

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, April 4, 1991**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 91/04/04

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to give notice that at the end of question period today I'll introduce a motion under Standing Order 40 for unanimous consent to the following:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Government Motion 5, section 4, the Legislative Assembly appoint the following members to the Select Special Committee on Constitutional Reform: Sheldon Chumir and Yolande Gagnon.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

### Bill 13

#### Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 1991

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 13, Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 1991.

This is an omnibus Bill, and I look forward to debate on second reading and in Committee of the Whole.

[Leave granted; Bill 13 read a first time]

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 13 be placed on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the propane marketing report of the Gasoline Consumers' Information Committee and an accompanying news release.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the annual report for the Department of Economic Development and Trade for the year ended March 31, 1990.

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to table the 1990 annual report for the Alberta Research Council.

MS McCOY: I'm pleased to file the annual report for the year ended March 31, 1989, for the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to table the 22nd annual report of the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation for the year ended March 31, 1990, and the 1989-

1990 annual report of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to file a response to Written Question 150.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of the Environment, followed by the Member for Grande Prairie.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to file the responses to written questions 224, 225, and 226.

DR. ELLIOTT: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased on behalf of the Northern Alberta Development Council to file with the Legislature Library a publication entitled *Fundraising Handbook: Fundraising for Community Projects*.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to file copies of a letter from the Oldman River Dam Environmental Assessment Panel to the federal Minister of the Environment requesting that the second diversion tunnel not be filled, that is to say that the reservoir not be filled until such time as the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, in the members' gallery we have a former president of the Alberta Association of MDs and Counties and present chairman of the Alberta Assessment Appeal Board, Wallace Daley. Would Wallace please stand.

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce in the gallery today Mr. Rob Schellenberg, who is publisher and co-owner of the *40-Mile Commentator*.

MR. SHRAKE: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislature a couple from Hong Kong. They're businesspeople, and they're here in Alberta looking possibly to move here. Mr. and Mrs. David and Susanna Yeung are accompanied by Charence Chiang from Calgary. They're sitting in the members' gallery, and I'd like them to rise and receive the traditional welcome of the Legislature.

head: **Oral Question Period**

### Health Care Funding

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Health. The health care carnage and chaos continues. As we speak, the Calgary district hospital group, consisting of the Holy Cross, the Colonel Belcher, and Rockyview hospitals, is announcing that some 200 jobs will be lost to contracting out, plus further jobs to be eliminated outright. This follows massive job losses at the Calgary General and preventative losses at the Edmonton board of health. Frankly, what this government is doing to health care is outrageous, and we can't afford a Conservative government any longer. My question to the minister is a very simple one: will the minister confirm that these positions at the Calgary district hospital group are indeed being slashed?

MS BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Calgary district hospital group was a participant in the acute care funding plan. It performed, frankly, very well under the acute care funding

plan. Presumably they may be making some decisions within their administration as to how they might best use their resources. I believe they're proceeding in the proper way. If the hon. member has a specific question, then I would be happy to look into it for him.

MR. MARTIN: Well, we have many specific questions. We just don't get any answers, Mr. Speaker.

It's because this government has lots of money for all sorts of things like NovAtel but no money for hospitals that we're facing this problem. Let's look at the wise use of resources. Take the example of the Calgary General. We are advised that the hospital has been forced to lay off aides and attendants, who make \$10 and \$11 an hour plus benefits, only to contract back these positions from private sources who pay \$7 an hour with no benefits. It's called regressive Conservative economics. The same thing's going to happen, of course, with the Calgary district group.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we will do it. Let's relax here. We've got an important question to ask the minister.

My question to the minister: does the minister think that making health care workers poorer makes long-term economic sense or improves the health care system in the province?

2:40

MS BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, although it may be a great source of frustration to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, we entrust the administration of our hospitals and the day-to-day management to a hospital board. The Calgary district hospital board is one that has the responsibility for three facilities, and they are working through their own management as leaders in their community. I think that if the hon. Leader of the Opposition wants to suggest that government step in and tell them how to do their job, then he can go right ahead and do it. I don't happen to support that kind of model of health care delivery in our province.

Secondly, he indicates that there is no help for health in this province, yet there's money for other things. Well, he's patently wrong. Health is the largest single expenditure of this government and has been increased by some \$300 million over last year in this province. That's not a decrease, Mr. Speaker; in fact, it's a very sizable and, I would argue, appropriate increase. With respect to what we will be doing in health in the subsequent budget year, I think he'll have to await, as will all Albertans, the message from our Provincial Treasurer tonight.

With respect to decisions made by the Calgary General hospital board, which is responsible for two sites of delivery, they have one model of service delivery in one of their sites and a different one in the other site. The board is looking at the cost effectiveness, and they are proceeding with very good data that they have as an operator of two sites with two different systems. I believe it's a very appropriate way for them to review the problem. It is not a matter of being joyous over anybody losing a job but a matter of ensuring that health dollars are spent in the most appropriate way.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, again I remind that this is a government that has money for NovAtel, for the Principal Group, for GSR, for Myrias – you name them – but no money for health care. It has not kept up to institutional inflation in the last number of years, and we know that.

Now, I want to come back to that minister because it's her policy of squeezing them dry and then blaming it on the boards that's caused the problems. I want to ask her because she refused to answer the question; maybe she didn't hear it properly.

#### **Speaker's Ruling Replies to Oral Questions**

MR. SPEAKER: That's not in order, hon. member, and you know it.

MR. MARTIN: I'm sorry; were you up?

MR. SPEAKER: We're not commenting on whether she answered the question. Now, just ask yours, please. I'm sure you'll be able to do it in a relaxed way.

MR. MARTIN: Well, okay. I understand. I was waiting for you to stand up if you had something to say.

#### **Health Care Funding (continued)**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my question again to this minister: these wages will go down from \$10 and \$11 plus benefits to \$7 an hour, and I want to ask her how that makes economic sense for the working people of this province and how that will in the future add to health care in this province. Answer that question.

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. Leader of the Opposition would like to put the question to the chairman of the Calgary General hospital board. That hospital board is looking at the best way they can get value out of their health dollars. They are making a decision. The chairman of that hospital board has assured me that with the changes they are proposing, they will be protecting patient services above all else, albeit they may be delivering their health services in a little different way with delivery through outpatient programs as opposed to inpatient services. I happen to think it's a rather progressive move, and it's a virtually identical question that the member asked before.

He also made the point of saying that there's no money for health care. In fact, in the 1991 budget there's \$3.4 billion for health care. He also insists on looking for blame in the health system. I think that to the compliment of the many, many thousands of Albertans who are involved in the delivery of health in this province, we have all of us – all of us, Mr. Speaker – accepted the responsibility to get the best value out of that \$3.4 billion, and that is precisely the way we're proceeding.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I don't need to look for blame. I know who to blame: this government.

I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway.

#### **NovAtel Communications Ltd.**

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications. Already during this session we've seen the minister

admit to the fact that the cabinet recklessly agreed to back NovAtel losses for the second half of 1990. Those losses of \$204 million mostly occurred in the second half of 1990. We're also on the hook for \$525 million. Now, since the Auditor General has told the Official Opposition that in fact the 1990 NovAtel audited financial statements are complete, will this minister tell this House and the people of Alberta, the taxpayers that are paying the bills, exactly how much this mess has cost them by releasing those books immediately?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, the NovAtel annual report will be filed in the normal course, as required, in due course. The Auditor General has reviewed the 1990 audited reports and indeed may very well report on them as well.

MR. McEACHERN: What he's really saying is that he's going to make us wait another year for the books, as usual.

Given that NovAtel's losses suddenly changed from a \$3.6 million gain to a \$204 million loss and that we're still on the hook for future moneys this year, would the minister mind telling Albertans just how much NovAtel has lost in the first three months of this year?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information on an audited basis at all yet. We've had the 1990. We put that over to the opposition and to the public generally and made it public within 24 hours of the time we got that information. I think that was responsible and responsive as well. Indeed, full information as to the accountability relative to those losses has been made available through press releases. I'm sure that if the hon. member read those press releases, he would get that information.

MR. McEACHERN: That's nonsense. We have not had one word about the losses in the first three months of 1991. That's what I was asking for.

Well, we know that we're on the hook for \$525 million in guarantees of one kind or another for NovAtel. Will the minister assure the taxpayers that that's the bottom line, that they have not got an unlimited base they can call on the taxpayers to pick up?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, that's not quite the way it works. Any time there is a financial arrangement made with respect to NovAtel, it's put out there in a public way. Under those financial arrangements under which it is now operating, NovAtel continues to operate on that basis.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

### **Syncrude Loan**

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is to the Premier. As we go into budget night, Albertans are appalled at the hundreds of million of dollars which have been lost and wasted in government giveaway loan and grant programs over the past five years. These aren't abstract numbers. They translate into closed hospital beds, inaccessible universities, inadequate women's shelters, and increased user fees and taxes for all Albertans. Now, we see in the 1990 public accounts a footnote which refers to an interest free loan of \$81 million to Syncrude, in which a loss of \$21 million was booked in 1990. I'm wondering whether the free enterprise Premier can tell the taxpayers of Alberta why they should give some of the largest

companies in North America a loan which not only provides an interest free benefit of \$10 million a year but which also appears not to be repayable?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy, responsible for Syncrude, is not here. I think it's necessary to reply nevertheless to the allegations in the first part of the hon. member's question because they were so completely false. What has happened in the last five years is that the government has taken on a massive effort to turn around the economy of this province and to diversify it. In 1986 the province had both a budget and an economy built on \$40-a-barrel oil, and the economy was running on oil at \$10 to \$13 a barrel. This government said: we're not going to allow that to continue in the future. We took on the effort, and the successful effort, to build and diversify this economy to where it is now: the best economy in Canada and probably North America.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you make that big a difference, take on that large a project, obviously from time to time there are going to be problems. It won't always be perfect. There may even be mistakes. Those mistakes happen in such areas as Myrias and GSR or others. But the big picture is that we've made a difference for all time in the economy of Alberta. It's diversified. It's strong. Energy is down, agriculture is down, and it's still the number one economy in North America. That's producing.

**2:50**

MR. CHUMIR: Sure we've diversified, Mr. Speaker: out of financial institutions and now out of cellular telephones.

I'm wondering whether the Premier, who surely must know the answer to this, can tell the taxpayers of Alberta whether in fact they're going to get that \$81 million back from Syncrude. If so, why is \$21 million in losses booked in 1990?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, now that he's narrowed it down to a straight question and it does belong with the Minister of Energy, I'll make sure that the minister responds to it.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, maybe the Premier hasn't seen the agreements as well, Mr. Speaker. I'm wondering, then, whether the Premier could perhaps get his own wheelbarrow out and provide himself and this side of the House with a copy of that agreement, which has been refused to me so far.

MR. GETTY: I think, Mr. Speaker, the wheelbarrow's being used at a farm somewhere.

### **Small Business**

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, according to a survey taken by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the confidence in the country's business economy is at a dangerously low level. This has led small business operators across the country to put themselves in a survival mode and brace themselves for further deterioration. The Minister of Economic Development and Trade has said many times that the backbone of this province depends on small business. Could the minister please outline what this government has done to help small business and increase this survival mode?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, let me do so very quickly, but let me also leave the hon. member with the assurance that that pessimism amongst the small business community is not as exaggerated within this province, because within this province

the small business community knows that we're setting the climate in which they can succeed. They succeed mainly on the basis of their own work ethic, but we also have the lowest taxation rate for the small business community of any province in Canada. In addition to that, we have an extensive list of programs that are available to the small business community, whether they are attempting to export their products or whether they wish to have interest shielding. We've gone through a consistent time period of support for the small business community, and it's support that will be maintained for this very vital sector, which the hon. member indicated is the backbone of our economic well-being in the province.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, some of the small businesses in Alberta are still quite concerned about their survival. I wonder if the minister could outline programs that his department and this government have given to them, especially those involved in international business.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, in a general sense we have in the past offered them interest shielding. In addition to that, we just recently announced the IBIS program, whereby we have now computerized the opportunities for companies that wish to access markets outside our province. We've got our export loan guarantee program. We provide a matching service, too, for the business community. We also offer them business counseling. It's a wide variety of support services that we offer to the small business community, and we have worked over this past year with a number of clients, totaling some 35,000 to 40,000 individuals, within the small business community.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

### **Economic Development**

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In his recent report the Auditor General makes some pretty scathing comments about this government's irresponsible approach when it comes to admitting to financial losses suffered from government guarantees and indemnities that go bad. The Auditor General says, "The Province's annual losses arising from guarantees and indemnities are understated" and "mislead". To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade: given that the recent failure of Canadian Professional Munitions Ltd. in Raymond is just the latest example of the government's disregard for taxpayers' money, will the minister accept the Auditor General's recommendation to change this practice in the public accounts, or will he continue with his present course, which only obscures and hides the truth from Albertans?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would check the record, he will find that the Provincial Treasurer has already responded to the direct question as it relates to the Auditor General's report, but let me indicate to the hon. member, as our Premier has just indicated, that had it not been for our intervention, we would still be flat on our back within this province. Because of our intervention we have the leading economic growth of any province in Canada.

