

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, April 9, 1991**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 91/04/09

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Centre.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to give notice of the following motion under Standing Order 40 at the end of question period:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta

- (1) urge the government of Canada to take a leading effort in providing humanitarian assistance to relieve the suffering of the Kurdish refugees and
- (2) urge the government of Alberta, through the Alberta Agency for International Development, to make a generous contribution to the international relief effort mobilizing to meet the extensive needs of the Kurdish people.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to table the annual report of the Agricultural Development Corporation for the year ended March 31, 1990.

As well, I'm pleased to file a response to Written Question 171 and a response to Motion for a Return 220.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table with the Assembly today the annual report of 1989 for the Alberta Gaming Commission.

MR. SPEAKER: Solicitor General.

MR. FOWLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to table the annual report of the Department of the Solicitor General for the year ended March 31, 1990.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly one of what I refer to as the original activists within the community of disabled persons, Ron Lee, accompanied today by Vernon Roth. If you would make your presence known and receive the warm welcome of this House.

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege this afternoon to be able to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a former page in this Assembly. Mr. Harold Campbell of this city served as a page from 1933 to 1935, at the time when the Hon. George Johnston was Speaker, the Hon. John

Brownlee the Premier, and the United Farmers the government of the province. Mr. Campbell tells me he is enjoying renewing many memories on his visit today to this Legislature. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Campbell is seated in your gallery, and I would ask him to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce through you to the hon. members of the Legislature a very astute group of gentlemen that are the members of the Municipal Statutes Review Committee. They have spent some three years reviewing some 140 pieces of legislation during the past period of time and today have presented me with a proposed new Municipal Government Act, which I will be reviewing and tabling in this Legislature at the earliest possible opportunity. The chairmen of that committee are two of our members in this Legislature, Mr. Glen Clegg and Ty Lund as chairman and vice-chairman. I'd like to introduce the members and have them stand at this time: Ross Alger of Calgary; Councillor Gary Browning, Devon; Frank Lambright, Eaglesham; Bob Matheson, Edmonton; Eric Musgreave, Calgary; Councillor Dick Papworth, the county of Lethbridge; Alderman Craig Reid, Calgary; and the secretariat is Tom Forgrave and Norm Milke.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to introduce to you and the members of the Assembly some 90 students from the Doctor Egbert community school in the constituency of Calgary-Montrose. They are accompanied by their teachers H. Leong, D. Ganchev, and D. Higgin and parents Mrs. Miller, Ms Ludlow, and Ms Howard. They've been on a tour of the Legislature, and I visited with them. They are disappointed that the Flames lost last night but are optimistic for Wednesday. I'd like them all to stand and be recognized by the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislature three members of the board of directors of the Edmonton Co-op. They are Andy Cameron, Gloria Kereliuk, and Joanne Olafson. They're here today out of concern with the fate of the Edmonton Co-op and seeking government assistance in overcoming that issue. I would ask that they stand in the gallery and receive the welcome of the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight, followed by Edmonton-Highlands.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to introduce to you and to this Assembly three Albertans, special guests from southern Alberta. They are Kerry Brinkert, the president of the University of Calgary Students' Union; Jill Johnson, president of the University of Calgary Graduate Students' Association; and Heather Tabor, the vice-president external from the University of Lethbridge. I would ask them to stand and receive the usual warm applause from this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Those were the people I was going to introduce.

MR. SPEAKER: It's great to be popular.

head:

Oral Question Period

Senior Citizens Programs

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Seniors all over this province are outraged at the insult paid to them in this year's budget, a budget of increased fees and reduced benefits for our seniors. To them this is cruel and heartless. For the most part, seniors in Alberta live on fixed incomes and cannot go out and scare up extra money needed now to balance their own personal budgets. They are at a time in their lives when they need the support of a caring government that will allow them to live a dignified and independent life-style, a life-style they have earned and which this government's budget is working to deny them. My question is a very simple, straightforward one to the Premier. How does the Premier justify attacking seniors in this cruel and heartless way?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that the hon. Leader of the Opposition seems to have paid no attention to the budget speech. What has happened is, as pointed out by the Provincial Treasurer and in more detail by the Minister of Health, and perhaps she may want to add to my answer – let's just look at the budget speech where it points out that this government has increased seniors' benefits to some \$1.2 billion. There is not a jurisdiction in Canada that comes close to the programs we have in Alberta for senior citizens.

Might I say also that the senior citizens in this province, when you travel and meet them, say, "Look, we want to make sure we contribute in this province as well, and we want to pay our way." The Alberta government is working with these seniors groups, and they really appreciate the programs the government has in place.

MR. MARTIN: Well, he's talking to a lot of hypothetical seniors that we're not, Mr. Speaker, because our phone's been ringing off the hook and they're not happy with this Premier or this government. Hard-pressed seniors in this budget, no matter how he wants to look at it, are being asked to pay more, more, more, and more: nursing home and lodge fees, medical equipment, eyeglasses, dentures, you name it. I point out to the Premier how hypocritical it is, because this is the same time that there's a 15 percent increase for the ministers and their upper bureaucrats. I want to ask the minister this: how can he justify this increase for people over there and the top bureaucrats at the same time we're cutting back needed programs for seniors?

2:40

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member is totally off base and wrong. The benefits for seniors in this budget are increased. Do I have to repeat it again before it starts to sink in? Now, the Minister of Health may wish to go into details, because he's now talking about details of health matters having to do with seniors. She may wish to straighten him out as well.

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, let's look at the issue of cost sharing. Yes, we are saying that where there is a cost-sharing program, it should be based on the ability to contribute, not on age. We are certainly looking at those programs in Alberta. But let's just start to look at some of the programs we provide in that \$1.2 billion. With respect to eyeglasses, we assist with partial coverage once every three years. Places like British Columbia and Ontario provide no coverage. Let's look at dental

care. We provide assistance. Places like B.C., Manitoba, Ontario: no coverage. Let's look at long-term care facility residence fees. In Alberta seniors have the lowest rates in Canada, and those on a minimum income have the highest disposable income. Those are programs that are directed at the people that need them most, and those are the ways we've looked through our programs. Seniors in Alberta can be proud of the programs this government continues to support for them.

MR. MARTIN: That kind of nonanswer is not going to impress the seniors of Alberta. They don't care what they're getting in other places, Mr. Speaker. And they don't pay medicare premiums in the province of Ontario; I might point that out.

In this budget there were cuts in Aids to Daily Living, extended benefits, nonprescription, medicare, seniors' home heating. Those aren't cuts, Mr. Premier? I want to come back to the Premier, who supposedly is in charge, and ask him this: why not, instead of cutting back in these programs to the seniors, cut back some of the 28 of those people sitting over there? They're very expensive. Then you'd have millions of dollars to spend on seniors.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, does the hon. Leader of the Opposition not understand English? The money for seniors has been increased, not cut back. He refers to health cutbacks. There are not cutbacks in health; there are increases. It's a massive budget of some \$4 billion in health and over \$1.2 billion for seniors. Now, his comments about cutbacks are absolute nonsense.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the only nonsense is this government, that can't cut cabinet ministers but can cut seniors. That's what people find nonsense.

Magnesium Company Loan

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my second question is to the minister of economic development and international trade. While they don't have money for seniors, we know where they do have lots of money to hand out, and this is in their whole loan guarantee mess. It looks like this is going to get even worse, with Albertans holding another multimillion dollar bag once again. The government has given a \$265 million loan guarantee to the operators of a magnesium smelter just south of Calgary, of which at least \$103 million has been drawn up to date. This project is \$50 million over budget, nine months behind schedule, and the majority of partners admit they may never get its cost back. The minority partner has refused since July to sink any more money into the project. My question is a straightforward one. Will the minister tell Albertans now if their money is totally secured, and can he give his commitment that Albertans will not lose any money on this project?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the opposition party consistently raises our involvement with loan guarantees and support programs. I would be curious as to whether they would go on the record as it relates to our support for farmers through our farm credit stability program. If he's suggesting we shouldn't support our farmers, I wish he would be direct in that statement. If he's suggesting also that we should not support the small business community with our substantial involvement in loan guarantees and whatnot, I wish he would be honest in dealing with that. If he's suggesting that we shouldn't deal with our students by offering them loan guarantees so they can have

a proper education, I'd be interested in knowing that. In addition to that, I'm happy to share with him that I presently have the issue he has raised under advisement, and at an appropriate time I'd be more than happy to share with him what the decision will be.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I thought I asked about a magnesium smelter, not about student loans.

I think it's clear he should take it under advisement. There's a lot of money there. Let me point out to this minister that so far this company has lost \$5.8 million on revenues of only \$600,000. Now, there are only two options for this government: it can either pour hundreds of millions more of taxpayers' money into this project to bring it to full capacity and risk a huge loss if the project goes bust, or it can refuse to put any more money in and take a huge hit on the \$103 million already loaned. Which is it going to be? That's the question I want to ask the minister.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member only has to refer to the budgetary documentation that was distributed when our Provincial Treasurer introduced the budget, whereby we outlined some \$3.5 billion worth of support to individual Albertans so we can have the strongest economy in Canada. If the hon. member is suggesting we shouldn't have involved ourselves, I appreciate his suggestion. As I indicated to him earlier – and I answered the question for the hon. member earlier – he'll just have to wait a short while for the answer.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I've got an answer for the seniors: maybe they can form a company, take out a PC membership, and get a loan guarantee.

Mr. Speaker, this is a lot of taxpayers money. We had a budget just last Thursday; all of a sudden we now find out that this budget may be outdated. I want to ask this: if either option for the government is going to cost the taxpayers money, isn't it clear that this is going to affect already the so-called balanced budget?

MR. ELZINGA: No, Mr. Speaker, it is not clear that it is going to affect the budget, because the hon. member's making a number of assumptions that could possibly prove very false. Let me come back to what he indicated at the start. If he is suggesting that the some 30,000-odd farmers that have involved themselves in this program, the some 20,000-odd small business people, the many students all wish to take out PC membership cards, we'd welcome that. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. ELZINGA: But if the hon. member's suggesting that, it is the utter nonsense he usually spouts in this House. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: It's your clock that's ticking, hon. members.

