has the minister made a written submission on behalf of Albertans, or does he intend to do so before the July 9 deadline?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated yesterday and the hon. member has referred to it again today, the date is July 9. I have not yet had an opportunity to review the Unitel application, but there's every likelihood that we will indeed be making a representation and in fact have a presence at that hearing.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, Mr. Speaker, we know from several studies done recently that the main threat to local rates and rural telephone services is Unitel's application to horn in on our long-distance business in Canada. Will the minister's submission go so far as to oppose Unitel's application, and will the minister table a copy of it in the House when he has it completed?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out to the hon. member on so many different occasions, the jurisdiction in respect to matters that relate to the regulation of telecommunications is a federal responsibility. The aspect of the policy

is competition, and with that sort of a policy competition is permitted under the types of standards and requirements . . .

MR. McEACHERN: Are you in favour or against it?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, hon. member. You've asked your two questions; stop shouting back and forth.

MR. STEWART: . . . set by the CRTC. We will be reviewing that application very closely and making sure that the interests of Albertans are protected in every possible way.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Entertainment in Licensed Premises

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is to the Solicitor General. Last Thursday night the Solicitor General indicated that he would favourably consider holding public hearings before enacting regulations restricting entertainment in bars. Now, in my view it's quite inappropriate for decisions on matters of this nature to be made behind closed doors by the cabinet without open, public debate as if this were just another round of the Meech Lake accord. It's important that there be . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Take your place. If you're going to be giving almost an exact repetition of the five sentences you gave yesterday, you're in danger of losing your question again today. So would you be good enough to ask the question without trying to rephrase it and inadvertently perhaps trying to challenge the Chair. Just ask your question with regard to the regulations, I trust it is.

MR. CHUMIR: Would the Solicitor General agree to have the new advisory committee or some other body conduct a public review of any proposed entertainment regulation before any changes are made, as he implied last Thursday evening?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, one of the things about the amendments, which ran 40-some pages – the media attention it gets is restricted to two lines – was the building up of an advisory council by legislation, which could have up to nine members and was there to advise either the board or the minister. Most certainly it is one of the first jobs that the advisory council will be asked to do when in fact it is established after proclamation of the Bill.

MR. CHUMIR: I hope that they will be public.

Now, the minister said last Thursday that he was concerned about extremes going on in bars but not the body beautiful being viewed. Perhaps he had his own in mind: 275 pounds of muscle. I'm wondering whether he would tell Albertans exactly what he has in mind instead of doing his own exotic dance of vagueness and evasion.

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, I find the question a little puzzling for the simple reason that the first question was: would I ask a council to advise me on it. I responded to that question by saying yes. Now, I'm asked what it is they're going to be responding to. I'm not going to be telling the advisory council what they should be coming back with.

MR. SPEAKER: Cypress-Redcliff.

Royal Family Essay Contest

MR. HYLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is to the Minister of Education. Tomorrow Queen Elizabeth II will be starting her visit to this province, and it's my understanding that as part of those celebrations the Department of Education had a contest for essays for all the students in school in Alberta, entitled The Royal Family in Canada. I wonder if the minister can share with the Assembly the results of that contest throughout the province of Alberta.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, yes, the hon. member is quite accurate. The Department of Education, in fact the province of Alberta, sponsored an essay competition in all of our schools throughout the province, and from a number of excellent submissions from students on the subject of The Royal Family in Canada, I'm pleased today to announce that four students have been chosen: Veronica Jane Kootenay, from the Glenevis area, the Alexis elementary school, a grade 3 student; a grade 12 student from Edson, the Vanier Community Catholic school, Hanif Mohamed Dhanani; a grade 9 student from Calgary, from A.E. Cross school, Jill Elizabeth Himann; and as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, a winner from Bow Island, Miss Lynsi Rae Jenkins, from Senator Gershaw school. All four of these essays were judged to be excellent by the judges in the competition, and I'm pleased to be able to file with the Assembly today some material, including the background on the winners as well as the essays that they wrote. [interjections]

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, the opposition doesn't seem to think it's important that students in schools in this province get an opportunity to know what the monarchy means, but I'm sure my constituents and other members of this Assembly do want students to know what the monarchy means in the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: I wonder if the minister can inform the Assembly how the honour will be placed upon those students for winning that contest.

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely correct. This is something that is of importance to all Canadians: the monarchy in our country. This is a celebration. Her Majesty doesn't have an opportunity to visit our beautiful province often enough, so I'm very proud that the Minister of Education will be able to present to Her Majesty tomorrow afternoon in Calgary the four successful essayists as well as their parents, their teachers, their school superintendents, and the chairmen of the four individual school boards.

Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to have this opportunity as a young Albertan to meet Her Majesty and to be inspired, just as these children have been in the writing that they've done in focusing on the royal family in our country. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: With due respect, hon. members, perhaps you'd be kind enough to look at Standing Order 23(k) with regard to the royal family. The matter of heckling really is inappropriate. Thank you very much.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.
Edmonton-Centre.

Violence Against Women and Children

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Premier about a very uncomfortable issue for a lot of men, which has to do with the violence perpetrated by abusive men and the increasing incidence of men in Alberta who repeatedly batter women and children. Now, despite a lot of talk and studies and task forces on this issue, it remains true that 14 percent of men in Alberta are batterers and that over 25,000 children are assaulted by men who are repeaters of violent behaviours. Given that there are few programs to effectively deal with male batterers and so many gaps between government departments on this issue, what commitment will the Premier give that his government will take comprehensive and concerted action so that more men in this province can join with the many women who are already working to end the violence against women and children in Alberta?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health isn't here today; she may wish to answer the hon. member in additional detail.

Mr. Speaker, in our society there are certain matters that none of us like, but they are there, whether they are in family breakup, whether it's abuse of children or women or men for that matter, or whether it's in the whole area of drug addiction. We have these problems. We deal with them as completely and as comprehensively as we can. The people of Alberta spend a tremendous amount of their tax dollars in this regard, and we'll continue to do everything we possibly can to fight what is admittedly a sad part of our society but one that it seems impossible to stamp out.

MR. OLDRING: To supplement the answer, Mr. Speaker, I'd want to point out that here in Alberta we of course have introduced a number of initiatives, including being the only province to have an Office for the Prevention of Family Violence. I'm not sure if the Member for Edmonton-Centre is aware, but this is on the national agenda as well. He might be familiar with the Rogers report, which was just released approximately a week ago. I might say that Alberta played a lead role in that, and it contains some 70-plus recommendations that are now in the hands of a federal counterpart, and we look forward to seeing his response to those recommendations as well.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the work that has gone on to date on this issue. However, it remains that one of the problems is a lack of comprehensive action on the part of this government for male batterers, who in a sense fall between the gaps of many currently existing services. One of the major gaps I'd like to point out and ask the Premier to comment on is service for the treatment of male batterers who are not criminally charged and who are not mentally ill. So it's not a health issue; it's not a criminal justice issue. It's a social issue. It's not prevention; it's treatment. So I'd like to ask the Premier what commitment he will take to meet with the various ministers involved, to report back to the House with a full government strategy to put in place a comprehensive rehabilitation treatment program for these men to dramatically reduce the kind of violence against women and children that these repeaters are enforcing in this province?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I don't in any way take away from the hon. member's earnestness, but if he just looks at the answer

I gave first: we're doing everything we possibly can.

MR. SPEAKER: The Solicitor General, briefly.

MR. FOWLER: I would like to supplement the Premier's response, Mr. Speaker. The Solicitor General's department views this battering as a crime. It may be a social issue in some people's view, but in fact it is a crime. Sometime this fall we will be disclosing to the public of Alberta – it's now in the development stage – precisely what we plan on doing from a policing view point and from the victim's assistance program viewpoint, which legislation is now going through.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Social Services Employee Relations

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The recent strike taken by Alberta social workers, psychologists, and child care counselors was one of the most divisive and contentious labour actions our province has seen. That workers felt compelled to take this dramatic action, I think, was further proof that provincial labour laws and government attitude need a dramatic overhaul. Unfortunately, with the strike over, we continue to see examples of a government more concerned with retribution than with finding a way to instill trust and good faith back into the negotiating process. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. The letter recently sent to all workers closes with an inflammatory and highly offensive threat that "any similar future misconduct will result in further discipline being taken which may include dismissal." My question is: was this threatening line part of the back-to-work agreement made with the workers?

MR. OLDRING: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, since several workers have already filed grievances against this letter, will the minister please tell the House how he expects that this juvenile action taken by the department is going to ease tensions between workers and the department?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, not juvenile action; it was action that was agreed to by the parties that were at the negotiating table. It was very appropriate information to provide to the workers. It had nothing to do with retribution. It was just plain and simply stating the facts. The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has already pointed out that there is a process that's available to workers if they feel they have a legitimate concern as it relates to the letter, and if what the member has told me is accurate, that some of them filed grievances, they will be dealt with appropriately.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Millican.

Business Revitalization Zones

MR. SHRAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1986 we brought out a very nice program regarding BRZs, business revitalization zones. I guess we've got these all over the province now. We've got over 24 of them. They're in the small towns and the cities and so. The businesses get together, and with a little help from us they're doing good things: upgrading their business areas and so on. This is all good and well, but we require them, I guess,

every year to send in a complete audited financial statement of their affairs, with a balance sheet, revenue expenditure statement, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, which basically comes down to: out of a budget of around \$15,000, they've got to spend over \$2,500 for accountants. Could the Minister of Municipal Affairs please answer: why do we have to spend this much money on accountants?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I take the question raised by the hon. member as a representation, and I think it's a very astute one at the present time when you think in terms of the accounting fees being that percentage of the total expenditure and leaving a net that does bring a lot of revitalization to downtown Alberta. What I'm prepared to do in terms of the hon. member's question is refer section 171.7 of the Municipal Government Act to the Municipal Statutes Review Committee and have them look at it and see if there's a more sensible way of handling that audit process in the legislation.

MR. SHRAKE: Well, that just about answers my question. Basically, will the minister try to have something like an annual report each year, that their accountants make up the annual report like most civilized organizations, and if there's a problem, then we come in with asking for a complete audited statement? Will he review this as soon as possible?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, yes, I will review it very quickly. The legislation is on the books at the present time requiring a complete audited statement, and I have to live with that as the minister, but I will undertake a complete review on the request of this question.

Worksite Safety

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, my questions today are to the Minister of Occupational Health and Safety. Just two weeks ago I brought to the minister's attention a Calgary firm which was threatening to fine its workers for getting injured. Just yesterday a case was brought to my attention by an ALCB employee who was reprimanded with a letter placed on his personal file by his employer for this crime: reporting a worksite danger to the Occupational Health and Safety department. Mr. Speaker, it appears that in this province and with this minister the workers will get it from both sides: they get punished if they get hurt, and then they get punished if they try to make the workplace safer. So the question to the minister is simply this: upon receiving my documentation in this case, would the minister undertake to inform all the officials involved in this particular case that under section 25(6) and section 28 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act it is clearly illegal to punish employees for reporting worksite dangers? Would he do that?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, of course it's illegal to punish workers for reporting an accident. I'm not aware of the case. If the hon. member was so concerned about these workers, surely he would provide a copy of what he's got in his hands to myself so we would look at it.