Yes, there are failures; we readily admit that there are failures. But that failure rate is a very small percentage. It has been suggested by my other colleagues that it varies anywhere from 3 to 5 percent, a very small failure rate. We don't apologize for a moment over that failure rate, because if you examine the successes and the jobs that have been created for

all Albertans, we're very proud that we are leading economic growth on a Canada-wide basis.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thanks to this government's intervention, the province is \$11 billion in debt.

Mr. Speaker, given that Alberta taxpayers are likely to lose \$670,000 in this latest failure, at Canadian Professional Munitions, and given that Alberta taxpayers were as of a year ago on the hook for over \$2 billion in other loan guarantees – heavens only knows what it is now – will the minister admit that this practice by his government is out of control and somebody has to step in and bring it back into control and stop it?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's traditional of the New Democratic Party to participate in nonsense, and nonsense we've just heard from the hon. member as it relates to being out of control. I just indicated to him the success rate. The Provincial Treasurer is also going to take the opportunity tonight in his budget presentation to share with the hon. member the success we have had by involving ourselves with loan guarantees, whether it be for students, for the agricultural community, or for the small business sector. We've involved ourselves with thousands of them because we recognized the importance when we were flat on our back, as the Premier indicated, in '85 and '86 of offering that support when it was required by the citizens of this great province. We're not going to hesitate to involve ourselves when it is required. Now that we are the leading province as it relates to economic growth, we're pulling back, and we are pulling back substantially.

As it relates to the specific question of the munitions factory in southern Alberta: yes, they are in receivership; there was a court order on March 11 putting them into receivership. But it is far, far too early to indicate what losses will take place. There is a possibility that there will not be any losses. In the event that some of the receivables and the actual physical facility there are sold, we could have all of our exposure covered. So it is far too early, Mr. Speaker, to indicate what losses we might suffer. We are hopeful, though, that another group will come in and take over that company, because they do provide a valuable service to southern Alberta and to Alberta as a whole.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

### **Labour Safety Code**

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Labour. Despite denials to the contrary by the Department of Labour, a document is circulating the province right now entitled the Safety Codes Act, which is a replacement or another version of the uniform general safety Act that was published about three years ago. There's been quite a negative reaction by the stakeholders to this proposed piece of legislation. My question is simply this: is it the intent of the minister to introduce this safety codes Act legislation during this session of the Legislature despite all of the protest?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, we have an implementation committee that is chaired by the Member for Rocky Mountain House and that includes over 50 different interests, people ranging from trade unions through municipalities and counties and so forth who have an interest in the safety legislation of this province. With one or two small details left to be worked out between them, all of their concerns have been addressed. As I

understand it, the proposal that is coming forward is one that has the consensus of that implementation committee.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly not my information. Terms that I have heard about this proposed legislation include "wholly redundant." So I would ask the minister if she will direct herself – not a committee but the minister herself – commit to withholding the legislation and consulting with these stakeholders that I know have made presentations until their concerns have been addressed and the proposed legislation changed?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, it's quite possible that the member who is raising this question is not as involved in the process as I or the Member for Rocky Mountain House have been. I would be more than happy for him to share some specifics with me because I daresay I have more recent information than does he.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River.

### 3:00 Teachers' Retirement Fund

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Teachers in my constituency and throughout the province are concerned about their pensions. They tell me that the Teachers' Retirement Fund may be exhausted by the year 2006, which is just 15 years from now. I've heard that this problem has come about because the government has not been meeting its obligation to meet the employer contributions. Will the minister please share with the Assembly and with my teachers why the government has failed in fulfilling its responsibility?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. The provincial government in 1956 struck a deal with the Alberta Teachers' Association such that the provincial government would contribute one-half of the annual cost of pensions, and this year that's some \$70 million-plus. On the other hand, teachers would contribute to the Teachers' Retirement Fund, and that fund would hopefully generate enough dollars to pay for the other one-half share of the cost. In fact, this year's contribution by teachers to the Teachers' Retirement Fund is in the order of \$57 million. So the government has fully lived up to both the letter and the spirit of the 1956 agreement.

It's 1991; times have changed. There is concern shared by teachers and this government about the long-term viability of that plan, and we have committed to make changes.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to hear that the government has indeed been meeting its obligation. However, that will not totally allay the concerns of my constituents and the teachers, of course, regarding the Teachers' Retirement Fund. There are also concerns about the reregistration of the TRF because of the new federal legislation. Will the minister please let the Assembly know, as well as the teachers within my constituency, if he has any plans at all to deal with this serious problem?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier and have mentioned previously in this House, the Alberta Teachers' Association has undertaken a very constructive information effort, which has been positive and constructive, and has informed their membership and has certainly informed all members of this Assembly about the concern, and we do share

that concern. I made it clear to the Alberta Teachers' Association last night that Premier Getty and this government share the teachers' concern about the longer term financial soundness of the pension plan.

This past week I have written on behalf of the government to the president of the Alberta Teachers' Association advising her that the government is prepared to enter into immediate discussions with the ATA to make changes to the TRF. There are a number of issues that must be dealt with, but in the short term our objective is to make changes to the legislation behind the Teachers' Retirement Fund this spring to ensure that it does continue to stay registered under Canadian income tax law. Urgent discussions will begin as early as next week between the association staff and the department staff to pull together the framework for those legislative changes. So I am convinced that by working together, the government and teachers will be able to come up with a long-term, sound financial plan for the teachers of Smoky River and for all teachers in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

### Tradespeople Training

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Career Development and Employment. Despite the minister's assurances that he has the support of the Building Trades Council over the proposed industry training Act, I have information that's contrary to that. There's provision in part 2 of the proposed Act that would allow for certain exemptions for certification requirements. That could mean that workers from outside Alberta, or indeed from outside Canada, possessing any variety of qualifications will be able to come into our province, not necessarily meet the Alberta standard, and be permitted to work in our province. So given that the proposal will put at risk Alberta tradespeople, their safety, the safety of the general public, I want to ask the Minister of Career Development and Employment: what assurances can he give this Assembly that certain guidelines will be maintained so that safety will be maintained in the Act?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, through you to all members of the Assembly, first of all may I say that I appreciate the hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont's interest. Whether we have support or nonsupport with regards to specific groups, I guess only time will tell when the legislation is introduced in the Assembly. With regards to the exemptions the hon. member refers to, I might point out to the Assembly that that's nothing new. The exemptions are there in the current Manpower Development Act. What we are endeavouring to do in the proposed industry and training Act would be to clear up any ambiguity and at the same time prevent any misuse or abuse that is taking place as it exists today. Safety will always be at the forefront of the proposed legislation.

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister will commit to undertake to obtain further input from the Building Trades Council and other trade representatives so that they may comment on the Bill following its introduction in this Legislature.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, it's always been my intent to have an open-door policy, and that intent will remain. I always said when I entered into this Assembly that I'd never lower my principles to be a politician, and that stands true to this day.

That's why I've had many public meetings with all sectors and would encourage that representation and would give that commitment to the hon. member before any legislation would be finalized.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar.

### Sexual Orientation

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Labour. In spite of the rhetoric of this government about equal rights for all, discrimination against lesbian and gay people continues, as evidenced by the recent case of a college instructor who was fired because he is gay. The Minister of Labour has in other instances directed the commission to assist with complaints which are not covered by the Individual's Rights Protection Act. Will the minister now instruct the Human Rights Commission to accept and investigate a complaint in this instance?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, the Human Rights Commission is an independent body. In discussions with the chief commissioner he has indicated to me, as I believe he has indicated publicly, that the commission itself does not have a consensus on this matter. It is not covered by their legislation. Therefore, they have declined to do as the member suggests.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, in Alberta a person who had good job reviews was fired solely because of his sexual orientation in spite of the fact that a majority of Albertans think it's wrong that a person can be denied housing, employment, or services on the basis of sexual orientation. In the face of this evidence, will the minister now agree to amend the Individual's Rights Protection Act to include sexual orientation?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, it is not up to me to amend the legislation. That would be up to the entire Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please, so I can hear. Thank you.

### Family Violence

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, this government continually expresses concern and sympathy over the epidemic in our province called family violence. Unfortunately, that gives very little comfort to the families and especially the children who live daily in a house of horrors. These families need more than assurances from the government. They need to know that there's a network of supports in place to help them reconstruct their lives in a safe environment. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Last fall the Solicitor General responded quite favourably to my suggestion that the government review the very successful London, Ontario, model for dealing with family violence. I'd like to ask the minister if he has in fact followed up on this promise to review and hopefully establish a London-type model here in this province.

MR. OLDRING: I can assure the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar that we have established an interdepartmental committee that involves the Solicitor General and others on the government

side to address this very serious problem. I would say that we have some very successful models that have been established in our own province that we can turn to as well, Mr. Speaker. I think of a very successful effort that involved two levels of government. It involved workers from our department; it involved a number of ministries from this side of the House. We've put together a training video that involves child apprehension as it relates to sexual abuse cases. It's a video that is now being asked for right across Canada and the United States. So we're doing some very successful things, and yes, we recognize that there's more to be done.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

3:10

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I don't discount training, but I think what people are looking for in this province is leadership in action, and this is a successful model.

Mr. Speaker, earlier in this House the Minister of Family and Social Services claimed his responsibility only for children that are under his jurisdiction under the Child Welfare Act in terms of providing follow-up treatment and counseling. Well, there are many children who are residing in his shelters and thousands more turned away from shelters who also require counseling. I want to know from the minister how he plans to deal with these. Or are they just perhaps out of luck?

MR. OLDRING: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I've already made it very clear to the member that we're working on it together as a government, but I've said on many occasions that it's not this government's problem alone, that it's something that's going to require the efforts of Albertans and Canadians at all levels. We're seeing that happening. I'm encouraged to note that in the last two years alone, there's been an increase of some 24 percent in community agencies that are prepared to respond to this. We've seen now the federal government show some leadership and some initiatives and a willingness to work with us and other levels of government. I'm encouraged to see the mayor of Calgary and the mayor of Edmonton come forward with some of their thoughts and suggestions and some solutions that they're prepared to offer.

Mr. Speaker, I've said all along that it's going to require the efforts of all of us working together. We are more than prepared to do our share. I would remind the member opposite that last year alone this government spent in excess of \$137 million providing child welfare services. I'd say that's a pretty substantive commitment. So, again, we're showing some leadership, and we're willing to work with the other players involved.

MR. SPEAKER: Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

### Sewage from Work Camps

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the hon. Minister of the Environment. As most of you are aware, the construction of the Al-Pac project will commence in my constituency very shortly, providing thousands of needed jobs for people in poverty in that region. A 2,000-person camp will be established on-site. I understand the work camp associated with the Daishowa project experienced some environmental problems recently. My question to the hon. minister is: could the minister outline to my constituents and to this Assembly what those problems associated with the camp at Daishowa are?

MR. KLEIN: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out that no charges have been laid against Daishowa Canada. However, Alberta Environment is considering a number of enforcement actions in conjunction with the Attorney General's department. I would like to emphasize that the enforcement actions that have arisen out of our investigations at this time have to do solely with the operation of the work camp. In other words, the enforcement actions centre largely around the operations of the work camp sewage treatment facilities. Insofar as the mill itself is concerned, it continues to operate as one of the cleanest mills in the world thanks to the standards set by this government.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the hon. minister is: could the minister give assurance to this Assembly and to my constituents that his department will monitor closely the camp that's going to be established during construction of Al-Pac?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, you know, we can always learn from the mistakes of others, and indeed we have encouraged the Al-Pac people to make contact with the Daishowa people to determine what mistakes can be avoided in the operation of the work camp as it relates to the Al-Pac project.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly.