AGT Privatization

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the hon. Premier. Managers of NovAtel were fired because they were some \$200 million out in their revenue projections. Our Provincial Treasurer has frequently goofed by underestimating his deficits to the extent of some \$3.2 billion. That's 16 times the NovAtel goof. I'd like to ask the Premier why there's a

double standard, a standard for those involved in industries controlled by the government and a standard for the Provincial Treasurer.

MR. GETTY: There isn't, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DECORE: I think the facts speak for themselves, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Speaker, a year ago the Premier promised Albertans that the proceeds from the sale of AGT would not be used – not be used – to pay down the annual deficit of the province. In fact, that's exactly what has happened. In the last fiscal year some \$335 million has been allocated to the annual deficit. Mr. Premier, I'd like to know why you broke your promise to Albertans.

2:50

MR. GETTY: I didn't, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DECORE: I don't think the Premier understood the question, or he was deflecting in his usual way.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Premier to tell us where the rest of the sale proceeds will go. I'd like to have him make a promise – and I'd like his assurance that he'll keep the promise – and tell us exactly where those sale proceeds are going to go when they do accrue on the rest of the sale of Telus assets.

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, he's dealing in a hypothetical situation. He still doesn't know how to put something on the Order Paper when he wants information. I'm afraid the hon. member is just striking out again.

Mental Health Services

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, considerable progress is being made at our regional treatment centres in the province in the treatment of the mentally ill and brain injured. With the specialized treatment and therapy provided by treatment teams, the stay in these hospitals is on average shorter and individuals are prepared to return to the community. However, there's a great need for suitable home placements for individuals that have undergone successful treatment and now need a supportive environment. To the Minister of Health: is the minister prepared to assess this situation and take action to meet the needs of Albertans needing such approved homes?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, part of the choices made in this budget of choices was to look at the community alternatives we can provide in health generally but in the area of mental health specifically. While I can get into the more line-by-line details as part of the estimates discussions, let it simply suffice to say that the approved homes program will see increased spaces for people who need a situation somewhere between the institution and their full community support. That's what the whole purpose of the approved homes program is, and it will be enhanced under this current budget.

In addition, specifically for the brain injured, the provision now for home care to the under-65 age group will be a major support on the community side to assist those Albertans who need a little extra support, particularly stand-alone home support, nonmedical support.

MR. SPEAKER: Ponoka-Rimbey, followed by Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. JONSON: Yes, a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to hear about those initiatives in the general description given. I would like to zero in on one aspect, though, and that is that in my constituency and, I know, in other parts of the province there is a particular need for such home placements and mental health initiatives with respect to our native population in native communities and on Indian reservations. To the Minister of Health: will these initiatives apply to our native communities across the province?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I think we always have to be very cognizant of the constitutional role of the federal government with respect to native people on reserves, but certainly as part of the 13 percent increase in the community supports in the mental health area, one of the initiatives will be in the area of native mental health services through our mental health clinics and through support for agencies that are not directly government agencies but are working with government to deal with the issue. I'd be happy to describe it further when we get to the estimates point.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

Principal Group Collapse

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Attorney General. One of the companies in the Principal empire was Glen-Eden Realty & Development. Before the collapse of that empire, the directors of Glen-Eden were John Cormie and Christa Petracca, a vice-president of the Principal Group. After the collapse Glen-Eden, the owner of the Prince Royal Inn in Calgary, was sold by the receiver Coopers & Lybrand in March of 1988, and the directors became Gaspar Szentner and Christa Petracca. In September of 1989 one of the numbered companies which owned Glen-Eden acquired sole ownership of Glen-Eden. The president of the company which was bought out and who walked away from the deal with \$1.3 million was none other than Christa Petracca. If the Attorney General is aware of these transactions, could he indicate to the Assembly whether they were in any way questionable or improper?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I'm not allowed to give a legal opinion, especially on facts I'm not aware of.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, with the collapse of the Principal empire, everyone took a bath: the taxpayers, the contract holders, and the noteholders. As part of his review, could the Attorney General investigate this matter and inform the Assembly on this question: is the money that was made on this shares sale now beyond the reach of our public authorities, or can some or all of it be recovered for either the taxpayers or the contract holders who have paid so dearly for the collapse of the Principal Group?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, the RCMP have all the documents and details related to the intricate dealings of the Principal Group and all its associated companies. They are continuing their investigation and will be recommending whether criminal charges will be laid and what these particular charges will be. In private matters, if some particular shareholder of a company that was involved in the deal has a concern, I would suggest they seek legal counsel.

MR. SPEAKER: A curious line of questioning, Calgary-Mountain View. Perhaps you might consult *Beauchesne* 411. Thank you.

Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Edmonton Co-operative Ltd.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Federated Co-operatives of Saskatchewan managed the Edmonton Co-op for five years, charged them apparently inflated wholesale prices, did the audit that put them into receivership, appointed themselves receiver/manager, and now actually holds the assets of the Edmonton Co-op. They did all of this while refusing to show the new board of the Edmonton Co-op their agreement with the previous board, which they say allowed them to do it. To the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs: while the minister's staff is meeting with the board soon, will the minister make a commitment here and now to meet personally with the board of the Edmonton Co-op to hear their concerns firsthand, or will he at least give us an explanation as to why he won't do that?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to commit to the hon. member, as we've previously committed to the co-op board to meet with them. They, in fact, are meeting with the deputy and assistant in the morning, as I believe the member well knows, and that meeting will take place. One with myself will follow if the board so desires.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister tell us whether he feels that an independent audit should be required in circumstances such as this in order to ensure that any conflict of interest or appearance to that effect will be avoided?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, in this particular instance my understanding is that the debenture that was owned by Federated Co-ops of the Edmonton Co-op was put in place when the Edmonton organization was unable to meet commitments or to achieve its end. That's unfortunate, but it was an internal arrangement among co-operative members in the province. To this date I haven't seen information which would allow us to believe that there was something wrong in terms of that transaction. I'm happy to receive any information, however, that the member might have or the members of the Edmonton Co-operative board might have in reviewing the circumstance.

Nonetheless, our goal remains twofold: first of all, to make sure there is fairness and equity in the system and, secondly, to ensure as much as we can that all opportunities regarding involvement in co-operatives in the city of Edmonton remain there.

MR. SPEAKER: Banff-Cochrane.

Waste Recycling

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituents are very pleased with the budget announcement of \$6 million to initiate a comprehensive, provincewide waste minimization and recycling program. However, since in Banff-Cochrane currently there are three recycling initiatives in three communities and we have two more which are planned for this month, my question

is to the Minister of the Environment. Will the existing recycling programs have to vie for funding from this \$6 million pool once the program is in operation, since to do so would put them in competition with the new communities that will become involved as a result of the budget announcement?

3:00

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place yesterday alluded to some \$2.4 million additional being allocated to enhanced waste minimization and recycling. I indicated at that time that really we have received something in the neighbourhood of 6 million new dollars. This is over and above the amount that had already been committed to the ongoing operation of community-based recycling programs such as those referred to by the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane. Indeed, community-based recycling programs that are now under way will be funded, and the new money will be there to enhance those programs and to create a more comprehensive system of waste minimization and recycling in the province.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. EVANS: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to hear that the government is going to continue to support the leaders in this recycling initiative in the province.

My supplemental question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Since the private sector has not exactly jumped at the economic opportunities in waste minimization and recycling, my question is: what portion of the \$6 million is going to be used to encourage industry to become involved in this program?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of the Environment indicated, it is \$6 million of new money, notwithstanding the fact that we have taken a substantial reduction within our own budgetary estimates. Recognizing the importance that recycling and waste management plays, on behalf of this government we have allocated \$2 million within our own budget so that we can have an industrial development component. There are viable economics in the removal of waste within our province, and we're going to do our level best to encourage the private sector to involve themselves in that waste technology.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

Party Convention Invitations

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Premier, and it has to do with the policy of his government on using taxpayers' dollars to promote partisan political activities. Last week the Treasurer slashed and hacked his budget so at least on paper we could have some magician foolishness that would appear to give us a balanced budget. Funds were cut from employment and training support and social services, and funds were indeed cut from the Department of Career Development and Employment. So my question to the Premier is: given that the government cut in so many areas, how is it that the Minister of Career Development and Employment found sufficient funds to use government services to print on departmental letterhead and distribute through the internal mail system invitations to the Progressive Conservative convention?

MR. GETTY: I think, Mr. Speaker, that the question is probably more properly addressed to the individual he's referring to.

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would love the opportunity to answer those allegations and would hope the hon. member would listen intently. First of all, on plain white paper I extended an invitation to any and those who would like to participate to come to the convention, just as I would extend to that hon. member if he so wished. If the hon. member would look at that specific piece of paper, he would find it has been duplicated and copied over by some individual. He would note that the word "subject" is overlapped on that specific piece of paper. It did go out on plain white paper. I would say that if the individual who was despicable, dishonest, and deceitful enough would meet me outside the House, I will then address him or her with those same remarks and allow them the opportunity to dispute and argue the point.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair will listen attentively to the supplementary question, which I'm sure will be brief, but the issue perhaps needs to be carried on further with the office of the Speaker because it involves some other kinds of funds.

Edmonton-Belmont, briefly.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On plain white paper, photocopied perhaps in the minister's office, typed by the minister's secretary, and distributed through the departmental internal mail system: we have to wonder who's using whose funds here to get this invitation out to a political meeting. So my question is back to the Premier. Will the Premier demand that the Minister of Career Development and Employment pay all costs associated with the production and distribution of this invitation to the PC convention?

MR. WEISS: I refer to you, Mr. Speaker, and your honest and valued judgment. You said that you would like to have the opportunity to review this, if there was any attempt to besmirch my character or my values. If I have done anything wrong, I would accept your decision as the leader of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Calgary-McKnight.

Students Finance Board

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time when student aid in Alberta is under siege, one would expect that the Students Finance Board would be working with students to ensure that realistic decisions are made on their behalf. However, because the student members of the finance board are selected by the Minister of Advanced Education based on party affiliation, the ability of Alberta students to be effectively represented is severely limited. To the Minister of Advanced Education: given that both of the provincial student associations have called upon this government to allow them to select the student representatives on the finance board, will the minister now agree to allow this basic democratic right and stop blatant partisan appointments?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Alberta student movement is extremely well served, some 116,000 of them, by the Students Finance Board. I believe it's very important that the representation and views of students be represented on that

board, and that's why we appoint student members. I would have great difficulty believing that those student members should only come from the major institutions in this province.