MR. FOX: It's never helped before.

MR. GIBEAULT: Yes, that's never helped before, but we'll remain hopeful.

Perhaps in the meantime, while the minister takes a look at it from his point of view, we could put a supplementary question

to the Solicitor General, who's responsible for the Alberta Liquor Control Board. I would ask him if he would agree to investigate this matter, since it comes under his jurisdiction, and advise all the managers within the ALCB that employees of the board are completely free to contact the Occupational Health and Safety department about any safety matter without threats of disciplinary action?

MR. FOWLER: I'm sorry; my apologies. Could I have the question again, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: The same question, basically, was directed to the Solicitor General about the matter. The Chair trusts Edmonton-Mill Woods will indeed file a copy of the letter to both ministers.

The Chair recognizes Westlock-Sturgeon.

Water Exports

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of the Environment. He might be able to enlighten me on something and enlighten the House. About 10 days ago the Deputy Premier, when I asked about the possibility of water export for domestic purposes from the Slave Lake area, said that it was really none of the province's business because nobody had come to him or come to the province for a permit. I then checked with the federal government, and they say that indeed water from a lake or a body of water within a province is a province's matter; it's nothing to do with the federal government. Consequently, water could be sold from one of our lakes for domestic purposes to Santa Barbara, which is the town in California, Mr. Speaker, that's requesting water. Now, my question, then, to the minister is: is the minister aware or does he have anything in place to allow or to control water export for domestic purposes from Alberta's lakes?

MR. KLEIN: Well, I guess in the traditional sense, yes, there is quite a bit in place to prevent the transfer of water through interbasin transfers to the United States. It's quite simply the policy of this government that there will be no waterway diverted into the United States. Now, there is nothing in the regulations, of course, that prevents the exportation of bottled water. I guess what we're trying to come to grips with in this particular situation is: how far do you go? My department is examining right now the extent to which permits are required for tank loads of water as opposed to bottles of water going across the border. In terms of transferring basins of water, whether they are lakes or rivers, to the United States, it is the policy of this government that that simply will not happen.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you. I think for the minister's edification, though, he might realize that there's nothing in law that says that you can't do interbasin transfer, but my question was not on that.

Now, I find that you have nothing in your books or there's nothing in the laws to govern water going out in bottles or tanker loads and then probably pipeline to load the tanker. Now, could the minister give some assurance to the House that he would consider a Bill similar to the one in Ontario, where nothing like this can take place unless they come to the minister?

MR. KLEIN: Well, I guess that and other alternatives could be considered. This is a situation that simply hasn't occurred before. It's one that is being addressed for the first time, and my department is trying to get a handle on the situation and to bring forward to me recommendations for action that would control this activity before it gets out of hand.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Point of order, Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is pursuant to Beauchesne 481(e), (f), and (i). Yesterday Mr. Speaker referred to a note which I'd sent him which he described as "one of the rudest notes the Chair has received in four years." Now, this note was intended as a private communication to express frank displeasure at having my question ruled out of order, but in referring to this private note in the manner in which he did in the House, the Speaker has by innuendo left the impression that there was something improper in my note and has cast aspersions on myself as a member. Accordingly, for the record I would like to note that in my view the note was quite tame; there's nothing in it that I would be in the least ashamed of stating publicly or that I feel is inappropriate or in poor taste for a member of this Legislature. A frank statement of my views, yes; inappropriate for a member, no.

To that end I would like it to be noted for the record that I would be prepared to allow others to make their own judgment on this matter by advising that I have no objection to the note being made public in any way.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, it does also quote in Beauchesne about points of order being raised at the earliest opportunity. Your earliest opportunity was yesterday. This point of order is not recognized.

head: Motions under Standing Order 40

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair will now move to a request under Standing Order 40. The Member for Edmonton-Centre.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate an opportunity under the provisions of Standing Order 40 to seek unanimous consent for this motion. I know that all members of the House and that people of compassion and goodwill throughout the world have been shocked and moved to great sadness by the news of the earthquake in Iran, not just the earthquake which has killed tens of thousands of people but the aftershocks, which continue to beat upon that land and the people therein in devastating ways. I feel strongly, Mr. Speaker, that we urgently need not only to feel and to express some degree of sympathy but also to reach out with help to others in our human family, in the global community as a result of this natural disaster.

I have heard and have been encouraged by the news of some relief efforts already undertaken by the federal government and by some initiatives in co-operation by our province, the government here in Alberta. But I think again, Mr. Speaker, by the urgent nature of this situation and this motion I would like to urge all members to do all that we can in Alberta in conjunction with the federal government to bring comfort and relief to so many suffering in that land at this time.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: With regard to Standing Order 40 all those willing to give unanimous consent to the motion before us as proposed by Edmonton-Centre, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

Moved by Rev. Roberts:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta convey its deepest sympathies to the people of Iran who have lost loved ones in the devastating earthquake that took place recently in that country and urge the government of Alberta to offer its assistance to the government of Canada in efforts to provide material and financial assistance to the ongoing relief effort in affected areas.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Centre, further comments?

REV. ROBERTS: I think I've made my comments, Mr. Speaker, and would like to perhaps hear from others.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: There's a call for the question with respect to the motion before the House. Is Public Works, Supply and Services dealing with this matter?

MR. KOWALSKI: We were hoping to make a few comments, Mr. Speaker, with respect to this particular motion.

Mr. Speaker, the government of Alberta certainly endorses this motion. In fact as early as the wee hours of Friday last week we conveyed our support and our assistance and our acknowledgement of the importance of this particular response to the federal government. We have in place by policy in the country of Canada – all provincial governments have worked out a response with the federal government through their various departments of disaster services, in this case Alberta Public Safety Services, and when events such as this do occur there's national co-ordination that is extended through the department of External Affairs. We reaffirmed that policy in September of 1989, and I want the hon. member and all Albertans to know that the government of Alberta has responded in that regard as well.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's also very important for Albertans to know that there are a number of individuals in this province who have distinguished themselves in this form of activity in the past, and they were led in fact by a number of young Albertans who are basically firemen that are located throughout the province of Alberta. All members will recall the devastating earthquakes that occurred in Mexico in 1985 and would also recall this minister standing and acknowledging the importance of these various individuals who volunteered their time to participate in this kind of activity. I think it's important that all Albertans really recognize who some of these Albertans are. A former resident of the province of Alberta, Mr. George Foster, a former fire fighter in the community of Leduc, is in fact spearheading a Canadian response in this regard as well. There are a number of other fire fighters who have already departed Canada on their way to Iran. An Edmonton fire fighter Stan Neufeld, a Leduc fire fighter Bill Davies, a former Leduc fire fighter Joe Kubat, and Craig Wright are the other Albertans who are involved in this.

Mr. Speaker, I would also point out as well that my colleague the minister of economic development, through a very important program that he administers through his department, the Alberta Agency for International Development, has a program in place that would allow any Albertans, nongovernment organizations in this province who want to assemble goods and materiel that might be forwarded – they certainly would be in a position to consult with my colleague the minister of economic development to see if there can be something additional further to it.

The conclusion of all of this is that the people of Alberta certainly want to extend their deepest sympathies to the people of Iran and are prepared to assist as per requests.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I may say a word, I'm quite touched when I watch the TV coverage on it, because about 20 years ago, as a much younger person, I did surface geology work through this area and through these villages, and they are a very warm, hospitable people. They lead a very low standard of living. With what little they had wrapped up in their families and their homes being annihilated, I'm sure they're going to appreciate any help and anything that comes in.

I also wanted to take the time now, Mr. Speaker, as I very seldom throw posies or accolades to the government, to compliment the hon. minister of public works, from my neighbouring constituency, whom I've always found most co-operative and helpful over the few years I've been in the Legislature when I've asked him occasionally if they had some help or in some way could help out some peoples in different areas around the world. I want to take my hat off to him. This may be the only time he'll hear anything nice from me in the next year or so, but I put to the Premier and the Deputy Premier that when it comes to helping out people and helping out in disaster areas, they have a very good minister indeed.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Call for the question.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion before the House is the motion with respect to the people of Iran proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Centre. Those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

head: **Privilege**

MR. SPEAKER: Points of privilege to be dealt with. First, the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services.

MR. KOWALSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The MLA for Edmonton-Whitemud on Friday, June 22, in the Legislative Assembly during question period made the following statement when referring to a fund-raiser golf tournament sponsored by the Progressive Conservative Association of the constituency of Barrhead:

The 110 participants were awarded various prizes, including [about] \$5,000 worth of gifts from Alberta Lotteries, all with lottery logos and emblems.

This statement is followed by a question which includes in it an allegation as follows, and I quote from Hansard of that day:

This minister continues to abuse his trust and use his lottery revenues for questionable purposes.

This latter statement made by the MLA for Edmonton-Whitemud is insulting or libelous and defamatory, or both insulting and defamatory, since it calls into question the integrity of the MLA for Barrhead. The allegation that \$5,000 worth of gifts or that any gifts from Alberta Lotteries were given to participants at the golf tournament is totally untrue, as is any suggestion that the Member for Barrhead abused his trust with respect to any matter arising out of the golf tournament or any other matter relating to the use of lottery funds.

The Member for Barrhead hereby alleges that these insulting or libelous and defamatory statements or both insulting and defamatory statements made by the MLA for Edmonton-Whitemud constitute a breach of privilege pursuant to section 10 of the Legislative Assembly Act. This notice was given to Mr. Speaker pursuant to the requirements of paragraph 15 of the Standing Orders.

Mr. Speaker, on two occasions – verbally in the Legislative Assembly on June 22, 1990, and on June 25, 1990, by letter – offers were extended to the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud to retract his insulting, libelous, and defamatory statements. As of this moment I've received no indication from the member that he's prepared to do such. It is requested that the matter of the alleged breach of privilege be dealt with by the Legislative Assembly today or so soon thereafter as is considered practical by Mr. Speaker in order to permit the Legislative Assembly to inquire into the matter of whether or not a breach of privilege has occurred and, if so, the sanction to be imposed on the member who breached the privileges of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you find that this matter was brought to the attention of the Legislative Assembly at the earliest opportunity and, further, that it is a prima facie case of a breach of privilege. If you find such, it will be my intent to provide notice that I will deal with this matter further within the time limits prescribed by section 15 of the House's Standing Orders.

If any untrue statements are made by any member in this House, then the reputation and the integrity of this Assembly is undermined.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, speaking to the matter of privilege as raised by the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, taking due regard that the member himself also has yet another point of privilege to deal with.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister responsible for lotteries has made some very, very serious charges. I've been accused of lying. I've been accused of making insulting, libelous, defamatory statements.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the minister responsible for lotteries what lying is, and it's very, very clear when we look at any dictionary. Using the Oxford as an example, the definition for lying or to tell a lie is very clear. It consists of an "intentional false statement" – an "intentional false statement." I want to remind the minister that there's no way I sit back and take

questions out of the air and say that today I'm going to ask the minister this question. Obviously, with a little bit of common sense, a little bit of rationale, one would realize that questions are not arrived at by that particular method. For any questions I have ever raised in this House, I have believed those statements or questions to be true – any question or statement. I have never intentionally made a lie in this House nor have I intended to insult the minister responsible for lotteries or insult any Member of this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind all Members of this Legislative Assembly, particularly the Member for Barrhead, that I am elected for a purpose, and that purpose is to serve the people. In serving those people, one of the responsibilities is to pursue matters that I believe impact on our masters. Our masters – and let's not forget it – are those that elect us, that give us the responsibility that we have. That's my job. That's what I'm elected to do. That's what I've done, and that's what I intend to continue to do. I don't believe it is proper to attempt to obstruct the system, to deny one that opportunity to pursue those objectives, to fulfill those roles. Any obstacle that is placed in that path I think is wrong. It is wrong. It is wrong.