#### **Landlord and Tenant Policy**

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. It's been almost a year now since the review of the Landlord and Tenant Act reported its recommendations to the minister, and while the minister has been studying and reviewing the report, Alberta renters have continued to face arbitrary evictions and substandard housing. Will the minister make a commitment to introduce and pass during this session legislation which will increase protection for renters?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is right. We did have the MacLachlan report, which reviewed the Landlord and Tenant Act, did meet with people throughout the province, and tried to make recommendations that would ensure that a balance is maintained between the rights of tenants and landlords in the province of Alberta. We then sent out that report and have asked for a response from citizens, landlords and tenants, to the recommendations contained therein. We are in the midst of compiling and discussing that. I am hopeful that we will see legislation with respect to it in the not-too-distant future, but above all we want to ensure that the report contains a fair and equitable treatment of all parties involved and is based on the solidest of information available. We're continuing to strive to achieve that goal.

MR. EWASIUK: Well, Mr. Speaker, the tenants will be looking forward to this legislation being brought forward, because we're still having problems with security deposits, money being held unfairly. Tenants have to go to court to get their money back, and in one case the minister's own department had to intervene and in fact charged the landlord. The question is: will the minister agree that security deposits should be paid to a trust account administered by a residential tenancy commission so that tenants can get their money quickly without having to resort to court action?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, we'll have to leave discussion of specifics until the time when a Bill is introduced. However, I would say with regards to deposits that we have taken strong action in the very unusual case where an individual has not paid those damage deposits back. That isn't acceptable to this government. I would also agree that the issue of a trust account for deposits is one that should seriously be considered when we're looking at changes to the Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

#### **Oldman River Dam**

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A Federal Court decision last year rendered illegal the province's continued construction of the Oldman dam until a court-ordered federal environmental assessment is completed. Now the assessment panel is concerned that the province's continued illegal construction of that dam will preclude its recommendations. To the minister of public works: will this minister honour the assessment panel's request and not close the second diversion tunnel of the dam, thereby not filling the reservoir, until the panel has completed its review so that their recommendations will not be precluded?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark is one hundred percent wrong – I'll repeat that: one hundred percent wrong – as is the Liberal Party in this whole issue. No one has ever stated that it was an illegal act to build the Oldman River dam. The Oldman River dam is probably the most important environmental protection and enhancement project undertaken in North America in a great period of time. As we stand here on the fourth day of April 1991, the waters of the Oldman River are flowing unimpeded. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. SIGURDSON: Call him to order.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, I'll call the whole House to order. Thank you very much for your direction, Edmonton-Belmont, and I hope you get over your cough fairly soon.  
Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Since the minister and this government keep saying that this federal decision doesn't apply to the government and therefore the government isn't breaking the law, Mr. Speaker, why is it that the Attorney General is going to all the trouble of appealing this through the Supreme Court of Canada?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, there have been a series of court cases that have been initiated over recent years. All members and I'm sure a great number of people in this province will recall statements made in 1986 that if one were to undertake a construction project of this magnitude, one would have to anticipate that there would be a series of challenges with respect to this from various quarters, some credible and some not credible. But when a challenge has been made – and it's my understanding that for 50 bucks or something you can have something brought before a Court of Queen's Bench – that means that you are then in a process.

The fact of the matter is that on April 4, 1991, the Oldman River dam is on a construction target that is essentially one that

was enunciated some five years ago. It's within budget. The waters of the Oldman River, I repeat, are flowing unimpeded on April 4, 1991, and there is not one person out there who has ever suggested credibly that the Alberta government is doing anything other than the right thing.

### **3:20 Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped**

MS MJOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, even after the meagre increase given by this government last fall, people living on AISH still live well below the poverty line, and to make matters worse, this Conservative government continues to disallow AISH recipients keeping their Canada pension plan disability benefits, which they have earned, and is once again taking away the cost-of-living increase which the federal government recently gave to CPP recipients. My questions are to the Associate Minister of Family and Social Services. In view of the fact that this government allowed CPP recipients to keep this cost of living increase during the past two years, how can this government now justify once again taking away this money, which does not belong to them?

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, the shared responsibility we have between the federal government and ourselves is one of a mutually agreed upon arrangement where we will supplement to a given point. That given point has been raised recently, and we will continue to top up, if you will, any benefits that are transferred from the federal government.

For the two-year period that was referred to, we had looked at this program in an attempt to modify it, if you will. It hasn't worked out, and we've had to revert to our original arrangement.

MS MJOLNESS: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. This money was earmarked by the federal government to go to the poorest of the poor, and it's shameful that this government is taking away this money.

In view of the fact that this government has set up a Premier's council for persons with disabilities, will this government now show its sincerity and agree to give back this cost-of-living increase from the federal government and also allow AISH recipients to keep their disability benefits?

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out that Alberta is one of the few provinces in Canada that has such a program, and as such it is the most beneficial to the recipient. I'd also like to point out that there are other hidden benefits that are associated with the program that perhaps are not being addressed or even recognized by the opposition member. The program also includes optical, ambulance, prescription drugs, denturist and dental services, as well as others. The program is perhaps not as good as we would all hope it would be, but then there is a limitation. I believe that the program more than adequately addresses within our range of ability to meet the needs.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The time for question period has expired.

### **Speaker's Ruling Repetition**

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair would just remind hon. members that when framing questions, care has to be given to the fact that we do have a considerable number of written questions and motions for returns on the Order Paper, and really they

shouldn't be repeated, almost verbatim in some instances, within question period.

### **Point of Order Oral Question Period Rules**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Buffalo has a point of order.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a point of order under 13(2) of Standing Orders. It relates to the fact that the Premier was not seated when the question period list was being set. I note in this context that last week I lost a question as a result of not being in my place after prayers. This seems to me to raise exactly the same principle as arose in my situation, and I must say that I have difficulty seeing how the Premier or any other minister of this government would have the right to full participation in question period even if they may come in, as often is the case, halfway through question period. The fact is that I think they should be able to participate, but I think this really points out that the rule the Speaker was applying in respect of myself last week is totally inappropriate, and . . .

### **Speaker's Ruling Criticizing the Speaker**

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Order please. Take your place, hon. member.

The first point of your comments I'm certain could be seen as being in a facetious context. The Chair would point out that you yourself are a student of the law, or at least I assume you are a student of the law. [interjection] Then we'll deal with legal niceties. The ruling last week dealt with questions; it didn't deal with the answers.

In the last moment or two, sir, you exceeded the bounds of proper conduct in this House. You are now questioning the actions of the Chair, and your comments are totally out of order. I trust that this will be the end of that. I'm sure that your own good judgment will come to bear in due course. I also trust that in future you'll be good enough to make your comments either privately to the Chair or to the House and not deal in idle chitchat with the media.

### **head: Motions under Standing Order 40**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. Standing Order 40 request for unanimous consent.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask leave for unanimous consent to the motion, which has been circulated to members of the Assembly. Just related to urgency, the Legislative Assembly has now formalized this special select committee and given it terms of reference and members from the government and from the opposition. It's my understanding that their first meeting will be tomorrow afternoon. The Liberal caucus asks consent to introduce and support this motion in order that we may participate in the hearings and deliberations of the committee.

MR. SPEAKER: There is a request for unanimous consent. All those in favour of granting the consent, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.



### Constitutional Reform Committee

Moved by Mrs. Hewes:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Government Motion 5, section 4, the Legislative Assembly appoint the following members to the Special Select Committee on Constitutional Reform: Sheldon Chumir and Yolande Gagnon.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This motion is certainly self-explanatory. We are hopeful that given the significance of the undertaking, the committee will involve all Albertans and that it will be an open and a very objective process. We ask for support.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, we welcome this motion and look forward to the participation of the Official Opposition and now the Liberal Party in the process of consulting with Albertans on the importance of Canada's future and Alberta within a new Canada.

[Motion carried]

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Written Questions**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that the written questions on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places except for the following: 156, 173, 174, 177, and 178.

[Motion carried]

### Payments to Former Minister

156. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question: What amount, if any, has been paid by the government to Mr. Hugh Planche in respect of services rendered for the fiscal periods ended March 31, 1987, 1988, 1989, and 1990?

MR. GOGO: The government rejects 156, Mr. Speaker.

### Recycled Paper Use by Government

173. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: What proportion of paper purchased by the government is recycled paper, and what is the average content of postconsumer waste in the paper?

MR. GOGO: Reject, Mr. Speaker.

### Pulp Mill Cost/Benefit Studies

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

MR. GOGO: Reject, Mr. Speaker.

### Oil and Gas Exploration on Crown Land

177. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question:

What is the total revenue obtained from oil and gas exploration, extraction, and related activities on Crown land by those holding grazing leases, and how many leaseholders received such revenues for the fiscal years 1988-89 and 1989-90?

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

### Oil Consumption by Government

178. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: (1) How much oil was consumed by the government for cars, trucks, and machinery for the year 1989, and (2) how much of this oil could be substituted by recycled oil?

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

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I would move that the motions for returns appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places except for Motion for a Return 188.

[Motion carried]

### Alberta Opportunity Company Loans

188. Mr. Bruseker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a detailed list of all properties and businesses that the government has taken over due to defaults of Alberta Opportunity Company loans for the past three fiscal years, showing in each case the name of the property or business taken over, the name of the company or individual who defaulted on the loan, the total value amount owing on the loan at the time it was defaulted upon, the estimated value of the property or business that the government took over at the time of default, and the price the property or business was sold for if it has been sold.

3:30

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, let me just take a moment to speak to this motion and indicate at the outset that we are going to reject supporting this motion for a number of very simple reasons. Number one, there have been no properties or businesses that the government has taken over due to defaults of Alberta Opportunity Company loans in the past three years. Alberta Opportunity Company is a Crown corporation reporting to myself through its board of directors. All Alberta Opportunity Company problem accounts and properties are dealt with in the normal course of business on a commercially sound basis.

I should share with the hon. member, too, and I think it would be noteworthy if he would refer to *Beauchesne* 446(e), whereby it indicates documents that would not be produced in the Legislative Assembly:

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.

I refer to this because so often hon. members will ask us for information beyond the scope of what this motion suggests. There is a commercial confidentiality to which we on the government side are bound, and because of that we have obligations to those individuals so that there cannot be personal gain in a financial way by some of those competitors who might be in competition to individual companies.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that explains to the hon. member why we will not be supporting his motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Additional summation, Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must say that I question whether in fact no businesses supported by the Alberta Opportunity Company have gone under. When we look at the statement of expenses, in fact, the annual returns for the Alberta Opportunity Company for the last three fiscal years to which the motion speaks, it says that in the 1988 annual return their grant from the government of the province of Alberta was \$11.795 million, loss for that year was \$2.845 million; the 1989 grant, \$11.869 million, loss that year by the Alberta Opportunity Company, \$6.973 million; 1990, the grant from the province of Alberta, \$11 million, loss that year, \$12.956 million. We have here a government that is supporting the Alberta Opportunity Company, that is losing money at record increasing rates, and the minister stands up and tells me that no companies have lost money, that no companies have gone into default.

#### **Point of Order Factual Accuracy**

MR. ELZINGA: Point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: All right; point of order. Calgary-North West, be seated.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is misrepresenting the facts. I do not have a quotation. I did not indicate that. I wish he would be more honest in his presentation. If he will check the record, I indicated that "there have been no properties or businesses that the government has taken over." That's not to say that there haven't been any losses by AOC. If he would word his question differently, we're more than happy to respond at that time, but he's being . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. Point made.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that I take exception with the point "dishonest" that was made by the member opposite. I was quoting from the annual reports that show the losses, and if he doesn't believe in the reports that his own department puts out, that's certainly his problem.

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. BRUSEKER: Now, Mr. Speaker, the obvious fact is that this company is losing money hand over fist. I want to know where it's gone. The minister refers to 446(e). That says, "papers [concerning] . . . personal financial gain." Well, the people that make up the taxpayers of the province of Alberta have lost in excess of \$23 million over the last three years through the Alberta Opportunity Company, for which this minister is responsible. Now, he likes to dance a little sidestep and says, "Gee, nothing's been taken over." Well, in fact I know that at least one now is in the ownership of the Alberta Opportunity Company, and I don't believe what he says to be true.

[Motion lost]

#### **Speaker's Ruling Wording of Motions**

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair wants to point out, though, that given the thickness of our Order Paper and the number of motions for returns and written questions, it really is incumbent upon all hon. members to read the exact words that are present in the various motions for returns and so forth. It makes it much easier for the House to be able to listen to the debate and know what's really going on.