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, I am afraid the minister did not understand my question. I have no problem with student representation; it is how they get there. The point is: would the minister allow the students to select their own representatives, as is done on the board of governors?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, because the Students Finance Board represents policies affecting all students in our postsecondary system, I as minister seek the views of many Albertans as to who those representatives should be. The only caveat I have is that they be students, but not students of any particular institution.

Senior Citizens Programs

(continued)

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Health. Yesterday she made some announcements about reduction in the benefits to seniors in that they would have to cost share some of the extended health care benefits. Now, in that the budget for seniors has improved in the annual budget, could the minister tell us whether this saving is being transferred to some other programs for seniors?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I started to get into the issue when the opposition raised it, and that was the whole issue of asking for some cost sharing in certain programs in Health, which is what we've done, and I'll get into the details obviously more during budget estimates.

Let me simply say that while there have been areas where there have been requests for cost sharing, there have also been substantial increases in how we're funding our budget, particularly that directed to seniors, including the \$13 million enhancement and updating of the Aids to Daily Living program, which is now available for all Albertans, a \$10 million increase for home care for the seniors population, of course no health or Blue Cross premiums, but also no drug or ambulance costs for seniors living in nursing homes. Those are part of the balances and the choices that we made, and unlike some members of the opposition who believe that governing means never having to say no, believe me, the responsibility for governing means that we have to make choices and make those choices based on principles and be prudent about those choices. Those are what we're recommending to this Assembly.

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, in past years we have heard of seniors from other provinces wanting to move to Alberta because of the programs that we have for seniors. With this reduction now in cost benefits, how will it compare with other provinces?

3:10

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, interestingly, Alberta will continue to have some of the finest, if not the finest, range of programs for seniors. I got into some of the details on the program, but let's look at things like physical therapy services. In Alberta we waive the annual limit for senior citizens. That's not duplicated anywhere, including in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, or Ontario. Ambulance services: Alberta provides full coverage for ambulance services for seniors, but if we look at British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario, there is no coverage. In Alberta we assist seniors with things like special in-home nursing

care through our extended health benefits program. In British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario there is no such coverage.

What we're dealing with here, Mr. Speaker, is looking at our programs, making choices in order to preserve those parts of the programs that we believe are essential for our seniors, and asking for some cost sharing in order that all Albertans can have access to those programs and all Albertans with low income, regardless of age, can have income protection for those services. I believe the principles are sound and that the proceeding through the budget is one that we recommend highly to the people of this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder.

Social Assistance Policy

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There continue to be thousands of people on social assistance throughout this province, and even though the Minister of Family and Social Services has increased spending in certain areas of social assistance, something extremely disturbing in his budget is that the minister has cut employment and training support by \$16 million. Given that according to this government's support for independence this particular support program provides extra help to clients to find a job, to upgrade skills, and to acquire work experience, how can this minister justify cutting such a huge amount from this program?

MR. OLDRING: Well, first of all, the member is quite right. We have undergone significant changes in this department to address the many needs of the caseload here in the province of Alberta. In terms of our budget, I'd want to remind the member that we have had a significant increase of 7.9 percent overall. I say "significant," particularly when you put that into the perspective that over 50 percent of the ministries and government agencies across this province have received cuts, but this government has clearly said that supports for independence is a priority.

Mr. Speaker, I'd want to point out that we've also been able to work very closely with the minister responsible for career development and employment and as a result of that are able to better deliver our services.

MS MJOLSNESS: Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that this program has been cut, this program that people need to get off social assistance. In view of the fact that the minister has said that benefits will be restricted or removed for failure to find employment and given this massive budget cut in this particular program, what assurances can the minister give to people living on social allowance that they will have access to training and support services if they need them?

MR. OLDRING: I know that we're going to have the opportunity of reviewing this budget in detail, but what I'd want to bring to the member's attention at this point, Mr. Speaker, is that what the cut reflects is the anticipated success of these reforms; what it reflects is 2,000 less Albertans on the caseload. That's why the cuts are there. We know the changes are good, we know the changes are going to work, and we know that there are going to be fewer Albertans dependent on supports for independence.

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

Agricultural Assistance

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the more outrageous motions passed by the Reform Party at their recent weekend convention was one urging an end to government programs for farmers. Now, this is apparently an objective that this government shares, as evidenced by their deep cuts to the farm fuel distribution allowance program and their axing of the fertilizer price protection program, proving that Reformers are indeed Conservatives in a hurry. I suppose that this might work if it weren't for their blind faith in a free trade deal that is taking dollars out of farmers' pockets by destroying things like the Wheat Board, the Dairy Commission, and the ag marketing agency. I'd like to ask the minister how he can justify putting Alberta's farming families between a rock and a hard place by butchering these important programs of support for farmers, on the one hand, and working so hard to destabilize and undermine the structures that farmers have created to help them compete and get a fair price in the marketplace.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have to be convinced that the fertilizer spreader that was being used earlier by the Member for Stony Plain is now in the hands of the Member for Vegreville.

The Associate Minister of Agriculture may want to supplement this, but I think the key point the Member for Vegreville seems to overlook is that we've worked with the producers of this province, we've worked with the provinces of this nation and with the federal government to bring, for the first time ever, a stabilization safety net type program and make it available to our farmers this spring. This government commits an additional \$50 million to that program. For the first time we have a program that protects farmers at the same level right across the prairies. If the hon. ag critic on the socialist side would have paid attention when we announced that program, we stated at the time that it was incumbent upon us to make sure that once we leveled the field here, we didn't create a bunch of valleys here and that some of the input support programs would be adjusted in view of the additional commitment to the safety net program.

I should also ask the hon. member to take a hard look at the benefits that the farmer still receives compared to the nonfarmer and compared to any other farmer on the prairies. The Alberta farmer still has the fertilizer price protection plan in place and is the only farmer that gets a rebate in addition to being exempted from fuel tax on either his diesel or his purple fuel.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, the GRIP program doesn't cover the actual cost of production and in fact only guarantees farmers 70 percent of an average price that is continuing to decline. I'd like to ask the minister: given the opposition to the GRIP program expressed to the minister last week by the delegates of the Alberta Wheat Pool, how can he continue to support a program that guarantees farmers steadily reducing incomes while his government is working so hard at the same time to increase their costs by carelessly slashing these important fertilizer and fuel programs?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure where this member does his research. The so-called GRIP program was developed by a committee of 33 people across Canada, 19 of whom were producers. One of those producers was the first vice-president of the Alberta Wheat Pool, and he tells me the Alberta Wheat Pool does not support GRIP?

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Seniors Dental Care

MRS. HEWES: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Curiously both the Premier and the Minister of Health continue to applaud themselves publicly over the so-called increase to health spending, whatever that is, while all around us there is evidence to the contrary. The tinkering to programming announced by the minister may very well neutralize any increase, and once again we see that seniors have become an easy target. My questions are to the Minister of Health. The government allows extra billing for dental services to seniors because the government's approved fee schedule for dentists doesn't even come close to the actual costs. Now, under the new cost-shared program seniors have to pay 20 percent and the government 80 percent presumably. What of? That's what we don't know. My question to the minister is: is it the government's intention to prohibit extra billing?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, of course being governed by the Canada Health Act, there is no extra billing with respect to basic medical services that are governed under the Act. Alberta, however, has consistently argued that we wanted to supplement programs beyond those that we were required to provide under the Canada Health Act, and one of those areas of program coverage is the one of routine dental care in Alberta for senior citizens. We happen to think it's an important program. It's certainly not a dental plan, but it is some support for dental coverage for seniors. Certainly the ability to extra bill by the dentist is one that is not governed by the Canada Health Act, and dentists can in fact extra bill – quote, unquote – in this province.

MRS. HEWES: So, Mr. Speaker, we take it that that's acceptable and that in fact we're chipping away even further at the meagre income of many of our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, my next question, then, to the minister is: is it the minister's intention to institute any kind of subsidy program for those low-income seniors who can't even afford a trip to the dentist let alone extra billing fees?

3:20

MS BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, if we were to have a universal dental program in this province, I think it would be very appropriate if we were to look at ability to pay, as we have done, for example, and as presumably the Liberals are now supporting, in the Aids to Daily Living program. However, that is not the way we have looked at dental care in this province. We believed it was important to provide some assistance to seniors for their dental care, and that is a program that will continue. It's one that we're asking seniors to cost share, and it is very important.

Let's look at it across the country. I mean, British Columbia has no coverage for dental care for seniors; Manitoba has no coverage; Ontario has no coverage. We think it's an important thing to provide some of that coverage within the 9.8 per cent increase this year over last in the Department of Health, and those were some of the principled and prudent choices that we made in developing our budget, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Highlands.

Homeless Persons Support

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few years ago the Edmonton Coalition on Homelessness reported that homeless-

ness was a serious problem in the inner city. They also indicated that about 85 per cent of the housing structures in the inner city had a structural life of less than five years. In the meantime, the throne speech before the election was called two years ago indicated new government support for shelter for the homeless, which has resulted so far in only a few units being constructed with the help of Alberta government money. Now the social services budget shows a 3.5 per cent drop in shelters for homeless adults. I'd like to ask the Minister of Family and Social Services: is this the final word that he has on shelter for the homeless in Edmonton, or is he planning another program to replace what's now being reduced?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, no, this is not the final word at this time. I'm happy to advise the member that I'm working very closely with my colleagues on this side of the House and that we'll be making some further announcements later this year.

MS BARRETT: So already the budget's out of balance, is it?

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who's responsible for the housing program in Alberta and the administration of the National Housing Act financed programs, if he plans to correct what's wrong with this picture? This picture shows that the Alberta government was the only government last year that had no social housing whatsoever under this program compared to all the others. Is he going to fix that this year?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd certainly appreciate the document the hon. member has being tabled so that I'm able to examine the graph as such and the basis upon which it is designed. I believe that the province of Alberta has very actively, in a proactive way, developed housing in this province comparable to any other province, and I'm sure that if we lay those facts before this Legislature, that would be very evident.