I want to talk, Mr. Speaker, a bit about lottery funds. I want to talk a bit about accountability, and I want to talk a bit about the refusal to answer questions I've raised.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, I'm sorry. Forgive me, hon. member. There is yet another matter of privilege coming up later in the day which deals with that whole issue. What we're dealing with here are the statements made in the House by two members of the House. The member will deal with statements, whether it was in your question, your preamble, or your supplementary, or whether it was in the reply that was given by the minister. This is not to become a full-blown debate on lotteries.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, if I can pursue the matter to the best of my ability and attempt to rationalize why I feel the minister responsible for lotteries is wrong. As I said earlier, I have a responsibility to pursue matters. One of those matters I have to pursue is a matter of responsibility, and I was simply attempting to indicate by making that reference that accountability is not always there, in the sense that there is not a book I can turn to and say on page 15 that I can see how these expenditures have been accounted for.

Mr. Speaker, let's take a look specifically at the questions I asked in that period of Friday, June 22. The minister in his comments did what I would call some selective reading. He referred to the 110 participants and so on, but reading the entire question, I began by stating:

It's my information that on Saturday, June 16, the minister responsible for lotteries held his annual constituency golf tournament and Progressive Conservative fund-raiser at the Barrhead Golf Club.

Then the minister picked up. I repeat: I started off by saying, "It's my information."

Secondly, when I followed with the second question, because of previous disclosures of what I feel is the improper use of lottery funds – information is given to us, and we have an obligation to pursue that information because of the lack of accountability of lottery funds, and I'll continue to do so. That's the exact wording that I used. That's what's recorded in Hansard. I made it very, very clear that that information was provided to me, not taken out of the air.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it's obvious from these two comments, these two questions, that the information upon which

I was proceeding was information provided to me, information which I believed could be true, and information I felt was important enough to warrant the question during question period. The very, very important thing is that I believed it to be true; I had information that led me to believe it to be true. I did not say, "I know for a fact, hon. minister, that you used lottery funds or government employees for your own personal gain." I claimed to have such information, and I asked that question in order to verify its validity.

It's important to spell out here exactly how members of the opposition at times get information. We get information sometimes because of research, sometimes because we may get phone calls. We may get letters in the mail. It may be from members that are employed by cabinet ministers right here that are not happy over some particular handling of an affair and they want that exposed, so they have a method of funneling that information to the opposition, whether it be ourselves or the members of the other opposition party. That's a given practice within a democratic system or a parliamentary system such as we have.

Mr. Speaker, since I have made public on a number of occasions details of the government's decision to use lottery funds for the purchase of briefcases to promote the community facility enhancement program for government MLAs and the trip to Japan led by the MLA for Red Deer-North, we've received a great deal more phone calls, a great deal more information. Sometimes we can quickly check out that information, substantiate it to be true or not to be true. But at times we do have to rely on that information that is given to us. Because of the previous admittance by the minister when it came to the questioning about the briefcases and again with the trip to Japan, which verified that source of information, there was no reason, Mr. Minister, no reason at all to believe that this information was not correct. Again, I must point out that twice I tried to raise the question of government employee involvement in that golf tournament, and that point still has not been clarified.

Mr. Speaker, in this particular case, yes, the information came from a source. It came from a well-placed source, and a source that I believed was providing us the correct information. On that particular occasion of Friday, June 22, I believed that I asked a legitimate question, a question which I did not know the answer to. I did not accuse the minister of anything. I only wished to raise the question so that the minister might have an opportunity to address what members of the public believed to be true. I never would suggest the minister is lying. I would never suggest that any minister is lying. In this particular case, I accept his statement.

But again, Mr. Speaker, I maintain that I was simply doing my job as a representative for the people that elected me as a member of this particular opposition. Now, that is a role. That is one of the roles of a member of the opposition, and I would believe that if the finger is to be pointed, and if there is such a question of guilt in this particular situation, the guilty party would be the party that attempted to mislead this House by deliberately providing information that was not correct. That was not me. That information was provided to me, which formed the basis of my questions.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, let me refer here to Beauchesne 31(1), which states very clearly:

A dispute arising between two Members, as to allegations of facts, does not fulfill the conditions of parliamentary privilege.

I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you rule against the minister responsible for lotteries, who has brought this point of privilege forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Additional members? Minister, any additional comment? Thank you.

With respect to the matter of privilege on this issue, due notice has been given to the Chair, and the Chair takes the matter under advisement.

Next matter, Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on the point of privilege, as noted in the documentation sent to you yesterday, regarding the comments made by the hon. minister responsible for lotteries during Oral Question Period on Friday, June 22, 1990. I wish to address what I believe is the real point of privilege, that being the comments made by the minister in response to my questions. In response to the question I put to the minister on that date, the minister made the following comments:

On the third point, Mr. Speaker, the statement and the allegation made by the member the member has lied to the Assembly.

"The member has lied to this Assembly." Further down:

I'm accusing this member of lying, lying in this Assembly now.

Twice, "lying, lying," and then again:

This member will either retract that statement now or I will take every step available to me as a member of this Assembly to make sure that he's eliminated from this Assembly . . . He has no right to lie in this Assembly, and he has done that.

That is four times that the reference is made to the words "lie," "lying," or "lied," and they are all examples of unparliamentary language. They are insulting.

Mr. Speaker, I did not lie to the Assembly, as I pointed out earlier. I merely asked a question based on information provided to me by what I felt was an informed source. Again, I'll remind the minister responsible for lotteries of the definition of "lie," and that is to intentionally make a false statement.

Mr. Speaker, I've also raised a question about the reference made to elimination, and I've done that for a reason. The reason why I did that is that according to Erskine May, it is very, very clear that intimidation is not an acceptable practice. Using that type of terminology – the exact wording, if I can go back to it for one second here, where the minister had said,

I will take every step available to me as a member of this Assembly to make sure that he's eliminated from this Assembly.

That is very, very, to use the expression, heavy talk.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, when I receive a letter – and I'll file six copies of this letter with you – from a solicitor representing the minister, that of course adds to that whole aspect of intimidation. More important than that, we have to look at allowing the process to work, and for the process to work, Members of the Legislative Assembly, members within the opposition, must have the opportunity to ask questions, to question government, to question matters that are of concern to the electorate, to the voter, to the taxpayer, to those people that have placed us in this position. It is, again I stress, important to let that process work, and intimidation can't be used to prevent that process from working.

Mr. Speaker, I question as well that once a matter is raised, as it was raised by the minister on a point of privilege, in my opinion that must be settled by the Speaker, except for private consultation between members. It does not include outside counsel. I still do not understand the reason for the outside counsel, but I think using that outside counsel is a contempt of

process of this House, and it's an attempt to avoid the procedures of Standing Orders in the jurisdiction of the Speaker. I believe that the minister responsible for lotteries, the hon. Member for Barrhead, seems to confuse civil process with parliamentary procedures.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that I have fully explained why, in my opinion, the minister does not have grounds to suggest I misled this Assembly. Further, I believe that the comments made by the minister have negatively affected my ability to fulfill my duties as an elected Member of this Legislative Assembly, first of all by outright calling me a liar and, secondly, by – I would use the expression – a bit of intimidation or attempted intimidation.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would refer to Beauchesne 29:

The suggestion that a Member who makes a charge against another Member must resign if found to be wrong is a canard.

The Speaker has stated that there is no basis on which the Chair could so rule. This is a matter of personal ethics, and Members are free to conduct themselves as they see fit.

I make that reference in reference to the Member for Barrhead's statement about forcing me to resign or something to that effect.

I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you have this matter dealt with by this Legislative Assembly, that you have this matter dealt with quickly or as quickly as is reasonably possible, and that you take the comments that have been given under your consideration and give us your most humble and wise advice. Thank you.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, every member of this Assembly – every member of this Assembly – is responsible for his or her actions. It is irresponsible to blame unknown people for our actions. The truth is an absolute defense against libel. I believe that I've told the truth to this Legislative Assembly and to the people of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair also takes this matter under advisement.

The Member for Calgary-Buffalo, on the third purported point of privilege of the afternoon.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've given notice to raise this question of privilege under Standing Order 50, which is to the effect that members of this Legislature are prohibited from fulfilling our responsibilities as elected Members of the Legislative Assembly by virtue of the fact that lottery funds are not brought forward for full scrutiny, examination, by members of this Assembly.

Now, parliamentary privilege relates to the rights necessary for elected representatives to discharge their duties. The key privilege is that of freedom of speech and debate. We see in the instance of lottery moneys hundreds of millions of dollars being spent without being brought before this House for approval and debate. In assessing the propriety of this, Mr. Speaker, we have to look at the broader context. I believe we have to ask: what if all spending of this province were removed from legislative scrutiny? This initiative would be at such odds with the parliamentary process, the traditions of parliamentary democracy, the responsibilities of the Legislature for approving supply, that it would be a most outrageous breach of privilege, I would suggest. It would strike at the heart of the democratic process. Accordingly, by extension we have to ask how it is possible for this government to remove hundreds of millions of dollars of lottery expenditure from the scrutiny of this House without violating what must be a very, very clear principle.

Mr. Speaker, to deal with lottery funds in the manner in which they are dealt with is an invitation to abuse. It has resulted in the situation with respect to privilege with which we've just been dealing in the last few minutes. It particularly encourages an attitude of the government that they're not accountable with respect to lottery funds and that they can deal with the moneys as if it were the private property of the Progressive Conservative Party. It is this attitude, this climate, the danger of that attitude, which has led to the purchase of briefcases for Progressive Conservative members only, which has led to the Western Canada Lottery Corporation having the attitude that it was proper for the corporation to purchase two tickets to the Premier's dinner for the Progressive Conservative Party. These I believe contravene the fundamental principles of our democratic process and do constitute a breach of privilege which should be remedied by this House.

MR. SPEAKER: Additional members wishing to speak to this issue?

The Chair reserves on this matter as well.

Orders of the Day

head: **Written Questions**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that all written questions appearing on the Order Paper, except 358, 385, and 395, stand and retain their places.

[Motion carried]

358. Mr. Bruseker asked the government the following question:
What is the total number of Alberta Government Telephones employees as of May 1, 1990,
(1) 55 years of age or older, and
(2) 60 years of age or older?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the government rejects that in consideration of the Charter of Rights.

385. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question:
(1) How is lead-contaminated dust from Alberta Recoveries & Rentals Ltd. prevented from contaminating the outside air? Is a proper filtration system used within the plant, and if so, how and where are the filters disposed of?
(2) Is Alberta Environment testing and monitoring whether there is any lead contamination in the soil and groundwater around the plant site? In what way is it doing this and over what radius from the plant?
(3) Has any lead contamination been found in soil or groundwater, what is the amount of contamination, and to what depth does it occur?
(4) If contamination has been discovered, what measures are being taken
(a) to remove it,
(b) to examine whether inhabitants within a five-mile radius of the plant have levels in their bodies which are higher than the Albertan average, and
(c) by the Medicine Hat Health Unit to examine whether there is a correlation between those seeking medical help and symptoms that might be attributable to lead poisoning?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the government rejects that as well, as it's sub judice.

395. Mrs. Gagnon asked the government the following question:
With regard to the Provincial Archives' historical resources library, for the years 1985-86, 1986-87, 1987-88, 1988-89, and 1989-90,
(1) what is the total number of books and periodicals circulated
(a) to employees of the government and
(b) to members of the public?
(2) What is the total number of new books and periodical subscriptions purchased?
(3) What is the total number of items borrowed by the library for
(a) employees of the government and
(b) members of the public?
(4) What is the total number of items lent by the library to
(a) government libraries and
(b) libraries other than government libraries?
(5) What is the total number of books withdrawn from circulation?
(6) What is the total number of periodical subscriptions canceled?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the government rejects that, as the information is not available.

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that the following motions for returns stand and retain their places on the Order Paper: 331, 332, 334, 340, 386, 394, and 396.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak against that motion. I have a motion for a return on the Order Paper that I feel must be dealt with. It is a subject matter of serious concern to many people in Alberta in that it may look at the protection of children from violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, violation of the Child Welfare Act, violation of the Mental Health Act, violation of the Alberta education Act.

I have put this motion on the Order Paper because I could not get the kinds of reassurances I would have hoped for from the chairman of AADAC to satisfy me and the people that have raised concerns with me that laws of this province are not being violated. I know the hon. Deputy Government House Leader chastises us for what he says is wasting time on nongovernment days, but in fact it seems to me that on the days he chastises us, it is on behalf of government backbenchers and that he doesn't mind when we take time to deal with what we consider very important nongovernment business; that is, getting information that ministers and members of this government will not give to us. That is important business for us, so I feel that he does not have the right to chastise us for dealing with nongovernment business that we feel is a priority and is of importance.

I would therefore stand against this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Call for the question?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I certainly have not been aware that I've chastised any hon. members. It's their right to put motions for returns on the Order Paper. There are some 35 or 40

motions for returns on today's Order Paper, and I've indicated in my motion that the government is quite prepared to deal with all of those today, with the exception of the seven that I have in the motion.

In fairness, the motion for a return the hon. member is referring to – and I respect the hon. member to put that motion forward – is the responsibility of the Minister of Health. The Minister of Health is dealing with some 35 or 40 board chairmen of hospitals today and can't be with us, so with respect, I don't see how on earth the hon. minister could deal with the hon. member's question. I think moving this motion is perfectly in order.

[Motion carried]

354. Mr. Bruseker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all reports prepared for or by the government regarding the effect of privatization of Alberta Government Telephones upon the economic development and viability of rural communities.

MR. SPEAKER: The minister of telecommunications.

MR. STEWART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've looked at this particular question, as indeed a number of other questions the hon. member has put forward by way of motions for returns, and the difficulty is this: the hon. member seems to assume that this government commissioned a number of studies, reports from outside sources, and in that way based its decision with respect to Alberta Government Telephones. In fact, the process was ongoing, the examination was ongoing, the assessment was ongoing, and in the course of that, a number of internal studies were done by a task force of government representatives. It was, as I say, an ongoing process. If I had to identify what "reports" are the types of reports that are referred to here, I don't think I could put my finger on such reports. That is not to say that the very important questions that are the basis of this motion – namely, to look at the decision from the standpoint of its impact on "the economic development and viability of rural communities" – was not done. Indeed, it was, but it was done as an ongoing process of assessment, close examination.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when I look at the normal rules that govern the production of documentation for tabling in this House in response to motions for returns, I refer to Beauchesne 446 and the traditions and precedents that are established by parliamentary process. I see in 446(2) that a number of criteria are to be applied "if the government papers or documents should be exempt from production." I see, for example,

Legal opinions or advice provided for the use of the government. Well, there certainly were several opinions and advice given to the government in respect to this and other matters as it relates to the decision of Alberta Government Telephones. Sub (e) refers to

Papers containing information, the release of which could allow or result in direct personal financial gain or loss by a person or a group of persons.

Mr. Speaker, one of the important aspects of this initiative with respect to Alberta Government Telephones is an offering, a share offering, that is governed by securities laws of this province. In order even to talk in any meaningful way at the time of the announcement or subsequent to that, it is required that we obtain exemptions where applicable or approvals where applicable of the Securities Commission. That has been done. The parameters, however, with respect to the type of informa-

tion that can in fact be given and the types of statements that can in fact be made are very, very restrictive.

I refer to sub (g):

Papers of a voluminous character or which would require an inordinate cost or length of time to prepare.

Quite frankly, the type of consideration that would be involved in the response to the motion for a return would in fact be extremely voluminous, and the cost or length of time to prepare would be substantial indeed. I refer to cabinet. Cabinet documentation obviously is a matter of confidence, internal matters of government.

Papers that are private or confidential and not of a public or official character

is sub (n), Mr. Speaker.

Internal departmental memoranda:

there were hundreds of such memoranda that related to this decision.

[Mr. Schumacher in the Chair]

In summary, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the reason we must reject this particular motion is because of the nature of the documentation that is being requested – namely, reports. As I say, this is a matter of an ongoing examination, an ongoing process, certainly open for the opposition to indeed do their own assessment of the whole impact of "privatization of Alberta Government Telephones upon the economic development and viability of rural communities." The information that is available for that is a matter of public record; it's open for them with their research moneys to endeavour to make that assessment and to come to their own conclusions. I don't expect that they're going to sit at a desk side by side with government representatives and everything that crosses the government representatives' desk goes over here for a comparable assessment. They have their own research, they have their own ideas, they have their own ideological point of view with respect to the overall questions that were before the government at that time and in the course of that examination, and it's up to them to respond in a meaningful way to their responsibilities as an opposition in that regard. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we reject the motion.

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

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suppose we've covered this ground a number of times before in some ways, but this is a unique situation again. It seems to me that the Premier and the members on the government side like to say when they want to avoid a question in question period, "Well, put the request on the Order Paper and then the House will decide whether or not to give you the information." Of course, that becomes an excuse to put off the decision, and then the time of decision comes and the answer is, "No, we can't release that information."

Now, I've got to admit that there's an incredible variety of questions here. I know we're just dealing with the one, but taking together all the questions relating to AGT, I would not expect the minister could answer all of them. However, it would seem to me that if the minister is going to embark on a project as ambitious and important to Albertans as privatizing AGT, somewhere along the line he would have a study or some studies of factual information giving the pros and cons that he would be prepared to release that back up his idea that this is good for Albertans. So far the only thing we have is his speech to the chamber of commerce in which he laid out the rationale, the

sort of theory and thoughts, behind why his orientation is to do that. That's all very fine, but it's a little bit like what they released on the free trade deal. There were no specific empirical studies laying out the pros and cons of the free trade deal. All we got was a propaganda document put out by the government, based on a false document, I might add, or a study that was flawed and had to be revised.

So I guess what I would say to the minister is: why is it that he can't look through all these motions for returns and decide which ones he can satisfy and which ones he cannot and at least agree to release some basic information? He's saying we should do our own homework and make up our own minds, and we on this side, certainly the Official Opposition, have done quite a lot of that. We've looked at the Olley report; we've looked at the Sherman report. He likes to say that they're out of date or something or don't apply anymore. We've looked at the Unitel application. We can't see anything different there on where it's leading us, except the same kinds of things that happened in the States. We've looked at the report from Manitoba, done by Herschel Hardin a few years back, on what would happen to their telephone system if long-distance competition was brought in. So we have some studies, we have some facts, we have some things that we can see happen when these kinds of moves are made, and we get nothing from the minister except some hope that things will be better. The Sherman report even deals with the idea that somehow competition is going to stimulate everything, except there's no clear evidence of that. Big corporations that own monopoly telephone systems are sometimes at the very forefront of innovation in the telecommunications industry, and AGT is one of them.

So the need to privatize it or allow long-distance competition – whichever particular aspect the minister seems to be heading to, whatever direction he wants to go, he doesn't have any hard evidence to counteract the evidence we on this side have put forward. If the minister could release even the Alexander report that we know is available somewhere, if we could just get our hands on it or something that backs up his position, then I would feel better about him rejecting some of these requests for information. If we ask for one or two things, we don't get anything. If we ask for everything, we don't get anything. Why can't the minister decide that at least there are some things he has . . . Or maybe they just haven't done any studies, like they didn't do any on the free trade deal. I don't know.

Just one other thought occurs to me, about the Member for Calgary-North West putting all these on the Order Paper. It's a commendable effort, but I can't help saying that the Liberal Party in this Assembly either can't make up its mind or has already made up its mind that the privatization of AGT is a good idea. So he must be putting these 15 or 20 motions for returns on the Order Paper to make it look like he's doing something to defend ordinary Albertans in terms of their telephone system. Well, if he's agreed to the privatization of AGT and believes Unitel's application to the CRTC should be agreed to, then he's already sold out rural Albertans in terms of their telephone system and the residential users of telephones in this province. So he can ask for all the information he likes, but it's going to be too late. We need to stop the privatization and stop the application of Unitel if we're going to protect the telephone users of this province. You know, we've built up a good company here that's served Albertans' interests well for the last 84 years, and there really isn't much reason to change that, Mr. Speaker.

I guess what I'm in favour of is any information the minister is prepared to release to add to the debate in a substantive kind

of way. We would like to see him do that. Therefore, I will speak in favour of this motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make a few comments about Motion for a Return 354 that we are debating at the moment here. I was pleased to see the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway making his comments. It showed his rural background. Once again he was out in left field.

The reason for the motion for a return is very straightforward. The government has proudly proclaimed that this is the largest underwriting and undertaking in terms of privatization that this province and this country have seen, and certainly it is. A very important aspect that has been mentioned before in amendments proposed by the Liberal Party, in questions we have proposed, is: what would be the effect upon rural Alberta? Mr. Speaker, as recently as today there were a number of advertisements in the newspaper that referred to rate restructuring, but all the references I saw referred to Edmonton and Calgary and two other large centres. There's not much information being made public as to what will be the economic effect upon rural Alberta. My definition of rural Alberta would include not just the farm sites but also the smaller towns and villages we have around the province which make up some 40 percent of the population of the province. Now, Mr. Speaker, when we have an impact that represents 40 percent of Albertans and could have a serious – hopefully positive but possibly negative – impact upon the development of those areas, I have to request that information from the government.

Now, in responding to this particular motion for a return, the minister did make reference to Beauchesne 446 and several sections in there. What's asked for in this motion for a return, Mr. Speaker, is not advice necessarily and not legal opinions but rather economic opinions. What is being asked for is an opinion, and of course it has to be a projection. Whenever a government or an individual asks, "What do you think might happen if we did this?" – and that's the essence of my motion for a return – really what they're asking for is a projection, a hypothecation perhaps, of what might happen in the future. It's not a legal opinion; it's a best guess. Therefore, the reference the minister made to section (a) of Beauchesne 446 really does not apply.