Thank you.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

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

##### **Business Education**

204. Moved by Mr. Paszkowski:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to adopt additional business-oriented educational initiatives and programs in order to provide Alberta young people with more opportunities for practical training and experience in the area of independent business and entrepreneurship.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon. It's my pleasure that I rise today to speak to Motion 204. I believe that this motion is important to the future of many of our young Albertans and to the province as a whole.

Currently in Alberta there is no formalized process through which we can educate interested persons in how to establish a business. Although about 80 per cent of the job creation in Canada in the last 15 years was through small business, we have not made a consistent effort to teach our students at a young age that starting their own business is a viable alternative. We have only just begun to teach them the skills and attitudes necessary to pursue self-employment. I would like to see more programs available to students across the province dealing with business-oriented education. Beyond learning to keep books and understanding basic business principles, our students need access to the practical skills required to identify business opportunities and to plan and implement these ideas. They need opportunities to speak with persons in business, to challenge their own abilities, and to have information that would allow them to make career and educational choices from the full range of possibilities.

An increased role in practical business education in the school system would provide benefits to all concerned. The students would learn self-confidence through the development and creativity and independent thinking required to establish the true concept of an entrepreneur. They would also have access to the basic information and skills that they would need to go into their community and establish a business and gain the satisfaction of being self-motivated. The community would benefit as a small business entrepreneur is a source of diversification, economic stimulation, and employment. The province would indeed benefit as well through the development of our youth as an even more skilled and productive resource.

There are a variety of programs already in place in our province and some new ones that are being developed. I feel that these programs need our support and that we need more of them. Importantly, we need to ensure that the focus of these

programs is practical enough to be of real use to the students and to be applicable to the actual world of work.

These programs need to be accessible to all Albertans through the school system. The Department of Education currently has several business programs in place. Senior high business education includes optional courses in basic business: accounting, marketing. Business-related skills are being taught, and the theoretical background important to involvement in the business world has become available. The new business courses such as studies 9, the integrated occupational program, and work study programs are also introducing our students to the world of work and the skills they need for it.

Our education system does an excellent job of preparing students to take roles in offices and be very employable in the marketplace. More than being employable, however, we want our students to learn to be employers. We want them to learn to take on the challenges of finding their own place in the market and employing themselves and others. This is the goal of Motion 204.

In 1987 Bernard Valcourt, the federal Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism, identified this gap as well. He outlined the government as adopting the objectives of encouraging independent thinking, innovativeness, creativity, and flexibility: all entrepreneurial characteristics which have not been taught in our schools up till now. The hon. Mr. Valcourt commented further that people have generally been trained to work for somebody else and that we have created generations of employees rather than employers. It has been noted that all business schools generally do not train people to be entrepreneurs but rather to be middle managers.

The new pilot project enterprise and innovation, under development by Alberta Education, is a step in the right direction. This program would provide students with the opportunity to develop skills more specifically related to entrepreneurship and to apply those skills in a controlled setting. This group of complementary courses is available to all secondary schools and would be of real use, I'm sure. Programs such as Junior Achievement are also useful in obtaining these objectives. Junior Achievement provides opportunities for students to be introduced to business and to work with business to develop and implement plans to some extent. This is a very useful program. However, it's important to note that Junior Achievement programs are not available to all Alberta students. In my constituency of Smoky River, for example, only the Valleyview school has this program. None of the other communities are able to share. Those students living in remote communities, particularly those with limited population bases, do not have the opportunity to become involved in these programs. The question then becomes one of accessibility. It is the very communities that do not have programs available that would benefit the most from them. Including entrepreneurial programs in the secondary school system is critical, and we must look at this option now.

**3:40**

In 1989 a study was done by the NADC on youth of northern Alberta and entrepreneurship. This study found that many young entrepreneurs, particularly those in the north, found few or no courses or government-provided business counseling services available to them in the education process that we have in place now. Unfortunately, it seems that our youth have identified an information gap that currently exists in our education and in our programs. We teach them the basics. The

more extensive, practical tools and the information networks are necessary.

In that same NADC study today's young entrepreneurs were asked what they would advise aspiring entrepreneurs, and they indicated that the most important thing they could do would be to take every business course they could find. They identified then that specific courses dealing with entrepreneurship and business management were not available to them in the present school system and were in fact difficult to find in any form. I believe we have established, then, that we need more in the school system than what is currently being offered.

Other provinces around us are beginning to pay attention to the need as well. For example, in the British Columbia revised education curriculum they have included entrepreneurship as a component of several of their new courses. The emphasis of their new programs is on process rather than product, focusing on development, strong self-concepts, and innovative thinking. Similarly, Manitoba has included some entrepreneurial education in their curriculum. Although it is not taught as a separate subject, entrepreneurship is included in several courses. The Manitoba government has indicated that they will be pursuing it more in the future. In each of these provinces they are including room for teachers and schools to involve their local business communities and encourage their schools to do so wherever appropriate.

The Ontario school system has taken further steps to include specific education on entrepreneurship, including a particular course on the development of entrepreneurs. They are also including real business ventures or simulated business activity under the supervision of local business leaders to provide the students with realistic experience. The Ontario program involves a wide variety of teaching approaches and strategies and encourages teachers to make use of practical alternative learning environments and to make effective use of community resources.

The emergence of these programs in other provinces does, Mr. Speaker, underscore the fact that Canadians are discovering the value of having a healthy small business sector. Alberta cannot be left behind, as we are normally the leaders in directives for economic and social change.

The value of promoting entrepreneurship cannot be underestimated. As I mentioned earlier, small business is one of the main areas of job creation and economic growth in the country and in our province. The wave of our new incorporations – it was just mentioned today as 1,800 this past year – is certainly an important injection into the economy of this province. With the attitudes of self-reliance and independent action we can help our youth maintain and expand this important area of the economy. All indicators show that there will in fact be an increased need for business to provide products and services in our province. As trade barriers continue to break down, new export markets are being identified and made available to Alberta producers and manufacturers. Last year alone actual net exports increased a full 20 percent, and small business, as well as those businesses originally established by individual innovative Albertans, was in a large part responsible for that increase.

Our exports will continue to expand. Encouraging new and innovative market participation by entrepreneurs can only serve to increase that trend, providing jobs and strengthening the Alberta economy. In addition to the export possibilities, an increase in business and personal service ventures will also be seen. As our economy continues to grow, there will be new markets in the service sector as well, and we will be looking at our young Albertans to identify and go after these markets. Providing them with the knowledge and skills as well as the

self-confidence to do this will benefit not only them but the people they will employ and the entire economy of the province. Young entrepreneurs can also then play a vital role in diversification.

In rural Alberta in particular encouraging enterprise could be crucial. Availability of training in entrepreneurship may help talented young individuals in their home communities or in returning to those communities to establish businesses after leaving for postsecondary education, to help maintain the economies of these local communities. Further, they may find ways of stabilizing these communities by offering important alternatives to the agricultural and energy sectors. We have a responsibility to provide these young people with the skills and information they require.

I want to clearly point out that this initiative is not intended to discourage any student from seeking postsecondary education. It is intended only to provide them with a broad base of useful skills and attitudes. They may certainly use these skills to proceed directly into the world of work and to pursue self-employment through their own ideas and ambitions. Ideally, a perceptive teaching program and direct involvement in venture planning and in the local business community would allow them to do just that.

However, those who consider postsecondary education, Mr. Speaker, would find their knowledge equally as full. Their understanding of the business process and the entrepreneurial spirit would assist them in choosing an area of study, and they could pursue a more specifically focused program in some areas of business. The wide range of competencies they could acquire under the types of programs I have suggested would be useful in whatever setting they choose in their later life.

The business community must be involved in this process. Only by learning from those who have struggled to establish themselves can our students learn the entrepreneurial spirit. The partnership of the business sector will ensure a practical approach to the very practical world of entrepreneurship. Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that today we have no formal process in place to educate a person to become a businessperson. We have no process whatsoever that directs a particular focus on how to establish a business, how to run a business, how to be a businessman, and that's very, very strange, because the majority of our people are actually independent businesspeople. Yet we train for individual professions. We do a wonderful job of that, but we don't specifically train in the fully broad spectrum of how to become a businessperson. This motion would encourage that type of an education process.

There is a rapid change in technology, an emergence of new jobs and roles and career paths in the business world that can only best be explained by those involved in that world. These changes make it essential for educators to maintain close communication with the business community. Teacher-directed, theory-based content would provide the students with the sound academic support they require. Offering frequent opportunities for students to apply their theory in practical situations under the leadership of members of the business community is also an important component. I believe this combination represents an ideal approach to filling the information gap that currently exists.

That same study that was commissioned by the NADC that I referred to earlier had recommendations specific to this area. In addition to calling for the involvement of youth, the community, the business sector, and the government in the search of solutions to the information gap, writers of this report also recommended that any programs take a more practical approach to ensure the usefulness of the program to those students who are involved.

A partnership with the business community would also help to keep the cost of these programs low. Largely the curricula are already developed, already in place, as they could be adopted from programs such as the enterprise and innovation. The teachers could proceed using similar modules to teach the theoretical knowledge that's required, and volunteers from the business community could lecture the students on the more situational aspects of entrepreneurship.

The beginnings of extensive business-oriented education are in place. We must focus, however, on making it available to all students in Alberta. In addition, we must focus on ensuring that our students are learning more than just how to market their skills as employees in the workplace, that they have the self-reliance that will allow them to choose to be their own boss.

### 3:50

Encouraging entrepreneurship is not something new. We have pursued it in Alberta. However, we must realize that it deserves our full attention and support. We must develop a strong group of educated youth who will be leaders in business and elsewhere. The market demands it, the economy of Alberta demands it, and the youth of the province of Alberta demand it. Ohio state probably has in place the longest record. It goes back 10 years, and in that 10 years they have recorded that fully one-third of all new businesses established in the state are now being done by graduates of their entrepreneurship course. I think that's an astounding statistic of success.

I hope the members of this Assembly will support Motion 204. It's the motion that expresses faith in the commitment of the youth of Alberta and in the province itself.

Thank you.

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

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the opportunity to speak on this motion and to bring another perspective. I think there are a number of programs already in place that support entrepreneurship and business, as we've heard the hon. member mention, and we also heard from the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

I think that the member sponsoring this motion makes a good point. The goal of education should be creativity, innovation, independent thinking, skills, self-esteem, and self-confidence. I think what we have to say is: to what purpose? That's where I would differ with the member sponsoring this motion. Too often we have a focus only on competition and entrepreneurship, which by necessity creates winners and losers. What is often ignored or not acknowledged is that most of the progress of our world has been gained through co-operation. In fact, this very province was built in a spirit of co-operation. We had farm co-operatives. We had school boards that came together to build the rural school system. We had a health system that was established through co-operation in this province. Our social safety net is a commitment to the common good and is founded in co-operation. It talks about how we shall use our individual skills and ability and creativity and innovativeness to work together to ensure the well-being of all.

Our record of history has focused on struggle and competition and has for the most part not articulated the co-operative activities that have allowed societies and civilizations to flourish and progress. We hear about the leaders, the entrepreneurs, but what we have lost sight of is the work and the workers that have made achievement possible, the vast majority of people

who work together in a co-operative manner to help achieve the goals of the leader. For every leader we need many, many who work co-operatively in teams, in concert to achieve a common good. We would hope a common good, or else these many, many thousands and millions throughout history are exploited by a powerful elite and their inherent humanity has been denied. We certainly see that in the areas of slavery.

Mr. Speaker, some people only achieve under conditions of competition, but it is wrong to assume that it is only under conditions of competition that excellence is achieved. Quite the contrary is true. We only have to observe the contributions of the volunteer sector in this province where people work together co-operatively for no personal gain to create a more humane world. I would submit that in a world that more and more shares a common destiny, we must achieve our goals through processes of co-operation and dialogue, that we can no longer afford the old commitment to competition and survival of the fittest because all of us are involved in survival. We need a curriculum, I would suggest, that facilitates co-operation and communication and a balancing of the interests of the individual and of society as a whole. It is this curriculum that would involve innovation, creativity, independent thinking, knowledge and skills, self-confidence: the attributes that underlie success in any endeavour. Business entrepreneurship is not the be-all and end-all. We need to be concerned about the human dimension, how we shall live together. We cannot deny the value of small business built on skills and attitudes, but we can see that those skills and attitudes can be used to serve other goals. We need people who think creatively and independently, but we must understand that such thinking can be used for the common good.

I would ask the hon. members to think of the word "community," which is often talked about: that the business community will work for the community. "The community" means a state of being shared or held in common. It does not set one above another. Although we value the contribution of small businesses, we need to aid other forms of development.