During this upcoming fiscal year it is our intent to announce some very aggressive and positive steps in the cities of Edmonton and Calgary to meet the needs of homeless people in terms of housing. One of the things that's more active in Alberta than in other provinces of Canada is the free enterprise system, the market system, whereby people are able to secure their own home in which to live, and we don't have to move into many social, subsidized types of accommodation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Before we go on to deal with the Standing Order 40 request, is there any member here who has a group yet to be introduced? Okay. Might we have unanimous consent to revert to the introduction of guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

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

MR. OLDRING: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to be able to introduce through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly 28 grade 6 students from St. Elizabeth Seton school. They are accompanied by teachers and parents Mel Edlund, Jeannette Blunden, Maria Gigliotti, Florence Massie, and a neighbour of mine, Ron Burndred. They

are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask them to rise and receive the warm reception of this Assembly.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Centre, a Standing Order 40 request.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly. I do appeal to members for consideration of the motion which I have put before members in writing.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's becoming more and more painfully evident to us through a number of press reports and visual images on our evening TV sets that this massive human tragedy that is taking place on the Iraqi/Turkish border is one that isn't just out there but that, in fact, is one we have some jurisdiction over, that there are some things we can, out of our compassion, out of our resources, respond to. This motion wants to look at that and urge action in this regard. So I put it before members to be dealt with in this urgent way.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Under Standing Order 40 there's a request for unanimous consent for the matter to proceed. All those willing to give unanimous consent, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The matter carries. The Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Kurdish Refugees

Moved by Rev. Roberts:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta

- (1) urge the government of Canada to take a leading effort in providing humanitarian assistance to relieve the suffering of the Kurdish refugees and
- (2) urge the government of Alberta, through the Alberta Agency for International Development, to make a generous contribution to the international relief effort mobilizing to meet the extensive needs of the Kurdish people.

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and all members of the Assembly, for your unanimous support for this.

As I said, reports are saying now that close to a million men, women, and children who are our brothers and sisters on this planet, though far away, are experiencing dire suffering, starvation, disease, and life-threatening elements. Children are dying in the cold mountains on the Iraqi/Turkish border.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to rehearse all of the elements and aspects of the Persian Gulf war and other situations that might have led up to this situation. What we need to do today is realize that there is this great human crisis, that it is happening now, and that we have to take every effort, every resource, every means at our disposal to help those in this tragic situation.

There is the response from the United Nations recently, declaring that this situation affects international peace and security, and hence international relief efforts and agencies can, should, and must be involved. I just want all members of the Assembly to do what we can through the various resources I'd like to hear of from government and other mechanisms to show our compassion, to show how we are wanting to stand up with

our brothers and sisters in this situation and do all that we can to relieve their suffering.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Liberal caucus is pleased to support this motion. What is happening is a shocking and very terrifying situation that's a fallout from the war. It's our understanding that the Kurds are being bombed by their own countrymen as they attempt to seek some kind of safe haven for themselves and their families. They're starving, and they're ill. All citizens of this country and this province should feel outrage and should support in every way we can any organized means to alleviate the tragedy.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity, too, sir, to indicate the support of our Premier and the government of Alberta as it relates to this motion and to extend congratulations to Members of the Legislative Assembly for exercising such great compassion and sympathy for those individuals who are going through some severe stressful periods.

I wish to indicate, too, my thanks to the hon. member who suggested the motion in acknowledging the excellent record we do have as the province of Alberta in offering support to our nongovernmental organizations and those who are in need. As the hon. member has indicated, in his motion he suggests support be offered by the Alberta Agency for International Development. It is an agency that is noted for its compassion, sir. It is the most generous of any provincial agency in an area that is traditionally federal, and we're happy to involve ourselves in support of this motion on behalf of the government of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to add a personal moment to my congratulations and thanks to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, too, because as a surface geologist back in the middle '70s I worked for a couple of years from Turkey into northern Iraq, and I have many Kurdish friends. I still have many friends that I write to occasionally. It's a very barren, inhospitable country at the best of times, covered with lava flows and canyons, with not much way to make a living. That's one of the reasons the Kurds were left to occupy it. The Iraqis, the Iranians, and the Turks didn't want it, so the Kurds are the only ones in there. It's a shame indeed to leave such an impoverished countryside as they have, what little they had, to get bombed and chased out of. Anything we can do to help them I sure appreciate.

Again, for my Kurdish friends and also on behalf of many others who are interested in helping out the less fortunate, I want to thank the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre for bringing this forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Call for the question.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Member for Edmonton-Centre wish to sum up?

[Motion carried]

head:

Orders of the Day

3:30

head:

Written Questions

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that the written questions appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places on the Order Paper except for the following: 251, 271, 274, 277, 278, and 279.

[Motion carried]

Wabamun Power Plant Emissions

251. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question: Concerning the monitoring of the environmental impact of the Wabamun operation of TransAlta Utilities Corporation,
- (1) how often are air emissions from the stacks measured each month, and what substances are measured,
 - (2) how many times, if any, in the last 10 years did any of the substances measured exceed the limits set by the plant's licence to operate under the Clean Air Act,
 - (3) in the last 10 years what were the monitored values on those occasions when the levels were in excess of the permitted level, and if any, were the emission standards permissible under the licence issued in accordance with the Clean Air Act,
 - (4) how is possible contamination of Lake Wabamun being monitored,
 - (5) how often are the sumps that collect the sulphuric acid used to clean the heating coils in the evaporating tanks checked,
 - (6) how many times during the past 10 years have the sumps overflowed into Lake Wabamun, and
 - (7) what measures have been taken to prevent overflow from the sumps into the lake?

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

Advanced Education Programs

271. Mrs. Gagnon asked the government the following question: How many requests from postsecondary institutions for new programs are awaiting ministerial approval?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the government will accept that and herewith table the answer.

High School Graduate Survey

274. Mrs. Gagnon asked the government the following question: Does the government intend to update the 1988 high school graduate survey published by the Department of Advanced Education, and if so, when?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the government accepts Written Question 274 and herewith will table that answer.

Advanced Education Enrollment Projection

277. Mrs. Gagnon asked the government the following question: What percentage of Alberta high school graduates does the government expect that Alberta universities, colleges, and technical institutes will be able to admit in the years 1995 and 2000?

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

[Motion carried]

Students Finance Board

278. Mrs. Gagnon asked the government the following question: What proportion of student representatives on the Students Finance Board over the last 10 years have been recipients of student aid through the Students Finance Board prior to their appointment?

MR. GOGO: The government as well, Mr. Speaker, rejects that question.

Students Finance Board

279. Mrs. Gagnon asked the government the following question: What criteria does the government use in their selection of student representatives to the Students Finance Board, and do those criteria include considering whether or not the student has been a user of Students Finance Board services?

MR. GOGO: The government, Mr. Speaker, is pleased to accept that written question.

head:

Motions for Returns

MR. SPEAKER: The Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. GOGO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the motions for returns on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places on the Order Paper except for the following: motions for returns 210, 240, 242, 244, and 275.

[Motion carried]

Canadian Crude Separators Site Inspection

210. Mr. Mitchell moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the site inspection report for the Canadian Crude Separators Valleyview operation, land treatment facility, June 28, 1990.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we will accept that motion. The response is being prepared and will be provided forthwith.

MR. SPEAKER: Call for the question?
Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I accept the minister's response.

[Motion carried]

Landfill Pollution

240. On behalf of Mr. McInnis, Mr. Fox moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of any analysis report done by or for the Department of the Environment on the toxicity of waste material from the Petro-Canada/Gulf Oil Inglewood refinery site which was deposited in the Foothills landfill.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we're pleased to accept this motion. The response is being prepared and will be provided for filing.

Clean Water Act Enforcement

242. On behalf of Mr. McInnis, Mr. Fox moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all certificates of variance issued by the Department of the Environment under the Clean Water Act between April 1, 1989, and March 14, 1991.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we're pleased to accept this motion. The response is being prepared and will be provided for filing.

[Motion carried]

Clean Air Act Enforcement

244. On behalf of Mr. McInnis, Mr. Fox moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all certificates of variance issued by the Department of the Environment under the Clean Air Act between April 1, 1989, and March 14, 1991.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, we're pleased to accept this motion for a return. The response is being prepared and will be provided for filing.

[Motion carried]

Groundwater Monitoring Data

275. On behalf of Mr. McInnis, Mr. Fox moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all ambient groundwater monitoring data collected by or for the government since January 1, 1987, for the following: (1) Sunpine Forest Products Ltd., Sundre, (2) Domtar chemicals group, wood preservative division, (3) Natal Forest Products Ltd., and (4) Spray Lake Sawmills (1980) Ltd. until March 27, 1991.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, once again we're pleased to accept this motion for a return. The response is being prepared and will be provided for filing.

[Motion carried]

head: Motions Other than Government Motions

Waste Management

205. Moved by Mr. Gesell:
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to assist Alberta municipalities to develop integrated solid waste management plans through administrative support and the co-ordination of information and technology.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Clover Bar.

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak about garbage. Now, I want to draw a distinction here between the phrase "speaking about garbage," with the emphasis on the "about," and to the phrase "speaking garbage," which unfortunately happens in this House on occasion. I'm casting my

glance over at the NDP and Liberal benches as I make those comments.

Mr. Speaker, many of you are already aware that the city of Edmonton recently released a list of seven possible sites to replace the Clover Bar landfill. Three of those sites fall in or near the county of Strathcona. The county of Strathcona is the area that forms part of Clover Bar. I find it extremely difficult to imagine in this day and age, with the wealth of information and the technology that we have at our disposal, that the notion of landfilling our wastes is still prevalent. It still is being pushed as one of the solutions. As I stated in July of last year at the height of the Aurum dump discussions, landfilling our garbage is a regressive and damaging habit. I use the term "garbage" particularly. I could use other terms such as "trash" or "refuse" or any of the other terms that apply, but I want to zero in on this particular problem that we're having, and I use that term with an objective in mind: to alert members, to alert Albertans, to alert all of our residents to that particular problem.