The minister made further comments about papers of voluminous character which would require an inordinate cost or length of time to prepare. What I'm looking for with this particular proposal, Mr. Speaker, although the minister said that it was an ongoing process – and clearly it had to be; the minister and the Treasurer have referred to this privatization proposal over a number of years – is that I'm assuming, and perhaps it's an erroneous assumption, that at some point in time there was a summarization of the different processes that occurred. That's really what I'm looking for. Following all the ongoing studies, the ongoing reports, the interim reports of the task force and so on, finally at the end of that it stands to reason that there be some conclusion reached, and I'm assuming that conclusion would therefore be presented to the minister responsible for looking after AGT. Therefore, while I'm not looking for all the ongoing working documents, what I'm looking for is that summary, that conclusion at the end, which I suspect would not be voluminous in character and would be a matter of a few pages.

I must confess I didn't quite follow how the release of information could allow direct personal financial gain by someone. What we're talking about is privatization. The shares will be owned equally by all those who purchase into it once this presumably is passed by this Legislature. Therefore, all individuals would have equal opportunity to gain or lose. So it doesn't seem to me to be any particular use to any one individual; rather, it would be of use to all individuals to allow for greater understanding of what's happening here.

The minister makes the comment that papers are private or confidential. Well, I would like to point out to the minister that he and I are both taxpayers on one hand and working for taxpayers on the other hand, so in a sense we find ourselves in a curious position. But the research that has been provided for the government really is public information or should be public information because it is information used in an official decision made by the government. When I reflect upon the Premier's opening statement, he said, "This is a policy decision of this government." The Premier used words to that effect in making the ministerial statement announcing Bill 37. When I look at that official public policy statement, really what we're saying here is that this is a decision that presumably is almost a fait accompli, given the realities of a very strong Progressive Conservative majority in this Legislature and really is now, in fact, the public statement and official public position, given the statements made by the Premier.

Finally, with respect to internal department memoranda, again what I'm looking for is that final summary, the conclusion, the final decision-making statements. So I would urge all members to support Motion for a Return 354.

[Motion lost]

355. Mr. Bruseker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all reports prepared for or by the government regarding various strategies for the privatization of Alberta Government Telephones and all government documents outlining the process which resulted in the decision to issue shares for AGT.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, in this particular motion before us I find the same difficulty. Again it refers to "a copy of all reports prepared," and as I've indicated in response to motion 354, I don't think I could put my finger on given reports and the parameters of those reports. This was again an ongoing process to assess all the matters that were vital to that decision, and it's not a matter of being able to single out reports done by any given individual or individuals or firm or consultant or whatever and then being able to tidy that up in a neat package and table it in response to this motion for a return.

There are many comments that have been made in respect to Motion 354 by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway as well as the hon. Member for Calgary-North West that indeed apply with respect to this particular motion as well. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, for example, talks about an assessment of pros and cons not having been forthcoming. Well, in fact, when we made our announcement, we did. It would be very important for us to tell Albertans why we were taking this particular decision. That was spelled out in the ministerial statement from our Premier, through media opportunities and public process. It was done in this House. The unfortunate thing is that much more of that would have taken place probably in the spirit of appropriate debate on second reading. The unfortunate situation, Mr. Speaker, is that from the very first

speaker from the Official Opposition to rise in respect of that particular motion, an amendment was made; then a subamendment was made. The focus of the debate, therefore, by rules of this Assembly had to be extremely focused and narrow and prohibited the type of debate which the hon. member would have enjoyed. The Bill was called for nine or 10 days, over 30 speakers participated in that narrow sense, and indications are that their minds were made up even before and therefore it was almost useless to continue in that sort of debate.

I can tell the hon. member that in the course of our examination relative to the strategies, we did – and I've said this many times publicly – consider a number of options and identified what those options were so the hon. members could in fact take hold of that and look into those options themselves. Those options were very clear. One obviously was the status quo, to leave Alberta Government Telephones as a wholly-owned Crown agency on the same sort of basis as it now exists. A second option was to convert that ownership by the government into shares and then to hold shares instead of as a Crown corporation. The third one was to try in some way to sever the regulatory and nonregulatory areas of its involvement and to perhaps pursue the privatization of the nonregulated areas and leave the regulated areas, try to isolate what some people may consider to be a telephone company – and of course there is no such thing any more, given the changes in technology and computers talking to computers, satellites, and fibre optics: all those things that are so much a part of our telecommunications system. The fourth option . . . Never mind. I'll write you a note on the fourth one, hon. member.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, those are the sorts of options that were considered in every respect, top to bottom, on an ongoing assessment basis. A lot of hard work by a lot of committed government representatives, involvement of elected people that was required along the way, the input on given isolated areas where we sought advice in order to confirm whatever directions or thoughts were going through our minds as we proceeded through this assessment: in light of all that we came to the decision. We've explained to the people of Alberta why we've done what we feel are the benefits of this particular decision for the people of Alberta. Indeed, the people of Alberta and all the hon. members opposite know this very well. Everybody has responded to this very, very favourably, and indeed the only people that seem to be against it are those opposite in the Official Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, the difficulty in some of these situations as well – and the hon. Member for Calgary-North West spoke of it – is to forecast ahead. Now, we can each exercise our own best judgment on that, basing that upon a given set of criteria and assumptions, I presume, but it's difficult to assess economic impact, for example, without knowing what actual decisions will be forthcoming from a regulatory agency. Now, we know that the CRTC has regulated in a fair and reasonable manner, that the type of regulatory regime in the United States, to which the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway referred on a number of occasions, is not the type of regulatory process here. In fact, one of the main reasons local rates in the United States increased substantially is that the regulators forced the United States telcos to add a number of extra services one by one onto the basic services on line rental. Obviously, with those extra services that were forced upon them by the regulatory regime in the United States, higher rates did prevail.

We take the types of reports prepared by independent firms and consultants, things such as the Olley report and the Sherman report that the hon. members have brought forward – and they

just have to realize that some of the assumptions and bases of those reports were in fact rejected by CRTC on the CNCP. So to hold those out and say that's the way it would be when CRTC has already rejected those sorts of figures and representations that were made to it in the regulatory process is just unrealistic. The application now being made by Unitel indeed adopts criteria and facts that are totally different now from those assumptions that formed the basis for the Olley and Sherman reports.

Now, you don't need a report to identify those sorts of problems. Anybody that looks at it and studies it a bit can come to those same conclusions. I would suggest that the types of information asked here indeed can be established and assessed by the opposition members in the course of their own consideration relative to this very important Alberta Government Telephones and the very important service for Albertans that it provides and will provide in the future, and indeed on a much improved basis because it will have the opportunity to be flexible and to operate as a full-fledged telecommunications company, taking advantage of a market that is worldwide in substantial amounts, and will be able to achieve revenues that in turn will allow local rates to be kept fair and reasonable for Albertans and to provide services. I mean, competition is not something we fear, and it's not something AGT fears. It's something that indeed it welcomes and knows is coming in any event. Thirty percent of AGT's revenues now come from competitive areas.

A few years ago, Mr. Speaker, it was not possible to rent a telephone except through AGT. It was not possible to own a telephone certainly at that point in time. That changed. People could then buy a telephone, but they could only buy it from AGT. Subsequently it was opened up to competition. Suppliers of terminal equipment could come in, and people could then access telephone equipment. They could go to the Radio Shack or their Canadian Tire. They would pay an even lower price than they did before. Competition certainly didn't act in the worst interests of the people of Alberta. In fact, it acted in their best interests. It provided choice and provided up-to-date technology at reasonable rates.

So, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of what I've just tried to indicate and certainly on the basis of our earlier comments in respect to 354, we have to reject this particular motion.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I determined to stay out of this, but the minister said some things that have to be taken up. He said that the Sherman and the Olley reports were somehow flawed or not right or something. So far he has shown us nothing that disputes the basic fact they put forward, and that is that if there is long-distance "competition" – if it makes any sense to talk about competition in something that's a kind of natural monopoly – when those long-distance rates go down, residential rates go up. The charts are very clear on that. Peat Marwick, on behalf of the Sherman commission, did some studies and showed that if there was an increase in competition, if the competition was allowed and the rate reduction was allowed to a certain percent – I think it was 25 percent – and they were allowed to take, say, 20 percent of the market, a penetration of 20 percent of the long-distance market, then there would be certain consequences in the local rates for Albertans. It was quite a high hike of increase in the residential rates.

If the minister's got some documents and some facts and figures that dispute that, fine. If he's just claiming that Unitel is making an application that is different and in fact they're going to use all the money they make in their long-distance endeavours once they're allowed into the market to subsidize

local rates, fine. If that's true, and I'll believe it when I see it, then it's based on the kinds of things that the Sherman report and the Olley report found when they examined what has happened in the United States mainly, although there was some looking also at Britain and Japan. So there is that danger there, and I see nothing that really protects anybody from it.

The Unitel application is very shallow. They have not brought forward their business plan. They have this glowing cover thing telling what a wonderful job they're going to do for everybody, but there's not much in the way of facts and figures that are going to really deliver to the people of Alberta in terms of residential use. There's certainly nothing that I see. As soon as the minister uses the words "rate rebalancing," I find that to be a euphemism for saying that everybody will pay their own way. Now, if that were really going to be true, of course the rural people would be in trouble, and that's what you rural MLAs better go tell your people. If the long-distance people were going to be really honest and pay their own way, they would not have some kind of artificial competition between two carriers and lower the price below what they're paying now because, Mr. Speaker, it takes a whole big network to be able to afford the long-distance lines. I don't really understand why the minister wants to let Unitel buy into our lines, hook on to our systems. I don't care what share they're prepared to give back to our system. It's a natural monopoly system that's working very well.

The Sherman report also found there was no clear evidence that a monopoly company was any different than a situation where there's more competition in terms of innovation and new technologies and that sort of thing, because a monopoly company is in a position to take a fair amount of money to get new capital for investment in R and D. So they sometimes lead the way, as Alberta Government Telephones has done. We're one of the better companies in the world. In fact, Prudential-Bache, a stockbroker, has put out an extremely glowing report.

If AGT is such a damned good company, why do we want to give some strangers a chance to hook into it and rip off some of the profits of it? Why don't we keep it for ourselves? You're worried about them needing new capital. Why don't we leave the system a monopoly system and regulate it? Okay, so the CRTC is going to do it instead of the Public Utilities Board. But you better be there speaking on behalf of Albertans and telling them that we don't want that Unitel competition on the long-distance rates because the inevitable consequence – and you've shown us nothing to dispute this; you claim it isn't true, but you show us no facts or figures or projections or studies that show it – is that in fact local, or particularly rural rates, will not be in trouble and residential rates for the general population will go up. Until we see some studies, until we see some hard facts on the other side, we think we've put those facts forward.