Co-operative spirit underlies much development. I think of a small town just west of Edmonton where there was a high unemployment rate. The social service community agencies came together to create a co-op that then built an international trade around their local resource, which was aspen. That didn't require the kind of entrepreneurship that we hear talked about today. We saw the skills and the attitudes used co-operatively to better the community. Co-operation is practical. It is practical especially in this world today when we can no longer afford to pit one group of people against another or one region against another. We need people who can work in business and create business, but it is not a narrow focus of individualism and competition that is necessary. Let us see how we can build business and industry founded in co-operation. Co-operation is what we need to teach students, because we share a shrinking world. It is in being concerned about our fellow human beings that we can truly know our own humanity and know our world.

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

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will keep my comments in response to this motion very short. I wholeheartedly support the concept of practical business education in the school system because the Liberal caucus is convinced that small business is the future for the economy in this province, so

I have no problem at all with encouraging and teaching entrepreneurial skills.

I am concerned about time. The high school curriculum is already absolutely packed, and I simply don't know where the students and the teachers in our school systems will find the time to now add another course, another concept, another curriculum. It seems to me that this pressure which our students experience in the schools does not lead to an expansion of their mind or a development of their humanness but creates a lot of pressure, a lot of tension and frustration, leading sometimes to dropout. So while the concept is very good, I think it is impractical in light of our present high school curriculum, unless of course the Department of Education would fund a fourth year of high school – not only fund it but staff it. Then maybe the time would be in place to allow students to pursue yet one other topic.

While supporting this, I do want to say that the schools are expected to do everything and to be everything for students. Now the member wishes to add another dimension, that of teaching them how to make money, and I don't think that specific goal is one that the schools should pursue. As I said, overall the concept is good. The mover is vague in his motion, and it seems to me that our schools, as I said, simply do not have the time to add yet one other curriculum program.

Thank you.

4:00

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Taber-Warner.

MR. BOGLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Motion 204 advocates a principle which is consistent with the provincial economic agenda of economic diversification. In simple terms: economic diversification is the establishment of promising new economic activities. The ideas and the energy necessary to create innovative business often come from the grass roots. If meaningful economic diversification is to be achieved, then government has a role to play and should provide information, training, and incentives to that end at the grass-root level, and where better to start than in our education system.

I was somewhat concerned by the remarks made by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore when the suggestion was left with the Assembly that we really should take away from the win/loss situation and rely more on volunteerism. I don't see this motion in any way taking away from the role of volunteers or the role of people co-operating with one another. Very clearly it's a positive move to make opportunities available for our young people.

I also would suggest to the Member for Calgary-McKnight, wherein the suggestion was made that the current timetable is full – and I agree with the member in that. But rather than recommending that we automatically stretch out the high school term by another full year, recognizing that some students do choose to go through a four-year program now, I would suggest that we sit down with the appropriate leaders in education and look at what we're now doing in our school system and prioritize, ensuring that there is a proper place for young entrepreneurship.

The junior and senior high school setting is an appropriate training ground for potential entrepreneurs and independent businesspeople. Our young people are innovative thinkers; our young people have energy and initiative. There are many examples of successful young entrepreneurs. Stephen Jobs, founder of Apple Computers, at age 16 built the first Apple computer in his parents' garage. Michael Gates heads and owns

Microsoft, a multimillion dollar computer software company. Gates started production of software while a high school student at the age of 17. There are many other success stories involving young entrepreneurs. However, for every success story there are hundreds, possibly thousands of young people who have the ideas, the ingenuity, and the energy to be successful but lack business training and education to take their ideas from dream to reality.

If the school curriculum provides more opportunities to gain confidence and experience in the areas of business strategy, financing, and risk taking, we will see more successful young entrepreneurs and increased economic diversification. Traditionally the education system has not offered classroom opportunities for entrepreneurial or business education. This has changed with the establishment of such courses as junior achievement and developing programs such as enterprise in innovation. The work experience and work study program is one area where there has been limited success. However, in my travels through the constituency of Taber-Warner I find that far too often the student involved in work experience is filling in in the small business activity, not in a training area but in a more basic part of the operation. Therefore, I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, that we're getting full value in that particular area. More could be done, I believe, with the entrepreneurs, the businessmen themselves, in helping to achieve our basic goals that exist through work experience and work study.

Junior Achievement, as was mentioned by the mover of the motion, the hon. Member for Smoky River – and I might add, Mr. Speaker, that I was very impressed with the research done by the member in the arguments that he's presented to the Assembly as to why we should adopt this motion – is one nonprofit organization which aims at giving young people an understanding of and appreciation for business and free enterprise. Businesspeople instruct the courses, which include applied economics, business basics, small company programs, and project businesses. These programs do offer a hands-on approach, and students can plan and manage their own small ventures.

It is important to note, however, as was done by the hon. member, that there are few examples of junior achievement outside the major population centres. I do recall one particular teacher who had students at the high school level each put in a dollar or two, and they invested in the penny stock market, the oil market. They formed an unofficial company, made their investment, and then tracked the stock through the newspaper. That gave an interest by the students in the room. I'd go back to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore, as an example. The students in the room who got involved were not necessarily going to go out and become entrepreneurs, but they received a better understanding of the stock market, of that process, how it worked, and it became exciting. It was a game, and yet because they each had a dollar or two invested in it, there was a very basic level at that point.

Mr. Speaker, in the Conservative administration under Margaret Thatcher, Britain went through a very dramatic restructuring of its economy. Margaret Thatcher didn't have the luxury of going back to the school system and beginning; Margaret Thatcher had to begin with the industries, most of which had been gobbled up by the state over a period of years. One of the remarkable results of returning to the private sector the ownership of literally hundreds of companies in Britain which had been purchased or expropriated over time was that the number of adult Britons who owned stocks rose from approximately 7 percent in 1979 to fully 24 percent in 1990.

That's a dramatic increase in the participation by adult Britons in their own economy and in the activities in their nation.

As I've said, Margaret Thatcher didn't have the luxury of going back because the country had gone so far down one particular road. We have the opportunity now to do something very exciting and very innovative through our school systems, and I would certainly urge hon. members to support this motion.

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

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm anxious to hear the Education minister's comments on this particular proposal. I think that to the extent that the motion is asking for a more co-operative co-op program, which I know is being implemented in some jurisdictions with a great deal of success, I would support the motion. The co-op program is a sort of work activity, practical experience type of arrangement between a local school and local businesses and others in the community whereby young people are placed in a work situation and are allowed or able to get practical hands-on experience. For many of them in, say, the high school years and even in the junior high school years these are important experiences for them to have and for them to learn. So the emphasis on practical training and experience in the motion before us is one that I support and one that I would encourage.

I know that there have been initiatives elsewhere and in this province from which we can learn and on which we can expand, but I have some questions about one more government initiative that places one more responsibility, one more mandate on the backs of our teachers and our school systems, if that's what the motion is asking for. It talks about "educational initiatives and programs," so I assume that it's intended through the educational system, but the hon. member might be satisfied that something separate and apart from the school system, say through career development, be responsible for carrying out such a program.

4:10

To the extent that the motion would look to the school systems to provide this particular initiative and programs, I have to ask the question: at what point do we stop asking the school systems to carry on or to accept a greater and greater mandate and expectations without at the same time, then, providing the resources to the school systems to carry out those mandates? We've had lots of mandated programs. In recent years we've had a number of them brought forward by the Department of Education which have curriculum implications, resources implications, professional development implications: all of them required, but there are no resources forthcoming from the Education department to help the school systems implement those new mandated programs. Here we have another one, and to the extent that it's asking – and I suppose proposing in the general resolution – that's one thing. I get a feeling that there's one more expectation of our teachers and our school systems, and at some point teachers and educators are going to ask themselves: when does it stop, and where do we get the resources to meet all these expectations that are created for us?

You know, before the session started this spring I made a point of touring a number of the schools in Calgary-Mountain View, meeting with teachers and resource people and principals just to talk about what's happening in the school system. So many of them are really feeling that they're out there in the community with all kinds of expectations and demands being placed on them without the support and the resources to do the

job. Here we have one more expectation of what the schools ought to be capable of and what we should want them to do, one more program for our young people. Now, heaven knows we want the best for our young people, and we want to prepare them for the world to come that they're entering into, the careers that they're going to enter into, but along with that expectation and that desire for our young people I believe it's incumbent upon us to ensure that the resources are in place to ensure that those young people get the education that we want for them, that they are prepared. It's one thing to look to another program; it's something else to then place the resources into the system to ensure that that program is developed.

I'm concerned, Mr. Speaker, that we're developing an emphasis in our educational system, certainly from elementary up to high school, that has this view of all young people having to fit into an academic stream, yet when we look at the width and breadth of our young people, not all of them want an academic program, not all of them are prepared for an academic program, and not all of them will fit into an academic program. So things like vocational education and perhaps practical training and experience programs at the high school level have been missing. As well, there are other aspects of life such as the arts that we have not been emphasizing in recent years in our educational system. These are all falling by the wayside in an overriding demand that all students fit into a preferred stream. I would just hope that this motion in front of us is another way of saying to the department and to the minister that in developing a curriculum, in developing programs for our young people in this province, let's recognize that not all of them fit into one stream or one pigeonhole, that there are some for whom that program is necessary and essential but that there are others, including perhaps the 30 percent of them who are dropping out before they reach grade 12, for whom other programs are needed and required, and that unless these options are provided to our young people and the resources are provided to our school systems to offer them to our young people, we may find that one stream or an emphasized stream or a preferred stream is going to be a failure and fail to meet and address the needs of more and more of our young people in this province.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that as far as the motion goes I agree with its emphasis, but I should also caution that along with it ought to be an implicit understanding that we are creating greater expectations of our school system and that we should be correspondingly prepared to provide the resources to any system in order to address and respond to the expectations we have for it.

Thank you.

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise today to support the motion put forward by the hon. Member for Smoky River. I commend the hon. member for the work he has done not just on the motion today but in all of the effort he has put into breathing a greater flavour of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial spirit into our education system. He has, since he was elected some two years ago, been at the side of Education caucus and at the side of the Minister of Education prompting, prodding, pushing, and sometimes pulling to have a greater flavour of entrepreneurial spirit brought into our curriculum. Having attended a conference on our behalf in the last year, he's informed himself on the subject, and I must applaud his efforts in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to change course just slightly and ask this question. When was the last time you heard someone say to a new employee recently graduated, fresh out of school: "Kid,

forget about what they taught you at school. This is where you're going to get your real live education"? You know, the tragedy is that it still occurs today, but if we are to be successful as a society and especially as a free enterprise system, those must become words of the past. There has always been a dialogue among and between educators and parents and businesses and government, but I sometimes wonder what kind of a partnership it has been. In my view, until recently business has really only been a silent partner. It's paid its education taxes, but it's really not taken a very active role in the education of our children.

I note that with motions like this and with the efforts of our chamber of commerce, our Junior Achievement, and the recently published Advisory on Education from the Corporate-Higher Education Forum entitled, *To Be Our Best: Learning for the Future* – with that kind of interest from the business community, business is coming out of the closet on education. Mr. Speaker, I welcome that, because business – the entire society but business in particular – wants employees with the skills and the abilities that they will need to make business and their businesses successful.

4:20

I always enjoy meeting with groups of businesspeople and just asking them: "Just what are those skills, what are those abilities that you're looking for? What do you as a business community expect from our public education system?" You may think that's a peculiar question, that the answer is just downright obvious. Well, it's not, because this Minister of Education gets an awful lot of contradictory, conflicting messages. Some people tell us: "Well, your graduates aren't ready for the workplace, for the world of work. They don't know how to conform to a work environment. They don't know how to be good employees." Then I hear: "Your students aren't creative. They don't take the initiative. They lack the entrepreneurial spirit." Well, clearly there's a contradictory message there. It basically says, "We want creative conformists with a risk-taking bent, kids who will be meek and innovative, kids who will be analytical, creative, and humble." Well, Mr. Speaker, then I hear that our schools should turn out well-rounded individuals, while others call for greater specialization in the sciences or the maths or even the languages. The conflicting message there is, "Give us more nonspecific specialists." Now, I acknowledge that those are extreme examples, but they are true; they've been said to me in the last 30 months. What they do is illustrate the rock and the hard place. They underscore what education needs from the business community and, in fact, from our postsecondary institutions. What we need is a clear and consistent message about what business expects from our education system, what business truly values, what's important.