Now, I want to stress the responsibilities that exist for municipal garbage disposal. I raised that in a question yesterday, Mr. Speaker. The provincial government's responsibility in the area of municipal landfilling is limited. It relates specifically to the protection of surface and groundwater, the protection of our environment in those two specific areas. The bulk of the obligation, the bulk of the responsibility for municipal waste rests clearly with the local municipalities.

Now, that responsibility and obligation sometimes leads us to some very serious problems. I had thought, and counted on, that in fulfilling that obligation, which I believe is aesthetically in line with the evolutionary course of technology, also the municipalities' awareness for our environment would, hopefully, occur. It is also, I feel, morally imperative to look at better solutions than landfilling. Unfortunately, I've watched and I think we all have watched and waited in vain. Mr. Speaker, it's my intention with this motion to get the province more actively involved in the area of municipal waste management. I will urge the government to assist the municipalities in their waste management dilemma and to help them to resolve the crisis on a regional basis.

At this point, with that preamble, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the motion into the record. I draw this motion to the particular attention of members that are representing Edmonton here in the House, because Edmonton is experiencing a severe problem as are the adjoining municipalities. The motion:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to assist Alberta municipalities to develop integrated solid waste management plans through administrative support and the co-ordination of information and technology.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've referenced the members of this House that represent the city of Edmonton. This motion is directed to all the municipalities within Alberta. However, in Edmonton we have a specific, an urgent, a critical problem that has to be dealt with. I would hope that the Liberal Environment critic, the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, and the NDP Environment critic, the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, might get involved . . .

3:40

AN HON. MEMBER: Not here.

MR. GESELL: Not here, you say.

. . . in the discussion because it does affect the areas, the jurisdictions that they represent.

Regional waste management solutions, Mr. Speaker, will be of benefit in a number of ways, not the least of which, I believe,

will be economic, and I will discuss, time permitting, the economic aspects and comparison of landfilling to other waste management or resource recovery techniques.

Sharing the cost of waste management on a regional basis amongst several municipalities eases the burden of the taxpayers because you have a larger area to work with and allows those municipalities to contribute to the exploration of alternate methods of waste management or waste disposal.

Far too long, Mr. Speaker, we've been burying our garbage in the ground. That has been a disposal method of choice. It's sort of the situation of out of sight, out of mind: a very unfortunate situation. Searching for a landfill in the metropolitan Edmonton area or any other area of Alberta is not searching for a long-term solution. It simply does not resolve the problem. I think we must turn that idea, that notion, around. We have to look at other alternatives.

There are many other alternatives that we could discuss. I will deal with a few, Mr. Speaker. I note that today in the *Journal* there was some discussion about the refuse-derived fuel and is there actually going to be a market for that type of alternate that is being explored, and I note today that the cement manufacturers are interested in that refuse-derived fuel. It's an interesting concept because it will be burned in furnaces that are of a high temperature, somewhere of 1200 degrees centigrade, and because of that high temperature there will be limited residue.

I think great strides have been made in the technology, the specific solutions to incineration and gasification. They used to be inefficient, and in the past those methods had the unfortunate result of heavy air emissions or waste residues. State of the art incineration at this point in time and gasification plants with scrubbers either wet or dry now will reduce that output of pollution that originally, earlier had been generated by those specific alternatives for waste reduction so that now there may be a very limited or even undetectable amount of emission that might occur from those specific plants.

Community composting, Mr. Speaker, is another area that has tremendous promise. I wanted to speak a little bit about a central community composting system but also composting on an individual level. That type of concept, the central composting system, has yet to be explored intensively and on a scale large enough to be of value to a number of municipalities, particularly a municipality the size of Edmonton.

I'm not sure if members are aware, but I need to stress and outline the composition of the garbage stream that occurs from municipal operations. In our area some 26 to 37 percent of that garbage stream is organic in nature and is suitable for a composting operation, yet we go ahead and bury that organic material. We bury it, and we expect it to decompose. Results of testing by the United States government and by a particular individual, Dr. William Rathje, better known as Dr. Trash, have indicated that decomposition does not actually take place. Dr. Trash, if I might refer to him in that way, is an archaeologist. He examines reclaimed landfill sites and actually does rigorous research on them. It's not that much different from the normal pursuits that archaeologists engage in. They look at the residue or remains of previous civilizations; he just does it in a little bit shorter time frame. He looks at some residue that humanity, civilization have left within the past 30, 40, maybe 60, or up to 100 years. He has found in testing those landfill sites, carefully weighing the composition of the test holes that he drills, that that organic material when buried displays very little sign of organic decomposition.

Paper decomposition is in a similar situation, Mr. Speaker, because paper is another major factor, a major portion of the

garbage flow that occurs. Now, landfill techniques call for such heavy compaction that the waste material is not subjected to aerobic decomposition that might normally occur, and because of that compaction and the absence of moisture it basically mummifies the garbage such that papers that Dr. Trash has found in garbage dumps that were reclaimed over 20 or 30 years ago are still perfectly legible and perfectly preserved. So the decomposition of some of the materials that people think are biodegradable are in fact not in those particular circumstances.

The community of Ryley, just a little bit east of the constituency of Clover Bar, has been involved with a very extensive central composting program. They've done this now for a number of years. I believe that program has been very successful. It's encouraged the community and area residents to bring and deposit their organic wastes in a central location and compost them into a rich and chemical-free humus that is used as a fertilizer and apparently is very effective, perhaps even more effective than the chemical fertilizers that are being used. The humus is made available to local farmers and gardeners to revitalize their fields and garden plots. [interjection] Yes, it should also be available to the socialists.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

This is one program, Mr. Speaker, that produces very, very many benefits. It reduces the input to the landfill considerably because of the high percentage of organic composition of the waste stream. It is a beneficial, economical, and environmentally sensitive alternative to chemical fertilization. It organically renews the fertility of our soil and the productivity of our agricultural land. I believe it also strengthens the bonds in the community, because you've got people, residents within the community and the area, that work together for a common goal.

3:50

Now, there is no reason why such a central composting facility should not also work for, say, the city of Edmonton and the surrounding area. Central composting is one specific alternative. I remember the time when I first came to Canada and lived in the city of Edmonton. Individual residents had a backyard garden and utilized that effectively and had compost barrels or piles that they used very effectively in order to revitalize that garden and to divert some of that waste stream that existed then. Well, Mr. Speaker, our waste stream has grown considerably, and we have moved away from that individual responsibility to divert some of that waste stream. I think we need to get back to some of those values. I think it is beneficial to pursue that on an individual basis but also on a community basis.

I think we have to basically rethink our concept of garbage. Garbage is not an entity all by itself. It's not something that materializes just, you know, out of thin air or of its own accord. Realistically garbage is the final product of every consumer, everyone of us here and all residents in the province. Anything that we grow, purchase, or otherwise acquire eventually ends up as garbage. The razor blades you perhaps used this morning, Mr. Speaker, are in the stream. The soap you used when bathing, the towel: all of those minute things that you normally don't think of end up in the waste stream somewhere down the line eventually, some faster, some slower. All of those things are garbage. Not only that: the process of developing garbage starts long before that utilization that we have there. The factory that created those goods that you used this morning created waste in that production process. That has to be taken care of. The packaging of that material, those goods that you

used this morning: the packaging that those goods came in is waste and has to be disposed. The fuel you burned when you traveled to get those goods from the store created waste. So everywhere we turn, there is no getting away from waste. It occurs almost as a habit, a bad habit that we have of generating waste, and that habit is growing. We create more waste now than we ever have on a per capita basis.

Now, if we look at waste in that light, maybe we can appreciate the necessity for a more balanced approach, a management solution, a resource recovery solution, because you can look at garbage or waste as a resource, something that can be restructured, reprocessed, and reused. I'm getting into the alliteration of the Rs here, but I will outline that a little bit more, Mr. Speaker.

Recycling has become a popular concept for reducing that waste stream that would normally enter the landfill. We can't recycle everything, and even some of the recognized recyclable materials that we have, such as glass or plastics, need a destination market in order to complete that recycling symbol, the Möbius strip. Saved-up glass, waste glass serves no purpose unless somebody wants to use it, wants it for some other product. Identifying and making use of these recycled goods is profitable, I believe. It's essentially turning our garbage into a valuable resource.

I think there's truth in the old adage – I haven't heard it lately – that says: one man's waste is another man's treasure. We're going to have to start looking at garbage in that way. [interjections] Well, people are laughing at this notion, Mr. Speaker, but you look at those companies that are actively involved in waste management. They are very successful companies and make a considerable profit. There is money in garbage; let's face it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: We know that.

MR. GESELL: Well, let's act on it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear. Good idea.

MR. GESELL: I'll get into that discussion right away about acting on it, Mr. Speaker.

Recently the county of Strathcona, a portion of which I am fortunate to represent, made a commitment of some \$14 million toward the implementation of a regional waste management technology system. I applaud that kind of thinking. That's very forward thinking, I believe, because if all the municipalities that are affected – the county of Strathcona, the city of Edmonton, the city of St. Albert, the MD of Sturgeon: all of those municipalities in the metropolitan area – if they would work together, contribute together to find a solution but also to support that solution, we would have a cleaner, safer, and more healthy environment. I think that's a legacy we can leave happily for our children.

Let me, Mr. Speaker, give you some statistics. I've referred to Dr. Trash and some of the research he's doing, and he's doing rigorous research. Some of the people might feel that research in garbage is maybe something that one could laugh at, but it is an important aspect. It tells us about our society. You should know some of the details. Researchers at Queen's College in New York City found that 84 percent of all household trash is recyclable, 84 percent. Also, if you can recycle one tonne of waste, you save yourself three cubic yards of landfill space. Three cubic yards is a considerable amount, a volume that is significant. Almost 70 percent of all trash collected each autumn

is yard waste such as leaves, grass clippings, and so on. Further, and this might appeal to the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, maybe also some of the NDP members, each tonne of newspaper that is recycled saves 19 trees.

AN HON. MEMBER: What size?

MR. GESELL: Well, average sized trees, I would expect. About six- to seven-inch caliper, I would imagine.

[Mr. Moore in the Chair]

Let me talk a little bit, Mr. Speaker, on a number of other issues here: some discussion about the Clover Bar constituency issue and some of the members that have been contributing to the problem and some of them that have been contributing to a solution.