As far as our amendment on the second reading was concerned, it was a very broad amendment. It was basically to get at that kind of debate, that we believed a telephone company was a natural monopoly and should be there to provide good service for the people of Alberta as opposed to being owned by a few people who were out to make a profit. So it allowed a very good back-and-forth debate, but we just didn't hear you guys until it came time, till closure was brought in, and then three or four of you tried to get up at the end and said a few nice words – but it didn't really answer any of our concerns – to try to talk out the time. That's the nearest we got to a debate out of you guys. We're getting more debate now on these motions for returns. I thank you for putting them on the Order Paper.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, it seems passing strange to me that this government says: "Well, trust us. We know what we're doing. We've done internal studies and audits, and you can trust us to know what we're doing." They often say that the private sector is so much more efficient and better than the public sector to run these things. I don't think there'd be any private-sector group of shareholders that would let a board of directors get away with saying: "We're going to restructure this whole company. Trust us that we know what we're doing. We don't have any studies or any data to prove what we're doing is good. Trust us." I don't think you'd get away with that in the private sector. I'm not sure why you think you should get away with it in the public sector.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking in closing debate on Motion for a Return 355, I just want to make a few brief comments with respect to the minister's concerns. The minister said that over the course of the years a number of studies had been done and much hard work had been done by the various members of presumably a variety of government departments. The reason for this particular motion for a return, again, is that surety to goodness out of all of those hours of effort, out of all of those studies, out of all of those task forces and so on, at some point something was committed to paper. This particular motion for a return says "all reports." Now, "all reports" may in fact only amount to one report. It may amount to, I'm beginning to suspect, zero reports, because I keep hearing that there doesn't seem to be any final, concluding statement. Somewhere along the line I have to start questioning, therefore, the decision-making process of this government. Do they never sit down and say, "Well, here's what we've decided to do; we're going to do A, B, C, D, E, and so on," and outline their position?

Now, it seems to me that when one considers strategies of privatization, and that's what the motion for a return asks for, the "various strategies" – the minister mentioned a couple of them; he mentioned three, in fact – there are perhaps other means of privatizing. One that the minister didn't mention, but I presume was under consideration, would be to sell it outright to some large corporation. That was probably considered at some point in time also, and that's why I put the motion for a return on. I would like to know how it is that the government chose to avoid that. I like the concept of selling it to Albertans; I think that's a good idea. But one of the things that's in the Bill in terms of privatization is that it says that nobody can own more than 5 percent. Well, several years ago, in the early 1980s, when the government created Vencap, they said that no one may own more than 1 percent, so I see a discrepancy there. I believe AEC is now 3 percent. So there, just in talking about strategies for owning shares, which seems to be the route that this government likes to follow in terms of share issuing, we have a 1 percent, a 3 percent, and a 5 percent solution, and I don't understand why it's good in one condition and not in the other one. Why is there a difference there? So even within strategies that the government has employed in different share issuing procedures, they haven't followed exactly the same strategy, the same procedure in privatizing or creating, in the case of Vencap, an entirely new body.

So there are a variety of different techniques. Presumably the government sat down in council and with caucus and with the research staff that they have available to them, looked at the

various strategies, and ultimately came up with the Bill we have before the House right now, Bill 37. So this presumably represents the ultimate result of the decision-making process that the government went through in deciding that, first of all, AGT should be privatized, and then secondly, deciding how to privatize it.

So, Mr. Speaker, simply all I'm asking for in this motion for a return is: we now see the end result; how did we get there? So I would ask all members to support Motion for a Return 355.

[Motion lost]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn Motions for Returns and that all motions for returns on the Order Paper stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

[Motion carried]

head: **Motions Other Than Government Motions**

217. Moved by Mr. Bradley:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to give consideration to supporting the establishment of a laser fusion laboratory in Alberta.

MR. BRADLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure today to introduce this motion to the Assembly. This motion concerns the future of Canada's participation in one of the most significant potential developments in the history of scientific discovery known to mankind, that being the development of a virtually unlimited source of clean energy through a process known as laser fusion. That is a fusion reaction confined by high-powered lasers.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table with the Assembly a brochure which was put together last fall by some visionary Albertans who saw the opportunity for Alberta to participate in this significant world energy development.

Mr. Speaker, I should note that this is not a proposal which comes forward from the Alberta Research Council, although Dr. Clem Bowman, the president of the Alberta Research Council, has been involved with the steering committee, but it is a very interesting concept. As chairman of the Alberta Research Council, I've had the opportunity to see firsthand many of the scientific and technological wonders of the past decade. I've also seen what lies in store for the future in terms of advanced microelectronics, telecommunications, biotechnology research, and advanced materials and laser technology. Each is impressive in their own right, yet I must confess that one of the most exciting projects currently being proposed in this province, in my view, is the laser fusion laboratory project.

Mr. Speaker, nuclear fusion has been widely recognized as a long-term potential source of clean, abundant energy for the 21st century. We know that we face in the world as we proceed into the 21st century a number of environmental concerns and other concerns about existing energy sources and how we will in fact produce energy into the 21st century. I believe there will be a mix of energies, but the opportunity in terms of fusion is certainly one which will solve, in my judgment, the world's requirement for energy for a long time into the future.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Just reviewing what mix of energies we have available to us, there's coal, oil and gas, fission, which is the nuclear fission reaction, a number of renewable energy options, and fusion. Of course, today we do not have fusion in reality, but this motion could bring us much closer to the development of fusion energy as a long-term supply for the world. In terms of nuclear fission, there are certainly concerns with regards to that option. Although some areas of the world are moving towards it, we have not yet solved the question of radioactive wastes emanating from nuclear fission. But nuclear fusion, which is the process that occurs in all the stars and is the source of energy in the sun, is considered by many scientists to be the ultimate solution to the world's energy needs because it promises a virtually unlimited supply of energy.

Although the task of creating and controlling matter at extreme temperature conditions found inside the sun represents one of the greatest technological challenges that has ever been faced by mankind, the potential benefits are so great that major fusion research programs are under way throughout the world, notably in the United States, the Soviet Union, Japan, and Europe. There is work on the Tokamak proposal, and on an annual basis some \$1.5 billion is spent annually with regards to fusion energy research in the world. The fusion research effort in Canada is modest by comparison but has the potential to make significant contributions to what will be the long-term development of operating fusion systems.

There are two approaches to fusion research: magnetic confinement fusion and inertial confinement fusion. The magnetic confinement fusion is the Tokamak proposal, which is being worked on by many throughout the world. In either approach significant heating of the fuel is required in order to achieve the very high temperatures in excess of 100 million degrees Celsius required to initiate and maintain fusion reactions. Lasers have the potential to provide the necessary energy to heat the fuel to ignition conditions in an inertial confinement fusion reactor, ICF, and the one laser which shows the most promise for this application is the krypton fluoride excimer laser.

Mr. Speaker, within Alberta at the present time there is a small core of world-class expertise and equipment that could be readily applied to an inertial confinement laser fusion initiative. Two of the critical ingredients are represented by Dr. Allan Offenberger and his research staff at the University of Alberta, and the second component is sophisticated krypton fluoride laser equipment on extended loan to Alberta from the United States Department of Energy. However, without our support it is very possible that Alberta and Canada could lose both of these current advantages to other nations. The laser fusion laboratory project represents a significant opportunity for Canada to fill a vacant niche in the international inertial confinement fusion research effort. It is based on the innovative laser fusion science and technology program at the University of Alberta and important linkages to major international laboratories.

While the long-term objective of the laser fusion laboratory proposal is on fusion energy, there are substantial near-term benefits arising from developments in laser and related technology. In addition, commitments and support for this project have been forthcoming from a number of institutions in the form of research collaborations, laser equipment, and computing, valued at approximately \$12 million. In addition, working and formal agreements have been arranged with major research laboratories in the United States and Japan. These agreements are to provide effective access to international inertial confinement fusion energy development and to technology transfer in lasers, optics, instrumentation, and other areas.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to advise the Assembly of the visionary individuals who have formed an interim foundation committee for the laser fusion laboratory project here in Alberta. These are distinguished Albertans, and I'd like to list them for the Assembly's information. First of all, we have Dr. Clem Bowman, who's the president of the Alberta Research Council; Dr. Duncan Currie, who's vice-president of the Alberta Research Council responsible for planning and development; Dr. Bob James, vice-president of research at the University of Alberta; Dr. Allan Offenberger, who's the project director and a professor at the University of Alberta; Mr. Bob Stollery, who's president of PCL Constructors here in the city of Edmonton; Mr. Don Currie, who is the managing director of the Alberta Chamber of Resources; Mr. Eric Geddes, familiar to all of us as past chairman of the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research and chairman of the advanced technology project here in the city of Edmonton; Mr. John McDougall, who's past president of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce; Mr. John Schlosser, who's chairman of the board, University of Alberta; Mrs. Catherine Wyatt, who's chairman of the board of governors of the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology; and Lance White, an alderman here in the city of Edmonton.

These individuals have formed the interim foundation committee, which has been working with provincial governments, the federal government, and industry in terms of putting forward this proposal. They were able to secure funding from the Alberta government to carry forward an initial initiative. Funding for that was in the amount of approximately \$155,000, which came from various Alberta government departments and the Atomic Energy of Canada Limited to facilitate development of the technical and business plans necessary for this proposal to come forward for decision. Mr. Speaker, this proposal is currently under review by the private sector, the federal government, and the province of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to delve into the motivation behind fusion and why it is the energy for the future. One of the reasons is that fusion would supply to the world a virtually inexhaustible supply of energy. The source for fusion would be seawater, and one cubic foot of seawater is equivalent to the energy of 42 gallons of oil – one cubic foot of seawater, virtually an inexhaustible fuel supply. The energy content per unit weight of fuel is high. Energy released per fusion reaction is 4 million times that of an internal combustion or carbon combustion reaction, 4 million times greater energy per weight of fuel. Fusion would have a minimum environmental impact on the world. There are no emissions of carbon or other gases which produce acid rain. Fusion reaction products are not radioactive, which was one of the problems we had in terms of nuclear fission. Fusion would provide a catalyst for advances in science and technology in the areas of plasma science, lasers and optics, large-scale computing, and sophisticated measurement techniques.

I've already alluded to fusion requiring a high temperature, a state of approximately 100 million degrees Celsius. Also required for fusion is confinement of the plasma, which would avoid the reaction from stopping. So you have to confine this reaction, and you also have to have it at a very high temperature.

There are two milestones with regards to laser fusion which must be achieved. One is energy break-even point, which is basically that you get more energy out of the reaction than what you put into it, and the ability to ignite the fuel. Currently we're within a factor of five of achieving that. Of the two processes which I've earlier alluded to, one being inertial confinement

fusion, the other being magnetic confinement fusion, both are at equivalent stages of development. Although magnetic confinement fusion research has been going on for some 25 to 30 years and billions of dollars have been expended on it versus laser, or the inertial confinement fusion, which was only developed in the last 15 years, they're both at the same level of development. One of the facts about inertial confinement fusion is that it's known that it will work.