I say that it's essential because by and large public education takes the lead from somebody else; it follows the lead. Public education in fact is not a follower, Mr. Speaker. It can only do what the larger society will allow it to do. Public education can't move beyond that zone of what is tolerable in the larger community. It's often pushing those zones of tolerable behaviour out, but it can only do as much as the community says it values and places a high importance on. When I see a motion like this one from an hon. member and the debate from my colleagues, especially from Smoky River and Taber-Warner, they're sending a very strong message out that says, "Entrepreneurship is important, and it's got to be taught better in our schools."

Mr. Speaker, I was interested although not surprised by the approach taken by the NDP, and a little surprised by the Liberal

member, because really what they're saying in their typical way is that we just add to what we're doing now. It doesn't matter if something falls off the table or if you squeeze kids. That's the kind of approach the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View might take. The fact is that just like science literacy, just like literacy in languages, you don't just do that in one period of a day; you don't just do that in the language arts class or the physics 30 class. You breathe and infuse into the curriculum the whole notion of entrepreneurship or the whole notion of a scientific literacy. You breathe that into the language arts class; you make it examples in the mathematics class.

I was delighted to read of a province that's changing its curriculum along the lines that the member is talking about. Instead of saying in the grade 1, 2, or 3 reader, "See Dick and Jane run," they're taking the approach, "See Dick and Jane balance the books of a company." Now, that's breathing and infusing into the curriculum a notion of entrepreneurship and the importance of our economy and economic growth throughout the entire curriculum. [interjection] Mr. Speaker, in a typical way the hon. members across say: "No, just let the government do everything. We'll make everybody feel good, but they won't know anything." That's the kind of approach taken by the socialists across the way. The fact is that without a strong, growing, vibrant economy, we will not have the wealth base in this province to provide for the first-rate educational institutions we have as well as our health care institutions.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to just conclude by saying that I look at the work being done by associations and groups like Junior Achievement, like our Alberta Chamber of Commerce, our own Alberta Chamber of Resources, who are making a real contribution. I must pay special respects to people like Russ Tynan from Junior Achievement of Southern Alberta and June Coyle here in the north and their volunteers who are working so hard to bring Junior Achievement and the whole spirit behind Junior Achievement into our curriculum. They have worked very hard in helping us to develop our business studies 9 program. That kind of effort by the business community is essential, and teachers need that, Mr. Speaker. If we don't have teachers getting help from the business community, from the people who support Junior Achievement, from our scientists, from our entrepreneurs, from our businesspeople coming into the classroom . . . Teachers need that outside help; they need those outside resources in order to make sure that this motion comes true.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by my hon. colleagues lauding the work that's being done by the Department of Education and my colleagues in the department. With the effort and support of a number of people outside the department across the province, we will take this motion. I encourage all members to vote in favour of this motion. It's the right way to go.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Smoky River, to close debate.

Does the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona wish to . . .

MR. CHIVERS: Yes, I did, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I was very persuaded by the hon. Minister of Education's latter comments when he referred to the possibility that the books of education would read that Dick and Jane should learn to balance the books. I was thinking this is a lesson that perhaps our Provincial Treasurer could well be sent back to school to learn.

However, more seriously, the problem with this resolution is not the theory behind it, the ideas. The problem is that this government is not committed to providing the sort of funding that is necessary to deal with the sorts of programs and initiatives that are discussed here.

AN HON. MEMBER: How do you know?

MR. CHIVERS: Well, if this was other than a matter of rhetoric, then presumably it would be something that we'd be hearing about in the budget speech tonight. However, I doubt very much whether we're going to hear anything of that nature in the budget speech tonight.

The difficulty is that we should not simply pass this on the basis of rhetoric and a motion. We should be prepared to carry it into action. By putting it in as a private member's motion, the government here is not prepared, obviously, to devote the sort of funding to it that it requires. The other difficulty with it is: if the government is prepared to provide the sort of funding that is required to carry this rhetoric into action, then what does that mean in terms of the balanced budget that we've been hearing about from the hon. Provincial Treasurer? The question is: how are the funds to be spent and allocated? What is the priority of the government? If the government's priority is to spend funds on a motion such as this, then the question that arises is: where are the cuts going to be made?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. Pursuant to Standing Order 8(3), the Chair is required to interrupt the hon. member and to move to the next order of business.

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

4:30

**Bill 202**  
**Environmental Bill of Rights Act**

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to move second reading of Bill 202, the Environmental Bill of Rights Act.

There's been much discussion over the last decade or so about the degree to which human rights should be enshrined in legislation. In fact, this goes back to the 1960s in the government of the late Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Diefenbaker, who produced the first Bill of Rights in Canada, which was designed in some measure to override the operation of government and to endow citizens with rights over and above what may be granted them from time to time by the government of the Legislative Assembly. The spirit was certainly picked up in the early days of the current Progressive Conservative government. Bill 1 in this Assembly, of course, was the Alberta Bill of Rights, which again attempted to endow citizens with individual rights above and beyond what a government and a particular Legislature was prepared to grant them. That concept developed itself into the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is now, as members know, a part of the Constitution of Canada.

Now, this particular legislation is designed to create a category of rights for citizens which I call environmental rights. They are rights which are becoming increasingly important as we recognize the stresses and strains that have been put upon our environment by human activity and by mismanagement of environmental issues over the years. There may be those members who would regret having a Bill like this come forward



on budget day; not this member, because I think legislation and the budget are two of the critical elements that this Assembly has to deal with. When all is said and done around here, as most members know, there's probably more said than done. I think passing legislation like this is something that we could do, and along with passing a budget, it's kind of a bottom-line provision of the sort that I think people are desperately looking for from this Legislature as we sit here today.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

This Bill is, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, a manifesto for a generation which has seen the corruption of the environmental movement by governments. I don't simply say by this government in Alberta but certainly by a whole host of governments. Most of the degradation that's occurred in the environment in the past 20 years has occurred with government permits, with government licences, with the official approval and sanction of the state. There may be a time prior to that when the degradation happened otherwise, but with the passage of legislation to create an Environment department in Alberta or the United States Environmental Protection Agency or similar around the world – these all had their origin in the late 1960s and the early 1970s – the character of pollution and environmental problems changed. Instead of local environmental problems there were mechanisms put in place to license and control those things but not to stop and eliminate. The slogan, I believe, at the time was something like "the solution to pollution is dilution." If you dilute pollution in enough effluent, if you build tall enough smokestacks, the problem would go away. Sure enough, it went away in a local sense but clearly not in a global sense.

The idea of an environmental Bill of rights has become a rallying cry for those who reject the right of politicians, people elected temporarily or appointed or whatever, to use state authority to despoil the environment. That's really what has happened over the past 20 years and where we attempt to draw the line with the Environmental Bill of Rights. It really gets to the core of a debate that we often hear in this Assembly and elsewhere about the relationship between environmental protection and economic development. I attended a debate on that subject in Lethbridge recently where the government was represented by the Member for Pincher Creek-Crowsnest. I was lectured by the Minister of Advanced Education in the throne speech debate on his view of how we have to be realistic and be prepared to sacrifice some of our environment for the sake of economic growth and jobs. I heard that selfsame rhetoric from the Minister of Energy last fall when he introduced the Natural Resources Conservation Board Act. I hear it from people in this government every day. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that they got it completely a hundred percent backwards.

The very way that question is framed dooms us and dooms our planet. The challenge is not to devise a formula for how much environment we can afford to sacrifice for the sake of economic growth and jobs. The challenge is how we can make our economic system compatible with our life support on this planet. We have to find a way to recognize that our economic system operates inside the larger environmental system and that if we allow this economic system to become larger or more important than our life support, we're asking for trouble.

I ask the members just to consider for a moment the fate and the condition of the crew of a submarine, which travels underwater. Do you suppose for a moment that someone in that crew would get permission to puncture a hole in the vessel so that that would create wealth and jobs? Well, of course it would

create a tremendous amount of activity for a short period of time and probably cause the vessel to sink, but the idea that someone would have licence and approval to destroy the life-support system for the sake of some other value is ludicrous when you see it in that small microcosm. But somehow people get it in their head, and that includes certain members of this Assembly, that we can afford to sacrifice some number of units of our environmental system for the sake of economic growth and jobs. That's the logic of Al-Pac, Mr. Speaker. What it gets down to, if you accept that premise, is that then you're led to a conclusion where it becomes perhaps a question of costs and benefits, and at that point you have to put an economic value on human life. That's where the logic of that position leads, let alone the other values and other aspects of life.

It reminds me as well of some of the people I knew, my parents and my friends' parents, when I grew up in Edmonton-Jasper Place, some of whom prospered mightily, because of economic conditions in the province, in their investments in the petroleum industry and the rest of it. They felt the thing to do would be to retire somewhere warm where you don't have to shovel the snow and suffer our cold winters, places like Hawaii and Arizona. These are people I've since talked to who find that they can't go outside and enjoy their retirement homes because of the thinning of the ozone layer, because of the threat of melanoma, skin cancer, from ultraviolet rays. They're not really in a position where they could escape or enjoy because the environmental problem is with all of us.

The problems, Mr. Speaker, are real and personal. They're not abstract and political. They're not the kind that we can afford to talk about in these abstract terms. Moreover – and I think this is critical – the idea of a trade-off is subject to abuse. As soon as you introduce the idea of a political trade-off between environmental protection and jobs and economic growth, you invite someone to declare that black is white and white is black or that gray is black. You invite somebody to say one thing and do another. You invite the rhetoric of the highest standards of environmental protection in the world, the rhetoric of being the best at this, the best technology, the best of that, which we hear every day in this place.

Then you see the reality of the Alberta-Pacific double cross, where the environmental assessment panel said very clearly that the project should not be approved and licensed, but it was. You invite the double shuffle, which is now happening with respect to the expansion of the Swan Hills plant, where everyone knows the purpose of that expansion, or the end result of it, will be the importation of toxic and hazardous waste through populous areas of the province, including my constituency. But the government has skilfully removed that question from the table and said: "Well, we're going to talk about that later on. Now we want you to talk about expansion. Oh, by the way, we won't avail you of the protection that might be available under the Natural Resources Conservation Board Act."

It's a situation where there is no bottom-line standard of proof, and that's the problem. Proof, as Paul Simon wrote, is the bottom line for everyone. That includes government, politicians, and private citizens, and that's the standard that's proposed in Bill 202, the Environmental Bill of Rights Act. It's an Act which introduces that standard of proof for politicians and governments. It takes power in that sense away from politicians and gives it back to people, which is where we need to put it in the context of where we are today.

Now, I'd invite members to contemplate for a moment what happens under Alberta legislation today. Let's suppose an example where the government really screws up. Let's suppose

a major project with enormous environmental impact where there is no proper environmental impact assessment done, and let us suppose that there is no independent scientific panel to review the environmental impact assessment. Let us suppose there is no mitigation plan put in place to deal with some of the problems that may arise. Let us suppose that there are no public hearings allowed on the project. Let us suppose that the project even flies in the face of earlier public hearings on the same project. Now, could anybody here imagine a project like that, anyone imagine a project under those conditions in the province of Alberta? Well, imagine the Oldman River dam project, where there was no EIA, there was no independent review, no mitigation plan in place, no public hearings other than those held by the Environment Council of Alberta, which recommended against the project. That's the project we're talking about. Everything done wrong.

4:40

Now, what can citizens concerned about this do? Well, they can go to court, and that's in fact what the Friends of the Oldman did. They can go to court, where they have to prove their case, where they have to prove that the environmental impact assessment was not done properly, that there was no independent review, no public hearings, no mitigation plan, and get a judicial ruling. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's what they did. They went there, they proved their case, and they got the ruling. But the government, the politicians, ignored the judicial ruling in any case and said, "Well, that's interesting; let's go ahead and finish the project anyway," and the project does proceed to construction, which is what is happening right here right now. It's happening. You have a situation in which the environmental impact assessment, which has now been ordered under a federal EARP panel, is going to happen after the project is concluded. Can anyone imagine a more ludicrous process than that? That's the state of the law in the province of Alberta, the way it is today. It's not hypothetical; it's not abstract; it's not political. It's real. That's what's happening in the province today, regardless of whether the Minister of the Environment chooses to look on it that way or not. I suspect that in his heart of hearts he knows the problems with that project and he doesn't like it any more than I do, but he's kind of stuck, like the rest of us.