4:00

The bottom line is that traditional landfill processes no longer are an acceptable method of handling and disposing of solid waste. That is clear in my constituency. It couldn't be clearer. I think it is also clear in any other constituency in Alberta; it doesn't matter whether we're talking about urban areas or whether we're talking about more rural areas.

I haven't really touched upon the Rs of recycling. I should call them the four Rs of waste management, I guess, rather than recycling, because recycling is one of these Rs. There are a variety of Rs, and I think the list is growing. This is the alliteration list I referred to earlier. We've got reduction, reuse, recycle, recover. We have regional rationalization now that maybe should be added in there, which I believe is a move in the right direction. Resource recovery obviously I believe is a better term to coin, even perhaps more effective than waste management. We have to start looking at our garbage, our waste as a resource not as something that has a connotation such as trash or refuse or garbage that we throw away. It's a resource that we must utilize and reuse. That's where the thought process has to change significantly in order to make us agree on an overall solution.

Mr. Speaker, before I get into more detailed discussion of the Clover Bar area, I'd like to just mention that we've heard quite a number of discussions in the media about the Clover Bar dump. The Clover Bar dump was originally in the county of Strathcona, and it was the county of Strathcona that for the longest period of time accepted refuse, garbage from the surrounding municipalities. It lately changed in the last annexation process in 1981 when that dump area was transferred to the city of Edmonton, together with some industrial areas. So for the city of Edmonton to claim that they have been assisting in solving the problem by accepting waste from other municipalities is a little bit tenuous.

I would like to indicate, and I mentioned it earlier, that we had some tremendous discussion about the Aurum site. A feasibility study was undertaken on that, a regional study that was funded by the province to some degree together with the county of Strathcona, the city of Fort Saskatchewan, and the city of Edmonton. There were a number of sites that were listed as feasible. Aurum was not at the top of that particular list. Even at that point in time, in the feasibility study Aurum was indicated as environmentally sensitive. Eventually, Mr. Speaker, that site was turned down because, I believe, it did not adequately protect surface water or groundwater from contamina-

tion and it was still a landfill solution. The thing I need to draw to the attention of members here is that the leader of the Liberal Party, who was then the mayor of Edmonton, strongly supported Aurum. I find that very interesting, because at that point in time there should have been the knowledge that that site was not environmentally sound. It's also been suggested by some that some of the reasons there was some steadfast support for that site rather than the northeast site, which was the preferred site in the study that was undertaken by these municipalities, might have been political. The member now represents that area.

MR. SIGURDSON: It's my constituency, Kurt. Don't get confused with the facts.

MR. GESELL: The Member for Edmonton-Belmont. Well, in any event, it's interesting that some of the decisions that were made at that point in time were not sound environmental decisions.

Mr. Speaker, I think my time is getting limited, but I'd like to deal to some degree with the concerns in the constituency of Clover Bar. We may be affected severely by a proposed landfill in Clover Bar. The residents in my area are extremely concerned about that possibility. They have made representation to me, and I expect they will make representation to this House about those particular sites. I tell you straightforwardly, Mr. Speaker, that those residents do not want to see a landfill solution. Now, I know we're going to get into the discussion of costs, and I want to address that, but there should be a solution other than landfilling, and it might not be a specific . . .

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, you've spoken your time limit.

MR. GESELL: Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PASHAK: I'd like to begin by thanking the Member for Clover Bar for giving me an opportunity to discuss with the members of the Assembly my favourite subject, which is the relocation of the Hub Oil plant to a new site in the city of Calgary. But before I get into that, I'd just like to say that this government makes a great deal of noise and considerable comment about the need to recycle solid waste products. I think all members of the Assembly would have to agree that their actual fulfillment of this promise leaves a lot to be desired. A good case in point is the government's attitude and the position it took with respect to the recycling of bottled glass products in this province. We know how tragic the closure of the glass manufacturing plant in Cypress-Redcliff was to the residents down there, and the reason it was closed was of course because many of the breweries have shifted from putting their beer in bottles to putting it into cans. Not only did we lose a plant but we've now created a number of beer cans that wind up in dumps. So this closure was tragic. This policy of the government was tragic for a number of reasons. It was tragic in terms of a loss of jobs, loss of employment, but it was also tragic in terms of what it did for the environment.

I'll note in passing that the Ontario government is trying to reverse policies that the previous Liberal government and the Conservative government before that embraced to encourage pop distributors in that province to put their products into cans. Now they're trying to encourage pop distributors in the province

to increase the percentage of bottles that contain pop in that province so they can begin to get recycling off the ground at least as far as that product is concerned in Ontario.

In my own constituency, ever since I was elected in 1986, on a number of occasions I have raised the issue of the Hub Oil plant in the city of Calgary. Just to refresh the memories of members of the Assembly, this is an older, outdated plant that was located there long before houses began to encroach upon its location. I want to begin by making it very, very clear that I don't fault the owners of this plant. They are not to blame for the current situation that exists there. In fact, even the Progressive Conservative Party decided it was a significant issue, because just prior to the 1989 election the Member for Calgary-Montrose and the Member for Calgary-Millican called a meeting in my constituency, called together my constituents to ask them their views about what should happen to the Hub Oil plant. At that public meeting, which I attended as a guest, there was certainly a large weight of public opinion expressed that above all else the operation of that plant should cease in that part of the city. They weren't concerned about whether it should be relocated or not, but of course the plant is still operating in that part of the city. So nothing has happened.

4:10

I might just indicate as well that since new people joined the government in the '89 election, I did engage in a rather lengthy exchange of correspondence with the new Minister of the Environment with respect to this issue. My first letter to the minister is dated February 7, 1990. It's a rather lengthy letter – it's two and a half pages in length – in which I set out a background to the situation and indicated some questions that I'd like to have answered, including the following. I asked: "Do the plant improvements that took place from 1986 to 1988 satisfy present environmental standards?" and "Are soil tests being done or contemplated to detect whether or not any dangerous toxins are still present at the site?" In a further question I asked about hydrocarbon emissions and, in particular, whether an emission control order of May 25, 1988, was being monitored on a daily basis.

I did get a letter back from the minister, for which I was appreciative. That letter came on March 23. The minister indicated to me at that time that recent odour emissions had concerned residents, and they'd complained about these emissions to the Department of the Environment.

Point of Order

Factual Accuracy

MR. SHRAKE: A point of order.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: A point of order.

MR. SHRAKE: The hon. Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn just made the comment, and he was referring to Hub Oil, that this was in Calgary-Forest Lawn. I would like him to check the boundaries: where his boundary and where Calgary-Millican's boundary are and where Hub Oil is.

As far as the plant, they did get rid of the smell. That's what the meeting was about. It affects an area called Erin Woods, which is in Calgary-Millican. [interjections]

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn, please.

MR. PASHAK: We'll take a look at the map and see where the railroad track runs through there.

Debate Continued

MR. PASHAK: In any event, Mr. Speaker, the emissions from that plant do flow into my constituency. In the evenings they flow into . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: They got rid of them though.

MR. PASHAK: But they didn't, and there's ample evidence. Even as recently, Mr. Speaker, as the last two or three months a large number of complaints were brought to my attention, were brought to the attention of the Canadian Western Natural Gas Company, were brought to the Department of the Environment, all complaining about incredible smells that were emanating from that plant. I asked the Minister of the Environment questions about those incidents in this Assembly. The Minister of the Environment indeed acknowledged that there were problems with the plant, that these problems had been brought to his attention. He also acknowledged that they were monitoring the situation and that in fact a breakdown in the operation of the plant had occurred. So there are indeed serious, ongoing problems.

The minister in his response of March 23 to my earlier letter indicated that the odours "are not acceptable," that further improvements were required, and that no tests of the soils in that area had been undertaken. I'd also made some suggestions about recycling of waste oil products, refining, and this kind of thing. The Minister of the Environment indicated that they were looking at that at that time. So I really appreciated his answers.

I wrote him again in April and asked if he'd been making any progress with the studies he'd indicated that his department was making. His response essentially was that they'd done some preliminary geological work at the sites, they were planning on doing even more studies, and that he would look into the financing of relocating the plant. So again we have fairly ample evidence here, Mr. Speaker, that the minister, typical of this government, talks an awful lot about protecting the environment, but when it comes to actually doing anything other than indicating that they're planning on doing studies, they do very little or in fact nothing at all.

So I'd just like to bring to the attention of the members of the Legislature once again some of the concerns of the residents in the area, and they're not just members of my constituency. Residents in Calgary-Millican also have the same problems. If the wind blows from the south, then it affects my constituency; if the wind blows from the north, it affects Calgary-Millican. I've even had some calls from some of the constituents who live in the Erin Woods area of Calgary-Millican about these problems.

In any event, the plant itself is on a road that was once a major highway into the city of Calgary, the old Highway 1 from eastern Canada. The plant is ugly and unsightly, and for that reason alone should be relocated. And the smells: I've already indicated how significant they are. Many occasions when I visit that part of the constituency in the evening, I'm subjected to the smells. They really are obnoxious. It's sulphur dioxide. It has the potential to be a toxic gas, but in smaller quantities it's . . . [interjection] Well, pardon me; not the sulphur dioxide so much but the hydrogen sulphide. It smells like rotten eggs, and it's something that urban residents should just not have to tolerate or put up with.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about the rural ones?

MR. PASHAK: Well, no one should have to put up with it, whether they live in urban Alberta or rural Alberta.

I'm also concerned about what's happening with respect to this older equipment. When oil is unloaded at the plant site, there's obviously lots of leakage, and the way the plant has handled leakage in the past is just to bring a bulldozer on site and put landfill over the oil that has leaked into the ground. No one knows how much oil has actually leaked into the soil or where it's going. From what I can understand, the water table slants towards the irrigation canal, and that oil could gradually be working its way into the irrigation canal and then into Chestermere Lake. So there's a potential for a real problem.