I'd like to briefly relay where else inertial confinement fusion, or laser fusion, research is being conducted in the world. In the United States there are a number of laboratories: the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory, the Laboratory for Laser Energetics at the University of Rochester, the Sandia National Laboratories, the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, the Naval Research Laboratory. In Europe there are four institutes working on it: the Rutherford Laboratories, the Max Planck Institute, the Ecole Polytechnique, and a proposal for a Eurolaser facility. In Japan there's the University of Osaka, the Electro-Technical Laboratory, and the University of Electrocommunications. In Canada we have the University of Alberta. In the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics there's the Lebedev Physics Institute and the General Physics Institute. These are the people in the world who are currently working on inertial confinement fusion, and the sole Canadian opportunity is with the people here at the University of Alberta.

Where is the niche for Canada in a laser fusion program? There are two important issues for inertial confinement fusion. One is the driver, which would drive the reaction out: developing a laser driver. The second is coupling onto the fuel target. There are two approaches to that with regards to inertial confinement fusion. One is a direct drive, and the other is an indirect drive where the laser is converted to X-rays. The direct drive coupling is more efficient in principle, and the direct drive component requires smoothing of laser beams. What is critical here is that the krypton fluoride laser – we have world-renowned expertise at the University of Alberta – is suitable for both of those approaches with regards to laser drivers.

The Canadian fusion program, Mr. Speaker, was established in 1979-1980. It had three components, one being the inertial confinement fusion, ICF; the magnetic confinement fusion, MCF; and materials/ engineering. The magnetic confinement fusion program was initiated by Quebec in 1981 with federal shared-cost funding, an initial funding of some \$40 million. In 1982 a fusion fuels program was initiated by Ontario with federal shared-cost funding. The total annual expenditure today in Canada on fusion programs is some \$20 million.

The inertial confinement fusion program was proposed by Alberta and has support and endorsement of Canadian fusion researchers, the National Research Council fusion advisory committee, and the national fusion project international review committee. The Alberta proposal meets critical national fusion project criteria. One is that the possibility of interim industrial benefits is high; secondly, that there is an indigenous Canadian advantage that will provide the basis for Canadian leadership in the technological specialty; and the interest to foreign programs is sufficiently high to make exchange of technology a likely outcome.

I should note, Mr. Speaker, that with regards to magnetic confinement fusion there is a proposal to establish in Calgary an international thermonuclear experimental reactor facility. This proposal would cost some approximately \$5 billion, and is a facility which is being – let's say this. There is tremendous competition throughout the world for the location of the ITER, or the international thermonuclear experimental reactor. So

Calgary is certainly bidding on that, and that is in the magnetic confinement fusion area.

With regards to the inertial confinement fusion, the laser fusion, which we have some opportunities for, I'd like just to review the history of that. As I said, there have been some 15 years of research and development in this area. The Alberta krypton fluoride laser program was one of the earliest and was initiated in 1980 at the University of Alberta. Alberta has leadership and expertise in krypton fluoride laser research and development, we're recognized internationally, and there is international support for the Alberta krypton laser fusion program. There's been a significant contribution of krypton fusion laser technology and equipment loaned to us by the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. It's been here in Alberta since 1987. We have formal agreements with the Osaka University in Japan for collaboration and exchange in laser fusion research and development, and we have a working agreement and the support of the United States Department of Energy for collaboration and exchange of krypton laser fusion research and development.

So, Mr. Speaker, the proposal is out there with regards to what Alberta's expertise could provide to this project. It is the only opportunity, in my judgment, for Canada to participate in an inertial confinement fusion program. We have the expertise with the krypton fluoride laser, as I have indicated. It is an exciting opportunity for Alberta and for our country as we look into the future.

What is required in terms of monetary commitment to see this happen? The program that has been suggested would cost some \$36 million over a five-year period to see a laser fusion laboratory established here in the province. We already have had contributed some \$12 million in terms of equipment which is on loan to us from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in the United States. What is then required is an additional \$24 million over a five-year period. It has been proposed that \$12 million would come from the federal government through Atomic Energy of Canada or other funding sources and that 50 percent of the funding for this would come from Alberta and would be shared by the provincial government with some industrial partners. So in terms of Alberta's contribution, we're looking at some \$12 million over five years.

In terms of the longer term, there are some exciting opportunities which will result from this, not only in terms of developing a laser fusion driver, but there are a number of applications in R and D which would flow from this in terms of laser systems and applications, the development of X-ray laser capability, some exciting opportunities in high energy density physics, and applications in medicine, physics, chemistry, and biology.

In the longer term, we'd have contributed to this a Canadian capability to participate in the international inertial confinement fusion demonstration projects, and we'd be able to develop Canadian technology in subsystems for commercial power production in the future. We also have the opportunity to see a spin-off from the development of optics capability here in Alberta, which would be fueled by this project. There currently is not a high-grade optic capability in Canada, and this project would see that coming to our province.

Mr. Speaker, the economic impact from this would be some \$78 million of direct and indirect spin-off to Alberta and some 900 person-years of employment over the initial five-year period. We'd see a world-class national research and development facility established in Alberta. We'd see diversification through spin-off industries in optics, lasers, instrumentation, and other technologies. We would see our initial research and develop-

ment investment multiplied many times through our international linkages, and we'd have increased educational opportunities. We'd have opportunities for scientific tourism and new capabilities in our local industry. It is noted that when scientists come to the University of Alberta from around the world, one of the showcases which is shown to them is our niche in lasers, and it's certainly of significant interest to many throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I'd like to say that this laser fusion laboratory provides an excellent opportunity for a national science project in Alberta at a modest price tag. Usually, big science projects cost hundreds of millions of dollars. For example, the Kaon factory, which is a particle physics laboratory which is being proposed for British Columbia, would cost some \$500 million. Here we are looking at a modest investment. It would be a major big science project for Alberta which would give us an international reputation. It would provide opportunities for spin-off industries, and it would attract people and activity to our province.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I just wanted to quote from one of the documents that is prepared by the interim foundation committee. It's entitled Laser Fusion Laboratory: A National Centre for ICF Science and Technology, and it's from volume II. Basically, this is how it concludes:

The long-term objective of inertial confinement fusion research is to develop a clean, inexhaustible energy source.

The science and technology of inertial confinement fusion and magnetic confinement fusion are distinctly different and are at an equivalent stage of development. A national fusion strategy must therefore encompass research and development in both confinement technologies.

ICF research based on krypton fluoride laser technology will have significant spin-off benefits in laser development and applications, optics, plasma technology, computer modelling and instrumentation and will enhance knowledge-based industrial capability in Canada.

Fusion, as a clean energy source, fits with other energy currencies. It can be used for electric power generation and the neutrons can be used for radiolysis of water to produce hydrogen which, in turn, can be used as a clean, transportable fuel as well as for upgrading hydrocarbons for other industrial applications.

Canada is at a crossroads. Either the krypton fluoride laser project will be funded or Canada will cease to have an effective participation in international inertial confinement fusion research and development.

Mr. Speaker, the value of this project to Alberta's long-term scientific and technological development is indeed significant. I would ask all hon. members to support this motion.

Thank you.

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

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, what can one say? I'm sold. It was a very good presentation that the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest made and a very important idea that he raises. Obviously, fusion compared to fission is a big step in the right direction in terms of clean fuel. That we've known for a long time, and there's been a lot of research done on it. Of course, we all got rather excited awhile back when some people told us they'd figured out how to do cold fusion; however, that still hasn't really been quite sorted out and figured out.

I listened with great interest wondering, as the member went along talking, about using seawater. I was aware that the Japanese had been doing a certain amount of experimentation, and I suppose other people as well, thinking that they could

isolate the hydrogen in seawater and use it as a fuel in place of gas and oil and that sort of thing. It would, of course, be a lot cleaner fuel and a great step forward. Finally, he did complete the circle and make the reference at the end to the fact that this was related; that is, getting the hydrogen free, I guess, of the oxygen from water. It would give us a clean hydrogen fuel. So, Mr. Speaker, the ideas the member puts forward are excellent, and it was well explained.

I guess I do have a question. Why was it that the member brought it forward in this way? Is it that the government has not quite made up its mind on this yet, just how much it's prepared to put in? If the government has already decided that they're a part of this project and these numbers that you gave us are the ones that the government has already committed itself to, then I'm a little surprised there wasn't sort of a press release or something in the budget that we could have heard about earlier in estimates. Is it that the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest is having trouble convincing his colleagues? Certainly he convinced me. So I guess I'm wondering: at what stage is the government's thinking on this? Are they just putting this forward as a sort of trial balloon to find out what other people think about it, in this Assembly and hopefully outside it, as more people hear about it before they commit themselves? It sounds to me like it's a pretty good direction to go, and I would wonder why they would be shy about getting on with it if it's as good as the member has laid it out. I have no reason to doubt him; I'm not suggesting that he gave us any kind of snow job or anything like that.

The need to develop fuels, of course, that are environmentally clean is one that we've been struggling with here in Alberta quite a lot. Of course, we have a lot of coal, and we have a lot of oil and gas. Gas is a little better than the other two, oil being a little better than the coal. Yet in Alberta we're building an infrastructure of electricity-producing furnaces based on coal, and I can't help wondering: just how co-ordinated are the efforts of the government and the municipal governments of this province in terms of trying to use the most environmentally safe fuels? It's all very well to pin your hopes on this fusion process, and certainly one looks forward to some major breakthroughs in the future that will help us a lot in our fight to cut down the amount of CO₂ emissions that are causing the greenhouse effect. That may still take some time, and in the meantime I wonder if we let our industries get away with a heavier level of pollution than we need to. I hope the government doesn't sort of say, "Well, you know, we're going to rely on this to save us in the next five or 10 years," that sort of thing rather than also looking at the best possible ways of using what fuels we have to now. Also, it doesn't mean that we should give up on solar and wind energy. I know that the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest has pushed hard and finally got some research being done on solar energy again after that program having been canceled for a few years. So I think that the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest puts forward an excellent motion. He's certainly got my support.

I've often been a bit skeptical – and you've heard me say it in talking to the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications – that the technology is going to solve all of our problems. It's very easy, for example, to develop technologies like we've done in, say, the rubber industry for tires, where we make the tires so tough you can hardly destroy them. Then you end up with a problem of what you do with the old tires when you're done using them on the cars. So technology has to be used with some thought. If developments of our science and technology are just to develop new things at an incredible rate

and to always be in the forefront of whatever is going on, if that becomes the sole purpose, we can run into a lot of problems about what we do with workers that we end up throwing on the scrap heap along with the second latest computer that we're throwing away because we got a newer and better one.

Sometimes I'm a little bit skeptical about dashing off after science and technology at an incredible rate, yet at the same time I recognize that some basic R and D . . . Certainly our universities have to be in the forefront of the thinking and analysis of how we deal with the technologies in our society. But I have just often cautioned that technology isn't always going to solve all the problems and that somehow we maybe have to stop and think a little bit about the larger picture and the long term rather than just a new – well, who needs another variety of toothpaste, or who needs another and better toothpaste tube to throw in the garbage heap if it's indestructible? I mean, that's kind of what we did with the Crest toothpaste tube. Somebody invented a better tube than the old zinc ones, and the first thing you know, we've got hundreds of them in our garbage heaps that we can't destroy because they're almost indestructible.