So what do we do? What are we going to do in Alberta? Well, reform the law. That's got to be the agenda, right? So the Minister of the Environment comes along and says: Well, I'm going to join what a recent article in *CGA Magazine* referred to as the green revolution.

It has swept the legislatures, halls of Parliament and the courts, leaving increasingly complex and strict environmental legislation in its wake.

Well, he's joined the green revolution to the extent that he's held some hearings. He's put out some documents for consultation, a so-called mission statement from Alberta Environment which doesn't correspond to the facts. Then a whole series of cards and postcards and letters back, which by my reckoning had absolutely no influence on phase 2, which was the draft legislation that was dropped a matter of days after the consultation process was done. Then public hearings chaired by the Member for Banff-Cochrane, followed by their report, and a throne speech which promises legislation.

Then what do we see? An item in yesterday's *Edmonton Journal* which suggests that Albertans should not "be disappointed if the changes aren't passed this spring as promised," coming from the Minister of the Environment, no less. He says,

"It depends on how many amendments there are going to be, and I would think they are going to be numerous." He said the government still has "the expectation that there's a possibility" the legislation may go ahead, "but don't be disappointed if it's not." He goes on to say, talking about the very important matter of whistle blower's protection, which is contained in this legislation: "Where we're going to go with it, I don't know." So there's perhaps a little bit of slippage. Perhaps legislative reform has been stalled on the agenda, and I think we should explore some of the reasons for that.

It appears to me, Mr. Speaker, that Alberta Environment has now become the black hole of government. You know; they suck in input by the truckload, but it goes nowhere. Everything goes in, but nothing comes out. That's a black hole, and that's what we seem to have in Alberta Environment.

Despite the fact that we have serious and well-documented deficiencies in the legislation, we have legislation which has been found to be unenforceable by a blue-ribbon panel of experts in a report made public more than two years ago – not that that's a surprise, because the prosecutors in the courts knew they were unenforceable for the almost 18 years prior to that that the legislation was in effect. So the question of penalties, which it was promised earlier would be increased, doesn't really come into play if you have legislation which is unenforceable. We have a situation in which the taxpayers pay close to \$10 million to rubber-stamp pollution permits asked for by industry. The taxpayers pay all of that money despite the principle that I think is quite widely accepted in society that the polluter should pay for some of these things. You have a standards and approvals and an assessment branch which are so overburdened with work that they routinely rubber-stamp approvals without having reviewed them at all, on the basis that they don't have the staff or the time to bother checking whether they're in order or not.

Now, that's an unacceptable situation. I understand that the Minister of the Environment can't get money from Treasury under these fiscal circumstances in order to get more staff to do his job, but why should he have to fight against the Minister of Health and the Treasury Board to get money to process the permits from the polluters? We're talking about Shell and Amoco and Texaco and companies like that who are quite able to pay the cost of their own permits. Why is it that I as a driver have to pay for my driver's licence or a building permit or a marriage licence or every other such thing, whereas Shell and Amoco and the other friends of this government, and I gather the Liberal Party also, pay not one cent? That's a tremendous subsidy on the part of the taxpayers, and it's a subsidy which has proven ineffective in its application because the staff aren't there to do the job.

We have the problem of freedom of information. Now, this is one where Alberta Environment really talks a good game about how they share information with the public. But you try, as I do, to get a simple thing like groundwater monitoring data, say, in the vicinity of a wood preservative plant or in some other areas where there may be a problem with pollution unsuspected. There was a problem out at Celanese just the other day, where it was determined that some of these cooling ponds with toxic materials were leaking into an area where a gravel company was excavating and selling material to the public which was highly toxic and contaminated. Yet Alberta Environment will not, according to a ruling from the Attorney General's department, issue groundwater monitoring data. Now, that's obscene in my view, and if there is a problem with the legislation – which I don't really buy, but if there is – why isn't there an amendment before the House today to clear that up so that people who

drink groundwater in Alberta, of which there are many, many thousands, have some right to know what somebody may be leaching in there?

What about the O'Connor report? I've been trying for months now to get an analysis in the possession of the department of material that was dumped in the Foothills landfill at Okotoks, to no avail. What about the effort we've had trying to get information about letters of permission issued by Alberta Environment to allow companies to exceed their pollution permits? Again, you know, something that affects the public in an environmental way, which is held from the public.

In the environmental assessment field, again, the legislation is deficient. I'm going to just mention the Oldman River dam in passing, and the fact that the Natural Resources Conservation Board, which as a result of the power struggle within government appears to be the government's answer to the chaos in the environmental assessment process, is still not, at this date, proclaimed. The Buffalo Lake project was allowed to be slipped through ahead of that proclamation as, I gather, was the Swan Hills operation. Issues like game ranching, which has now affected more people than I'm sure this government ever thought would be affected, was not allowed to go to that type of process. We've got the Canmore corridor developments and the Bow Valley developments. We have the issue of toxic imports in the province of Alberta, the issue of herbicide use in forestry, which is hotly debated within the forestry department and in the community and again is not going to be sent to that body. I gather Sunpine forest industries may also get through.

So it's not as if we don't have deficiencies in our legislation that have to be dealt with, and I would like to suggest to members today that passage of Bill 202 would go a fair measure towards solving some of the problems that I have dealt with today. Members are, of course, aware that this is the second year in which I've introduced this legislation. Since it was introduced, the Legislature of the Northwest Territories passed an environmental Bill of rights. They did so last November. This is legislation very, very similar in its scope and detail to the legislation that is before us today. It guarantees public access to information, whistle blower's protection, the right of any two citizens to demand an investigation, the right to launch private prosecution, and the diversion of part of polluters' fines to pay court costs for private citizens. That's passed; that's law in the Northwest Territories. I see that the Liberal caucus has copied this Bill and introduced one of their own, which I am inclined to regard as being a measure of support, although I'd have to say they're rather indiscriminate in what they copy. They copy everything, so I can't really say that that gives members any particular reason to support this legislation, but I am grateful for the support.

4:50

The Ontario government changed in the last year, and I am reasonably assured that the new NDP government in Ontario will pass an environmental Bill of rights, probably this year. It did occur to me that the Liberals in Ontario were committed to do such a thing when they were in opposition, but when they came to government, that commitment kind of vanished along with a few others. I'm reasonably assured that the Ontario government will introduce such legislation before the end of 1991. There is also discussion, which I think we will probably hear more of in the future, about putting some of these concepts in the form of an amendment to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms where they belong, in the basic fabric of the laws of our country.

Now, if I may turn briefly to just a few of the highlights of the legislation for the information of members. It provides a very strong and, I think, much needed guarantee of freedom of information for Albertans. There are many environmental issues in Alberta, but freedom of information is a very important one. More important still is that the information be timely and that it be available in a form which is understandable to the person who is seeking it. It provides for the right to cause an investigation.

You know, getting an investigation done by Alberta Environment is not as easy as you might think. You think you just pick up the phone and away you go, or write a memo. Well, forget it. I tried that shortly after I was elected, and I naively brought forward a specific concern that a constituent raised with me to Alberta Environment. The next thing I know I have on the telephone the irate owner of a business saying, "What are you doing, trying to ruin my business and my reputation?" I said, "What?" He said, "Alberta Environment told me that you complained, and I want satisfaction from you personally." Well, Alberta Environment walked up to this developer and passed on my name and walked away. That's an investigation? On your life it's an investigation, and it's not the only time it's happened.

The right to cause an investigation is in this legislation, and it's much needed. The right to be heard, extremely important, is confused in this government's mind with public hearings. You know, they hold public hearings and public input until the cows and the elk wouldn't have them, Mr. Speaker, but they don't always listen. Having a public hearing is not the same thing as hearing members of the public. The right to be heard is the right to have your information and your point of view considered in the decision-making process. What's the point in participating in Al-Pac hearings, for example, if the government is simply going to push the report to one side and say, "Well, we know better, because we've had some discussions on the side with the company, and they've given us certain assurances and provided us with certain pieces of paper, and therefore the finding of this panel is irrelevant"? Well, that's exactly what they did in Al-Pac. That's not being heard. People went there, they gave their submissions, they provided their evidence and their information, and they proved their case, but the government said, "Well, that's interesting, but we're going to do what we want anyways," which is just like the Oldman River dam all over again, just like Buffalo Lake, just like Swan Hills. It's a tremendous gap between the rhetoric that we hear and the actual decisions that are being made. So the right to be heard is a fundamental provision of this legislation.

It provides whistle blower's protection, which is simply the principle that people who report pollution violations ought not to be subject to harassment, intimidation, or reprisal from the company that's involved. I mean, there's no reason that I should be censured for complaining to Alberta Environment about a particular project, not that it matters to me a great deal, because I'm in public life and I can take that sort of thing, but it matters a great deal to an employee of a company whether they might be fired for reporting what's really going on.

We have to face the fact in this Legislature that we can't have environmental cops at every effluent pipe and in every corner of the province at the same time. Just like the Report a Poacher program, we have to rely upon citizens to report what's going on, but it doesn't make a lot of sense to advertise and to ask people to be good citizens if we then hang them out to dry and we pass their names on in the course of an investigation. It makes no sense whatsoever, but that's what's done in Alberta today. The minister of forestry spends hundreds of thousands

of dollars on the Report a Poacher program but provides no protection for the complainants whatsoever. We need whistle blower's protection, and it's provided in this legislation.

I particularly welcome the support of the Member for Banff-Cochrane in the report that he brought in on the draft legislation, which has now been deep-sixed, according to the Environment minister. The right – and this is fundamental – not to be unfairly and arbitrarily deprived of a healthy environment, which is really what happens when these projects are licensed without the case being made, when pollution violations go unpunished, when our environment is degraded; and more important still, remedies which are sure and effective in making sure that those rights are upheld, not a policy which depends on the political will of individuals in government, on the personality of the Environment minister or any other official in the government, but rights which transcend that: those, Mr. Speaker, are the primary provisions of Bill 202.

The Bill, as I said, takes power away from politicians. So be it. Those of us who believe that this Assembly is the expression of the collective will of the people must now recognize that there are things which are and must be off-limits to Legislative Assemblies, just as they are and ought to be to governments. Those of us who see collective action through government as a liberating force must recognize that it does have some limitations. For that reason, and recognizing a situation in which the cops and robbers in this game of environmental protection are sometimes confused about which side they're on and occasionally wind up in bed together – a situation which I think would cause most Albertans to say, "Hey, we'd better watch out for our own well-being, our own future, and the future of our children and this planet" – I move second reading of Bill 202.

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

MR. EVANS: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to answer some of the comments, I hope, from the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place on his Bill 202 and to also debate the Bill itself.

I have criticized both opposition parties in this House, Mr. Speaker, on the basis that they take a negative view of what this government is proposing on virtually all counts, so I will begin my remarks by indicating that there are some positives in this Bill. I want to practice what I preach, and I will get to some of those positives momentarily. However, I feel compelled to make some initial comments about some of the statements from the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

First of all, his concept that this government and the Department of the Environment are advocating a trade-off, that we will degrade our environment so that the economy can be moved in a positive, forward manner: that is absolute nonsense, Mr. Speaker. It is nonsense because this government and the Department of the Environment are committed to ensuring that the environment we have today will be sustainable in the future. That is one of the cornerstones of the environmental protection and enhancement Act that is being brought forward by the Minister of the Environment and that I had the pleasure as the chairman of the environmental review panel to get comments on from Albertans.

5:00

Now, I think it's extremely important that we understand that this is not a trade-off issue. We constantly hear that it is. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, anytime you deal with the economy and

anytime you deal with anything that relates to human beings, there's going to be some impact on the environment. We impact the environment by breathing, for heaven's sake, much less moving around and dealing in our daily lives. Each of us in this Chamber impacts our environment by the paper flow that we both encourage and promote. I'm looking at my own desk, and I can see too much paper flow on this desk. What we have to recognize is that the concept that we should be considering is whether the adverse impact on the environment is a significant impact, and if it is, then we don't proceed. That is the premise on which the environmental protection and enhancement Act is based, that we will not proceed, that this government will not allow industry to proceed if we are having a significant or anything more than an insignificant adverse impact on the environment.

I want to move on just briefly to the proposed Swan Hills expansion and the hon. member's concerns about that expansion, meaning that more waste will be going through his community. Well, I've heard in this House the hon. member stating that he is not opposed to the transportation of wastes from both the Northwest Territories and Yukon. Clearly, transportation out of those two areas will be moving through some populated areas towards Swan Hills. I have also heard the member say that that is preferable to moving those hazardous wastes to Oregon because it is a longer distance. He is acknowledging inherently, Mr. Speaker, that there is an impact from moving these wastes. It is a relative impact, and I think we have to be cognizant of the fact that Alberta is a leader in the technology of hazardous waste disposal and safe movement of hazardous waste. We are showing by example to the rest of Canada and to North America and the world that you can move hazardous waste in a safe manner.