Of course, this is only part of an even larger problem that has to do with the recycling of waste oil products more generally. Only about 20 percent at the very most of all the oil that's sold and consumed in Alberta is recycled at the present time. There's a major recycling plant in Edmonton, and there is the Hub Oil plant in Calgary, but the vast bulk of waste oil winds up in the ground, and no one knows where it goes from there. There are 24 storm sewers, by the way, that drain into the Glenmore reservoir in Calgary. Who knows how much water that drains into that reservoir during flood time picks up waste oil products and carries it into Calgary's drinking water supply system. But that's a general problem throughout the whole city, and I suspect it's a problem common to most of our urban environments as well. So we have the problem of leakage of waste oil products into the soil and potentially into the whole groundwater system of the province of Alberta.

So what do I think should be done with respect of the Hub Oil plant in Calgary? Well, it should be relocated, and it should be relocated immediately. In order to do that, the most appropriate way would be if the government would make a funding commitment to assist in the relocation. Just earlier today we heard the Minister of the Environment mention that there are millions of dollars available for community based waste recycling projects. This would certainly qualify for that. I don't know why the minister just doesn't jump on this bandwagon and help the company to relocate, because at one level I don't think they should be penalized because they were there first. They have a legitimate operation. It was governments, both city and provincial governments indirectly, that allowed housing to move out to where the plant is located, so they have to take the responsibility for this situation. That means that all taxpayers of the province have to take responsibility, but this wouldn't necessarily constitute a loss for the taxpayers of the province, because recycling, as the Member for Clover Bar has pointed out, is a necessary step in protecting the environment.

I think we should do everything we can to increase the amount of waste oil that's recycled, from 20 percent up to 70 or even 80 percent or the maximum number possible. That could be done if we encouraged Hub Oil to relocate into a modern facility that could recycle even more waste oil than they're currently capable of doing. I think that if the government took the initiative and met with officials in the city of Calgary and community leaders – and I would even volunteer my services – we could soon find a responsible and realistic and reasonable economical solution to this problem. Certainly one thing that the government should do right away is conduct an immediate study of the whole question to look at what the economics of the situation are, to do a kind of cost/benefit analysis of relocating the plant.

Now, that deals with the plant itself, but I think that should be part of an even larger policy of action on the part of the

government. I think it's absolutely imperative that this government encourage recycling of waste oil in the province, and one way it could do this would be to insist that every government owned vehicle and every vehicle driven by people who get funded by government departments should use recycled waste oil products in their vehicles. According to every study that I've ever looked at, recycled oil is just as good as fresh oil.

4:20

There are other steps that could be used here in Alberta that would be similar to initiatives that have been taken in European countries, where, for example, a premium is placed on oil when it's sold commercially. Then when the oil is taken back into a recycling depot, the premium is returned to the person that purchased the oil so that that provides a financial incentive for people to recycle waste oil. I would encourage the government to take a hard look at the recycling of waste oil, and I think that what is being proposed in the Member for Clover Bar's motion would support this type of solid waste recycling, unless I've misread the intent of his motion.

There are a couple of other issues, quickly, that I'd like to talk on, Mr. Speaker, and one has to do with the Edmonton situation. Now, I have to admit that I'm not completely familiar with what is happening and all the alternative sites, but just sitting outside of Edmonton, just paying a little bit of attention to what appears in the newspapers, it seems to me to be a ridiculous problem. Why can't the government get the city of Edmonton to come together with the municipalities that surround Edmonton and say: "Come up with a solution. We'll give you so many days to do it, and if you don't come up with it, we're going to make sure that you solve your landfill site." Why don't you do that? I mean, it seems to me to be a rather simple solution to a complex problem. Cut the Gordian knot.

AN HON. MEMBER: Centralist.

MR. PASHAK: Well, I'm a centralist dictator, yes.

The basic issue here, and I think the Member for Clover Bar actually touched on it, is that the problem with disposing of waste products is really not ultimately to go out and find waste disposal sites. The problem of disposing of solid waste products is really twofold. One is to cut down the amount of solid waste we generate and produce, and that can be done in a lot of ways. There's no need for people to package their garbage – I mean their groceries; that eventually becomes garbage, as the Member for Clover Bar suggested. There's no need to put those in a myriad of plastic bags. They could be put into shopping bags that the shopper takes with him or her back to his or her house and then brings into the grocery store every time they buy products. You could do things like that.

Other things we could do, of course, would be to recycle as many waste products as we can. I've mentioned a couple of examples: pop bottles, containers like that. Pop should be put in recyclable bottles rather than tin cans; we should recycle waste oil products. I'm quite certain that virtually everything we produce as garbage could be recycled if we put our minds and our attention to that as an important social issue.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to express my support for this motion and to congratulate the member on his having raised it for debate in the Legislature and to wish him well in seeking meaningful support of his caucus,

as might be reflected in substantive measures to, in fact, realize the objective that is implicit in this particular motion. At one point in making his presentation the Member for Clover Bar was apparently being chided by some of his back-bench colleagues, who appeared to be laughing at him. I would like to assure him that nobody on this side of the House was in any way laughing at him. Quite the contrary: I would like to express the sincerest of congratulations for his having taken the initiative to present this.

The next point I'm going to make I say almost tongue in cheek. I know that this member perhaps is well intentioned and well motivated. It may be that his interest is stimulated by a particular landfill problem that is confronting his own constituency. I say, tongue in cheek almost, that I wish there were 58 other Conservative constituencies with filled landfill sites, because then we might begin to get some true, broadly based governmental sympathy for this issue and perhaps there would even be a spillover to other environmental issues from this government. I can only hope, in the absence of that, that the Member for Clover Bar's very persuasive comments are in fact adequately persuasive and will begin to scrape through the reluctance that seems to be expressed so often by his government colleagues on so many important environmental issues.

The member did allude to the problem in Edmonton and, as has been the case with his government, has been inclined to misrepresent the issue as it has arisen in the Edmonton circumstance: that in fact the city of Edmonton did not want to support the Aurum dump site but that they were driven to support the Aurum dump site because they literally had no alternative.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

In the early '80s to mid-80s this government understood that it had a regional landfill problem, not a city of Edmonton landfill problem but a regional landfill problem. It was without two important ingredients for solving that problem. First of all, it takes a good deal of resources to establish a regional landfill program plan with the capital that is necessary to underpin such a plan, and of course the single city of Edmonton would not and could not be expected to have the necessary capital resources, but secondly and perhaps equally important is that in order to establish a regional landfill solution, the city of Edmonton would have to be able to deal with a variety of surrounding communities. These communities, including the city of Edmonton, are equivalent; they are equals; they are peers at the municipal level. Therefore, one would not expect one particular municipality to have the moral authority or, in fact, any kind of authority to impose a solution or a compromise amongst the various communities that are involved. It would be essential and necessary, a logical requirement, that a senior level of government with the moral authority would be required to intervene and assist in mediating, if you will, a regional landfill solution. In the early '80s the city of Edmonton explicitly asked the Conservative government of this province for that kind of assistance, and this government explicitly ignored that request. It can only be this government who must, therefore, take the responsibility for the current crisis that exists with respect to regional landfill in Edmonton and the surrounding area. So I would like to set that straight, Mr. Speaker, perhaps and hopefully once and for all.

There is clearly a need for a proper solid waste management plan for this area, for the entire province. We need only look at the statistics to understand that fully 1.8 million tonnes per

year of solid waste are produced by Albertans; that's about 800 kilograms per person. In absolute terms that is an enormous amount of waste. It not only underlines that we are throwing away things that we need not, and that is wasteful in and of itself, but it's also true, as we see in the Edmonton area, that it puts tremendous pressure on our ability to deal with such volumes of waste.

It's also evident and obvious, Mr. Speaker, that our society's predisposition, propensity to throw things away underlines, I think, a certain lack of sense of value in our society. If we simply find ourselves throwing away things that in other societies – China, for example – would be found to have an extremely high value, reusable economic value, if you will, I think it underlines that we are so ready to throw things away that we have not yet come to grips with the priceless value that we must place upon the resources that have been given us in this world. It says something about our character, our strength of character, our desire to do things properly and to do things right by the environment, to have a respect and a humility about all those wonderful gifts that we have been given. It is important that we embrace this not only at a substantive, let's handle the garbage level but at another level, the level of how we in our lives value the things about us, the resources that have been given to us.

4:30

I should point out from the point of view of the volume that it is also true that if we take a single, reasonably sized elementary school in this province today, assume that there are 300 students in such a school and that each of them would bring their lunch to school in a brown paper bag, at the end of the 220-day school year, believe it or not, 66,000 brown paper bags would have been used and probably thrown away by that single school population. Multiply that across the province and understand how frivolous it is that we are throwing away that kind of resource, requiring that we cut down literally millions upon millions of trees to do so, when education and alternatives promotion would simply put a stop to it.

Mr. Speaker, it is also true – and I should put this into the terms that Conservatives can understand so clearly – that there are economic benefits to waste reduction, to recycling, to reusing, and to utilizing our resources in the most efficient, effective, and responsible way that we possibly can. It reduces costs to business; it reduces costs overall to society. There is a *prima facie* case, which has been embraced and supported by the Member for Clover Bar, that yes, there are economics supporting what is otherwise a very, very reasonable and responsible environmental objective.

It is important that we understand that the need stems from the volume. The need stems from an important requirement that we address our life-style and the values that we bring to the manner in which we live, and it is important to understand the economics of proper solid waste management. There are some elements of a policy, a program, that I would like to raise or emphasize to the extent that many of these points have been raised earlier in this debate by others in this Legislature.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, we must set targets. One target that is very, very reasonable is to say that in this province we will reduce by 50 per cent by the year 2000 the amount of solid waste that is produced in this province today. That seems like an ambitious objective, but I know one thing for certain: if we do not set an ambitious objective, we will be never be motivated to aspire to achieve any kind of objective at all. More than that, that is not an unreasonable objective. We throw away things so frivolously and with so little consideration that by simply

implementing some of the easier measures that are available to us today, we would take huge strides almost immediately to achieving that objective.

Any of us in this Legislature, any of the people in this province who have simply put their mind, on a day-to-day basis, to reducing the garbage that they throw away in their own homes will know how quickly and how efficiently you can reduce your garbage to almost a negligible amount simply by home composting, by the blue box recycling program, by not picking up your grass clippings and putting them in a green garbage bag, by finding ways to reuse that piece of lumber that comes out of the old shed at the back, by not using paper towels or paper serviettes in your own home, by all of a sudden not using a live, or at least now dead, Christmas tree, if you will. Bit by bit and step by step these are very easy things to do, and they have tremendous and profound impact on achieving an objective like reducing our garbage output by 50 percent of today's standard by the year 2000.