So I have been skeptical in that line, but I am not skeptical on this particular project that you're talking about. I understand enough science, I believe, to know that fusion is so much better and so much more effective than fission. The nuclear industry of this country is – you mentioned the Canadian atomic energy commission. They have put out an incredible amount of propaganda lately talking about how, because oil and gas and coal are somewhat polluting, the direction to go is nuclear energy, nuclear power. They even bragged that they now know how to dispose of it totally safely. You know, they're going to stick it in holes down in the granite somewhere in Ontario. That worries me, Mr. Speaker, because I think this old planet has something like 5 billion years left to go, and I don't think they can assume that that granite is going to stay in one lump for 5 billion years. So certainly just because it won't be affecting us doesn't mean that we shouldn't consider the disposal problems of the nuclear industry, besides which, of course, we have the Chernobyls and the Three Mile Islands and those kinds of problems with that industry. I do know, like I said, enough about science to know that fusion is a cleaner fuel, is a way that we can improve the environmental use of energy in this society. So therefore one is quite prepared to back this kind of a project.

I guess I would just ask the member introducing this motion or some other government member to tell us what commitment the government does have to this project. I mean, he's outlined a very nice proposal and some good ideas here. What stage is the government at with actually coming through with some of the moneys to help this project along?

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to join in the debate on this very important motion for the future of Alberta and the future of the world. I believe fusion energy is ultimately the way in which this planet has to go to develop and continue to develop our life-style. One of the things I often remark on is that if we simply reflect upon the life-style which we enjoy today, consider how many appliances in your home are powered by electricity. Unfortunately, we in Alberta are just as bad as anyone else; we are choking ourselves to death with electrical power plants that are producing power by the burning of coal.

Now, fusion energy is clearly the way to go in the future, Mr. Speaker, and in particular the inertial confinement fusion. The problem with magnetic confinement fusion, to which the member spoke when he introduced the Bill, is that extremely high temperatures are required. Those temperature difficulties can be overcome to a large extent by inertial confinement. One of the problems of magnetic confinement fusion – confusion perhaps in some cases – is that what is required is temperature differentials of approximately 1 million degrees Celsius. I think the member said 100 million degrees, and I believe he's in error with that; I think it's only 1 million degrees that is required for fusion. But you must in magnetic confinement fusion obtain that temperature differential in a distance of about one metre, in creating a magnetic doughnut, if you will, containing the hydrogen.

The member spoke with respect to hydrogen being a virtually unlimited source of fuel, and certainly it is, Mr. Speaker. Hydrogen is the most common element in the universe, not simply on planet Earth – good old planet Earth, to which some of us are attached for sure and some are off in space. So combining hydrogen, you end up producing helium, which of course is also an inert gas. It's a very safe product as opposed to the fusion reactions, which can produce all kinds of radioactive materials.

One of the reasons why I support laser fusion is that I think back to the past when fission technology was being developed. We in Canada can be proud of our record in the development of fission technology. The CANDU reactors which Canada has produced in the past were considered amongst the best in the world, and Canada, I can proudly say, led the world in the technology and the technological development of those fission reactors. I would be most pleased to see Canada and in particular Alberta develop leadership in fusion reactors, because fusion reactors ultimately, as I said, are going to be the long-term goal, the long-term source of clean, environmentally safe energy for our children and our grandchildren presumably long after we are gone.

I do have a few questions that I want to raise and put to the member, and I hope he will get the opportunity to respond to them. He mentioned that this is a five-year project and that relatively speaking it is a cheap project: a little over \$2 million a year, \$12 million for five years. So costwise it's not a terribly expensive project. But my question really is: where are we going to go in five years' time? We will have the facility in place, we will have some staff in place, we will have some expertise being developed, but where are we ultimately going with it? The member made reference to the fact that lasers have in fact made all kinds of inroads into our daily life. Probably the most common one that people see is the laser at your supermarket checkout counter, and that's a convenience.

But there are some really exciting things happening with laser technology. One of them is, in fact, a constituent of mine, Mr. Speaker, a fellow whose name is Dr. Howard Gimbel. He's using laser technology to do some fantastic eye surgeries and has restored sight to hundreds of people and is leading in the world, I believe, in eye surgeries using laser technology. Here is an example of where laser technology really can help individuals on a one-on-one basis, and when I see that kind of thing happening, I think that's a very exciting development, and certainly I applaud those efforts as well.

With respect to long-term developments, a couple of questions sort of overall with respect to technology "vision," I guess is the word to use. The last white paper that this government produced was in 1985, and it looked at where the government

intended to go from the 1985 to 1990 time span. Here we are in 1990; the white paper has presumably come to a conclusion and has been the basis in the past for how technological decisions by this government have been made. So I guess I'm wondering a little bit sort of on the overall strategy. How does the laser fusion proposal fit into the overall scheme? Where are we going in the future? I guess what I'm thinking – we're going to have, certainly, some spin-offs: the \$12 million that we will inject into this particular project and funds from the federal government as well. Clearly, we'll have some spin-offs for the province of Alberta, but where are we going down the road? Where is this going to be in five years' time; where will it be in 10, 15, 20 years' time?

The past record – and I think it only need briefly be mentioned – in the high-tech industry has not been a hundred percent exemplary. General Systems Research springs to mind, where the government put some money in – some \$31 million – and sold it at a total price of, I think, \$200,000. So in terms of the research that went in and the development that occurred, clearly Alberta did not get its return on the investment. Now, I understand that this project as we are looking at it is currently a research project, and clearly we need to accept that in that research phase there will not be significant return, but in the long term we need to have that indication of where we're going. Are goals being established for this laboratory to ultimately, hopefully – now, I know we're dealing in a very iffy kind of situation, but are there goals to ultimately commercialize this, to be able to generate electricity in workable quantities, perhaps for the university since it's going to be started at the university, to start small there, ultimately to work up to producing electricity for the city of Edmonton, et cetera, and around the province, and ultimately perhaps even worldwide expansion and sales of the technology?

Mr. Speaker, I want to close there and give the member an opportunity to respond to some of those questions. I do support the motion; I think it is an excellent initiative, relatively cost-effective for the dollars we're putting into it. I think the potential return is excellent, and I look forward to seeing what happens in the future with this.

Thank you.

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

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm certainly supportive of this motion today. It's forward thinking, it has great opportunity for Alberta and tremendous implications for science, for education, for the environment.

Just to clarify a couple of things that have already been touched on – and the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest has already gone into considerable detail in terms of describing exactly what research is involved and some of the technical details of fusion and laser application of the same. To clear up some questions from the Member for Calgary-North West, this initiative is before government in terms of some degree of consideration, but no decision has been made and the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest is initiating the lobbying effort for the positive response from government on this. A number of us, seeing the wisdom of the initiative, are backing him all the way.

One of the areas that hasn't been touched on in terms of the positive effect of something like this is the effect on our education system. That will be extremely positive, I believe, where students would be continually impressed with this new type of technology. We know that students in Alberta respond

in an exciting way to areas of high tech, and they need to know that in many ways some of the problems facing the world in the future can be solved by the innovations of science and technology. When you start impressing upon students, even at the elementary, junior high, and senior high levels, the possibilities, the capabilities of things like fusion and laser applications to move us along the road towards developing fusion, I think that will put a demand on our education system by the students for increased demand for better and stronger science courses and applications of same. I know that the Minister of Education would just rally behind that type of request and that type of demand. Then add to that the economic realities and the entrepreneurial possibilities that would open up.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Actually, when I look at this particular motion, it I think has the same effect as a motion of my own on establishing a research capability in terms of development of certain products at zero gravity, a space agency that would tap Albertans into some of the opportunities of the future, development of certain products at weightless or at microgravity that can't be developed in any other way, certain pharmaceuticals and certain alloys. I think, too, as we look to the possibilities that fusion has for us, again, as students and as businesspeople, we realize that world energy use is rising, that we do have an increasing population and an increasing energy demand and concern about the environment. We hear a lot about global warming. I know the last few weeks I've sure been looking for that because it's been pretty cool. There are tremendous opportunities there and reasons that we should be, I believe, pressing on and leading the rest of Canada, as we already are, actually, to some degree in the whole area of fusion research, some of the capabilities at the University of Alberta.

Just so people know and can kind of have a concept in their mind, and also to the hon. member: it actually is 100 million degrees that we're talking about, the sustaining temperature to see the sustained reaction go on. But we're talking about an inexhaustible fuel supply where you're looking at a source, for instance, being seawater. One cubic foot of seawater is estimated to have the same energy potential as some 42 gallons of oil, so you begin to see the energy content per unit weight is incredible with minimal environmental impact and no emission of carbon or other gases producing acid rain, et cetera. It is the energy of the future.

The Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest has already talked about the spin-off benefits alone of moving in this particular direction. I don't think we can underestimate that. As a matter of fact, I think we have to try and estimate it just so people have some idea of . . . I guess from a layman's perspective sometimes there's some wondering, you know: "What is the big deal? What about fusion? What about fission?" Well, when we're talking about fission, that involves the splitting of heavy nuclei, and that's used in conventional nuclear power plants. There's environmental concern expressed over the fission reactors. Frankly, I think some of that is overestimated. We know that even in nuclear reactors and nuclear development to date in the world, there's been far more deaths and health risks and occupational hazards in the whole development of conventional gas and oil projects than there ever has been in the development and sustaining of nuclear power. But this even goes beyond nuclear power, and it brings us to a relatively safe type of energy resource.

Specifically when we look at the inertial confinement fusion approach, we're talking about high-power, short-pulse lasers that are used to compress and heat these small pellets, which contain deuterium and tritium, to fusion ignition conditions. In these cases, the magnetic fields required in a magnetic confinement fusion aren't required. Actually, you have a potential of simplifying your reactor construction and also the maintenance. As a consequence of the fusion studies done to date, Mr. Speaker, it's been determined that these shortwave length lasers are likely to be more suitable to drive laser fusion reactions and, as the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest has already pointed out, one of the most promising is the krypton fluoride reactor where krypton and fluorine atoms are brought together in the presence of the electrical discharge and you have the correspondent sustaining reaction.

The University of Alberta – and Alberta as a province has already many areas of high-tech research – demonstrated itself to be capable of world leadership and definitely on the leading edge. I think it's so important that we don't lose that edge, that as a government, though each of us here comes from fields which probably are not related to nuclear physics and are probably not related to studies of fusion and other such chemical reactions, we need to open our minds and listen to what our research people are telling us, the Alberta Research Council and many other high-tech initiatives and agencies that are funded by this government. We need to listen to those people and try to grasp some of the potential that is there for us in the types of things they're saying and what this whole area of technology has to offer.

It's, as I said, Mr. Speaker, an exciting area. We are being observed by other countries, internationally, who are looking at this area also, and they are recognizing what we're doing already, especially at the U of A, demonstrating its capability and leadership in the KrF laser technology. I think we have to acknowledge and see that indeed we are leaders, and we have to capitalize on that.

Mr. Speaker, may I conclude my remarks, realizing that other people want to get in on this debate, but time is running out as we approach 5:30. I'd like to see this continue and see other members of the Assembly, see this government grasp the vision of the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest. Let's run with it. Let's be world leaders and move in this area.

I would suggest that at this hour, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

The Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, it's the intent tonight of the government to do committee study of various Bills on the Order Paper.

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