I think it's incumbent upon the hon. member to expand his support for the initiative at Swan Hills and recognize that we can do this safely, that mere movement of the hazardous waste does not create a substantial increase in the chance of a problem, a spill, an accident. Rather, we should be focusing on how we can safely dispose of hazardous wastes within this province and, if the citizens of this province agree, consider taking care of hazardous wastes outside the province as well in an effort to show that, yes, Alberta is a leader, and we are compassionate to the needs of other provinces and, as the hon. member will readily admit, compassionate to the needs of those in the northern territories.

I would like to make a few comments as well on the constant reflection and interpretation by the member of the Supreme Court of Canada decision on the Oldman dam matter. I have read that decision a number of times, Mr. Speaker, and my impression – and I've had it confirmed by other lawyers – is that the decision indicates that the federal government erred in not requiring a full EARP, which would have been in conformity with the guidelines order. That is the sum total of the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada. It does not say that Alberta has breached any of its own rules of procedure or its own laws; it is merely a reflection on what the federal government should have done. Of course, the federal government has not taken any steps whatsoever to require the province of Alberta to do anything more than it has done to date because it is satisfied that the process of review – which has been ongoing for a number of years and has been very extensive, notwithstanding the comments from the hon. member. It has not said that the province of Alberta has to change, amend, improve that process. That, of course, is a decision of the federal government, and

their EARP will be done according to their timetable. But the premise is that the Alberta process has been adequate.

We, of course, have a new world in front of us for the rest of this decade and into the 21st century. That's what our new legislative package is all about, under the environmental protection and enhancement Act. That is what the NRCB is all about: review of nonenergy projects. That in my opinion is what will happen with our energy projects as well, through the ERCB: more focus and more time being spent on the issues of protection of our environment. That's exactly what this government is doing.

I'd be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I didn't make some comments on the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place's comments on what he perceives to be a delay in implementation or passage of the environmental protection and enhancement Act. He's indicated that he has read the report of our review panel. I appreciate that he has. He will note, if he reads that report carefully, that we as a panel expressed concern that because of the significance, the magnitude, and the complexity of the proposed Act, there should be a substantial and significant review of the very positive initiative of the department and this minister to ensure that, number one, all of the important legislation we have in existence today is indeed incorporated into the new Act and that we are consistent in the approach of the legislation that the environment is the most important aspect of our life in Alberta.

Now, what that means is that some 83 recommendations that were made by our panel are being carefully considered by the minister and by the government of this province. That is responding to public input. That is dealing realistically and carefully with public input and not casting it aside, not dealing with it in a superficial manner, as has been suggested by the hon. member when he says that public hearings are one thing but his Bill will give more than a public hearing; it will put some teeth into the matter. Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that there are already teeth in what is happening with the environmental protection and enhancement Act. I'm convinced that we will have a substantial and very positive debate on the legislative package when it is introduced into this Legislature. If that should mean that the Act is not passed in this session, that passage is delayed until the fall, precisely what the hon. member has concerns about – that is, the ability of the public to have effective input – will be met. So let's put this in the proper perspective.

### 5:10

I want to talk a little bit about the Bill itself. At the risk of being redundant – since, as the member has indicated, he brought forward this identical Bill last year and it was debated in this House on March 15, 1990 – I wanted to indicate my approval of some of the items that are indicated in the preamble. A preamble is a very appropriate way to set the stage for an important piece of legislation. In point of fact, we on the Environmental Legislation Review Panel have recommended a preamble to the environmental protection and enhancement Act. The first preamble,

whereas a healthy and sustainable environment is the basis of the health and well-being of the people of Alberta, clearly is important, and we cannot downplay the importance of it. I harken back to the mission statement of the Department of the Environment, which is addressing the need to achieve "the protection, improvement and wise use of our environment" now and in the future. I think the hon. member is just trying to paraphrase what is so adequately referred to and dealt with in that mission statement.

In terms of the fourth preamble,

it is desirable to remove . . . obstacles and ensure the important role of the people of Alberta and their government in securing a healthy environment for present and future generations,

again, I commend the member for that statement. It is consistent with the approach that's taken by the new draft legislation of the Minister of the Environment, because the environmental impact assessment process will ensure that Albertans do have effective input into all matters dealing with the environment from the very first opportunity. There will be provision for intervenor funding, and there will be, as I say, that opportunity to have input from the very first moment.

The next preamble:

It is desirable to conserve and maintain the resources of the Province for the benefit of present and future generations.

Again, a restating of the mission statement of the Department of the Environment.

I must make brief reference, though, to the second preamble:

Whereas the environment of Alberta is under stress from contamination and degradation.

I would ask the member if he has been to other jurisdictions lately if he considers Alberta to be "under stress from contamination and degradation." "Contamination and degradation" are extremely connotative words. I think he has to recognize the reality of the environment we have in Alberta today compared to other jurisdictions. There are literally no comparisons that are better than the province of Alberta, so I would ask the hon. member to consider his terminology.

The next preamble, Mr. Speaker, reads:

The people of Alberta face substantial obstacles to their ability to participate in environmental decision-making and to protect their common interest.

I take great, great issue with that. Again, I refer the hon. member to the draft piece of legislation from the minister, which provides just that type of opportunity. This is not because the opposition has required it; it is because this government recognizes that Albertans today demand the opportunity to participate in democracy and to participate in a meaningful way. That's exactly what is provided for in the Act.

I want to give other hon. members some opportunity to discuss this Bill, but I would like to just make a couple of brief references to the purposes section, section 2, in the Bill. Again, at the risk of being redundant, given the comments from the Minister of the Environment the last time that this Bill was debated, the first three purposes I think are extremely positive and reflect the attitude of the Department of the Environment, the Minister of the Environment, and this government.

The fourth purpose, though:

To give a right of standing to any person to seek legal remedies in protecting and conserving the environment.

We clearly have at common law a right to apply to the courts, to make a case, and, if that case is proven on the balance of probabilities, to have an award made. I see nothing in the hon. member's proposed Bill that would make that process effectively any easier for a plaintiff. Granted, there is the issue of standing which the member would choose to beef up, but clearly there's still the requirement of proof beyond a reasonable doubt, and to get to the point of a decision by a court, that burden of proof must be met. The suggestions by the hon. member would only make it easier to get into a court but make it no easier to prove their case beyond a reasonable doubt. I want the hon. member to carefully consider the implications of allowing more people into our already crowded courts when they already have the opportunity to do so. Under his proposal they would still have to prove their case beyond a reasonable doubt. I don't think the

hon. member would suggest to us that the burden of proof should be minimized in environmental matters. Proof beyond a reasonable doubt is, in my view, an appropriate proof and is required so that we don't create a society that operates on the witch-hunt philosophy.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

With those, I hope, brief comments, Mr. Speaker, I would like to sum up by saying again that there are some positive things in this Bill. I would encourage the hon. member to read over the environmental protection and enhancement Act and the report of our review panel. I'm sure if he does so with the intensity that he has in this House, he will get on the bandwagon and become a supporter of this important piece of legislation, and when we debate the matter in this House, he will indicate that generous support.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to begin by thanking the Member for Banff-Cochrane for limiting his comments so that I as a representative of the Liberal caucus could have a chance to comment on this important Bill. I emphasize that it is important. I would like to state to the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place that this is in many respects a very good Bill, and it certainly is in concept an extremely good Bill. It addresses a very, very important need in our society. I think among other things what I like about this Bill in concept is that it enshrines a place for the individual in our society in the environmental policy-making and regulation process in this province.

While this would always be an important feature of strong environmental policy, I believe that empowering the individual in our society to play a significant and effective role in environmental policy-making and in the redress of environmental issues and problems in this province is particularly important at this time. It is important for several reasons. First of all, I believe that the people of this province are miles, if you will, beyond this government, this tired and old government, in their concept of what environmental policy must be, in their assessment of how there can be no trade-off between economic development and the protection of the environment in this province, in their sense that in fact they are willing to place the priority on the environment over a short-term view of economic development. The people of this province, I believe, understand that you cannot have economic development or economic enterprise or economic well-being of any kind if we do not stop, step back, and ensure that we are protecting our environment properly and adequately. It is perhaps this single feature of this Bill – that it enshrines a place for the individual in the environmental policy-making and redressing process, that it empowers the individual to express his or her view of society in a significant, supported way – which lends it tremendous merit.

5:20

Mr. Speaker, I believe the stated objectives of this Bill are a very clear condemnation of this government's inadequacy to address and to pursue what seem to be such obvious and important values and principles and standards of environmental policy and protection of this province, to facilitate the right of the people of Alberta to participate and be heard in decisions affecting the environment. This concept is alien to this govern-

ment. They will say, "Well, we did that in the case of Al-Pac." They may have given people the chance to participate in a public hearings process, but they certainly did not take the time to hear them.

Al-Pac at least gave people the chance to participate. Let's look at Daishowa. In the Daishowa process people did not have a chance to participate in a significant way. [interjections] What they got the chance to do was to go to coffee parties.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

Please continue, Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What this objective does is to clarify very, very strongly how inadequate and how tenuous is this government's belief in and action upon the idea that Albertans should be able to participate and be heard in decisions affecting the environment.

To recognize the obligations of the [Crown] to conserve and maintain the resources of the Province for present and future generations.

Obvious. Obvious that a government should embrace such a value, but just today we learned that the government is actually going to cut back royalties that will be paid to oil companies for any oil they get from horizontal drilling. In defending that, I heard an official of the government state, "Well, it's going to be great because we're going to be able to sell more oil faster." Mr. Speaker, that particular statement I think permeates the thinking of this government, and I use the word "thinking" loosely. Sell more oil faster: it flies in the face of this very obvious principle objective of this Bill, that clearly the Crown should "conserve and maintain the resources of the Province for present and future generations." This government simply is not prepared to do that. The arrogance of this horizontal drilling defence is that somehow all of the economic benefit that can be derived from that resource must be derived by our special generation. Let's not worry about future generations. Let's not worry about the economic benefit that they may or may not have. Let's certainly not worry about the environmental consequences of that kind of obsession that they're going to have to deal with.

To give a right of standing to any person to seek legal remedies in protecting and conserving the environment.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we can see the kind of intervenor funding that is provided to individual members of the public by this government. On the one hand, almost nothing, no right to it; that is for certain. On the other hand, we see that the minister . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Hon. members, I respect your right to have conversations, but could you just turn the volume down a bit, please?

Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On the other hand, we have the minister paying for Daishowa's reforestation responsibilities over the next 10 to 14 years or so. There's no right to funding for a member of the public to have input into a very, very important environmental policy process or to have input into the redress of a clear environmental problem. There is, of course, an unstated right for major corporations with huge financial resources, with the incentive to do the environment properly if they could only see it – there's a huge commitment, an unstated right accorded

those companies by this government to spend money on behalf of Alberta taxpayers to subsidize their environmental damage.

Mr. Speaker, yes, there are some issues that are well emphasized and presented and defended in this Bill. I would offer the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place just some constructive criticism, if I might, in a couple of areas. First of all, while the Bill rightly provides people recourse through the courts, for example, and to certain boards, I believe that particularly in the case of recourse to the courts that can limit the access of a number of individuals in society who simply do not have the resources to approach that. I would ask that the member therefore consider the Bill that I have presented in the past, and will again, on an environmental ombudsman. What we would do is accord the current Ombudsman the special powers to review environmental problems in our society raised by individuals so that individuals without adequate resources wouldn't have to pay for a court process but could refer it to a publicly funded environmental ombudsman process.

I am also concerned to the extent that this Bill calls for the courts to refer issues in some cases to the Environment Council of Alberta. I have the utmost regard for the role that the Environment Council of Alberta has played in the past and

could play if it were given the chance to do that. I believe that role should be policy development, and if it is to do policy development, then it should not be doing policy review and the adjudication of regulation. I believe that's an inherent conflict of role and of mandate. I would therefore ask the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place to consider separating those two roles and perhaps referring that kind of issue to a properly structured environmental assessment board, which might be called the Natural Resources Conservation Board if only it were given the proper powers to operate effectively.

Mr. Speaker, I note that it is nearly 5:30. Therefore, with your permission I move that we adjourn debate.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:28 p.m.]