I do not know why it is that this government is so reluctant to set environmental standards. We only need to look at their joy at setting a balanced budget standard four or five years ago and the true feeling of accomplishment that they seem to have expressed the other night when they presented a budget that looks, at least on paper, like it might actually achieve that objective. Let's hope that it does. If it does, Mr. Speaker, it is proof positive that we should be setting objectives elsewhere, and nowhere more appropriately than in the area of environmental policy.

It's also true that a general element in solid waste management should be the user pay. Yes, there are economic considerations to make and competitive economic considerations to make, but there is also a great deal of flexibility and elasticity in the application of the user-pay principle within this particular policy area. I look at other jurisdictions, in the States for example, that are now charging homeowners, at least, by the bag for their garbage disposal. The Conservative economists over there will know that you put an economic incentive on something like garbage disposal, and all of a sudden householders and commercial enterprises will find a way to reduce it. There is nothing more positive and more effective than that. It is not impossible or overly cumbersome to implement it. It is being done elsewhere, in other jurisdictions in North America, and could readily and easily be done here in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, education is also extremely important, not just education through the schools, although that of course is important – it's also true that school-age children are probably miles ahead of this government in their understanding of what needs to be done – but education more generally in our society so that people continuously have the options, the possibilities, the understanding that yes, they can perhaps not put their grass clippings out in a green garbage bag, that there's a different way to do it. These things should be presented to Albertans day after day in a positive, encouraging way and the facts that will encourage them to utilize more environmentally sound life-style choices brought to their attention.

I remember how powerful it was to me when I heard the statistics on not using disposable diapers; that is to say, using cloth diapers instead. Statistics, as I remember, indicate that if you use disposable diapers for the lifetime of a child's use of diapers, it will cost a family \$2,500. I know this, Mr. Speaker, because my wife and I are currently experiencing this, not with disposable diapers, however. If you use cloth diapers with a diaper service, which is every bit as easy as a disposable diaper from a convenience point of view, I believe it costs about \$1,200

to \$1,500. If, in fact, you use cloth diapers which a family washes themselves, it will cost about \$500. When that is presented to people in a reasonable and clear way, the choice is so obvious. If people understood one further fact – about the literally hundreds of millions, the billions of trees that are cut down every year simply to produce disposable diapers which then are thrown away in landfills never to deteriorate and never to decompose, not to mention the health hazards that are involved in that. It is obvious, so obvious that the government not only needs to educate about that, but in fact could make the case to Albertans, they would embrace it immediately, and then they could begin to phase out through regulation, just to ensure that it occurs fairly and evenly, the use of disposable diapers at all.

Specific elements of a solid waste management program, Mr. Speaker, would include recycling, of course. Everybody knows that. Not enough is being done. The \$6 million that we hear about from this government is a far cry from what is required even for a blue box program across the province. To spread a blue box program across the province would cost, in the 1989 dollars that we assessed, about \$15 million. It is not a huge amount of money in many respects, and certainly the benefits warrant it. Today in Ontario over 50 percent of the households have access to the blue box recycling program due to the efforts of the David Peterson Liberal government of the past. We must create and extend a blue box or a recycling program across the spectrum, not just to homeowners and householders but to commercial enterprises as well. We must create markets. The blue box program is just one-half of the cycle. We can pick it up, but if we don't want to stockpile it, we must find a place, create incentives for its use. Government can provide leadership by buying only recycled paper and utilizing that for government operations wherever possible. The Legislative Assembly's administration and the Speaker of the House are to be congratulated for beginning to do that in a concerted way, but I believe that can be done much more broadly across government. Why am I suspicious? Because when I asked to find out specifics on the use of recycled paper in this government, that was one wheelbarrow this government failed to fill.

4:40

We should as a government use only recycled oil. The point was made earlier. Recycled oil, Mr. Speaker, makes all kinds of sense. In fact, I would go one step further and say: why do we not put a surtax on the use of nonrecycled oil and use that to subsidize the development and use of recycled oil? Let's restructure our priorities in that way to encourage environmentally sound initiatives.

Newspapers and periodicals which are published or imported to this province should in very short order understand that they must begin to utilize recycled paper. That should not be a question of choice, Mr. Speaker; that should be a question of direction. Time, yes, to make the transition, but direction. We're not asking you to do it, newspapers; we are telling you to do it.

Mr. Speaker, we need to develop source separation systems. This is of particular relevance for apartments and for commercial enterprises. It's very important that we begin to look at that and address that so we can find successful solutions.

We need to pay special attention to programs such as tires. The Trochu tire burning facility isn't perfect, but it may be in the short run a much better environmental solution than not having them picked up in the first place and having them catch on fire and burn uncontrollably in the second place. Burning

them to produce energy, Mr. Speaker, is a recovery initiative that in the short run at the very least has some environmental benefits and merits and also, of course, supports regional economic development. It's very disconcerting to hear that on the one hand the Minister of the Environment promised to put a tire tax to facilitate this kind of initiative – the pick-up, storage, recycling, and reuse of tires – prior to this year. Then come January 1, when everybody's off on holidays. All of a sudden he says no; we're not going to do it now. If this government cannot bring in a tire tax on the heels of the Hagersville fire, it is inconceivable what they think they could possibly do to promote environmental policy. This is not a difficult thing to do, and I believe there is widespread support in this province for initiatives such as that.

We need, Mr. Speaker, to look at market development in many respects. The promotion of recycled products comes down to assisting small entrepreneurs with market development. I remember just recently driving my car and hearing a news report on the fact that there exists in this city outlets, commercial enterprises, which sell recycled lumber, recycled building fixtures, and so on and so forth. Well, those are not widely known to exist amongst the people of a city like Edmonton. It would be very, very useful for the government to assist in promoting markets for that kind of product. I for one am next time going to go out and use exactly that kind of material. Why not? When confronted with the choice, I won't buy new; I'll buy reusable. Maybe I don't get a four-by-eight piece of plywood to build my rec room table, but with a little more ingenuity, I can use some odd-sized pieces and in fact make just as acceptable a table and feel and know that I have contributed to a proper environmental life-style choice.

Government can play a very positive role in assisting in that way. Recycling is good, Mr. Speaker, but it's also premised upon a faulty assumption in our society, that recycling means you can keep using because somehow it's all going to work out. It's not good enough. We also must reduce, and that should be the fundamental element of any solid waste management program.

Packaging reduction in fast-food restaurants. While one major fast-food restaurant in this city, in this country, in North America, and all over the world now, of course, which has kept me and my young sons alive on occasion, is now changing its use of styrofoam, it isn't good enough. There is still far too much waste from an operation like that, tonnes and tonnes and tonnes of paper waste. They should be encouraged, worked with to find ways not to use paper disposable wrapping and that kind of packaging.

This is a small example, but it underlines the nature of our disposable society, where we buy tea bags and some kinds of tea bags are actually individually wrapped, utilizing paper and energy to create that wrapping and printing and inks, and toxic wastes in those kinds of inks, and so on and so forth. Mr. Speaker, it is not necessary, and under this day's environmental demands it's not only not necessary but to continue to do that kind of thing approaches the immoral.

Mr. Speaker, home composting programs are essential. The Rotary Club of Edmonton is now working, as I understand it, with Rotary clubs across this province to promote the use of a home composter. They are to be congratulated. I received a very warm reception and assistance from the Speaker when I approached him several weeks ago about putting a composter outside the Legislature Annex so that people with their lunch wastes, coffee grounds, and tea bags could put them in a composter. I believe that we should ask and assist our cafeteria downstairs to provide leadership in composting, splitting up the

waste that could be composted. Fears about smell are not supportable. It's very, very easy to compost properly, and it only provides rich nutrients that could be used around the flower beds on these Legislature grounds. Commercial composting programs are extremely important and need attention. No matter what we do in a household, so much of the composting demand would come from commercial enterprise. As I say, starting here at the Legislature would be an interesting experiment. Stop subsidizing regional landfills. Let's reinforce those kinds of initiatives and activities that promote the environment, not those that diminish it.

We need a policy to phase out the use of disposables of all kinds, Mr. Speaker. We have a society, as I mentioned earlier, that somehow doesn't value its resources and its God-given riches well enough, and I believe that a policy that looks step by step at ruling out disposables wherever possible would be a society that would be richer and would have a greater sense of value overall.

We should look at waste audits, Mr. Speaker, to assist waste reduction plans both commercial and in the home, undoubtedly most effective at the commercial level. The Minister of Energy is always quick to promote his energy audit program, and he's to be congratulated for that. It's a precedent, however, that lends itself very well to waste audits and would have a tremendous impact.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would like to say that this is a good motion. It will become a great motion if this government embraces it and begins to fill it out with meaningful action, with meaningful policy. We have at our disposal, within our capability today in this society, the ability to take many individual steps to achieve a significant and substantial reduction in solid waste in this province. We could provide, in fact, leadership across this country and around the world in doing that. I believe that we have a moral obligation to do exactly that, and I ask that the members of this Legislature support this motion.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for St. Albert and also hon. Solicitor General.

4:50

MR. FOWLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not my intent today to speak from any expertise that I may have in respect to dry landfill sites and that type of waste and garbage. But I did acquire, unfortunately, in the '80s some expertise in the area of environmental control and protection through the Capital Region Sewage Commission in the city of Edmonton. In the very early '80s this government realized there was an environmental problem coming into existence in the area of greater metropolitan Edmonton and the districts around it. That problem was in respect to sewage. The counties, the MDs, the towns, and the cities which surrounded Edmonton were all encountering a similar problem or certainly going to encounter it in the very near future in respect to the disposal of the sewage being generated in all of those municipalities.

There were, in the early '80s, 10 municipalities around the city of Edmonton which had expressed a concern and were subject to a study by the provincial government as to what should be done. In short, Mr. Speaker, a study by the government decided that a regional sewage facility would respond to the problem which was recognized and studied. Ten municipalities in 1985 came together under a corporation and under legislation that came into effect the year before which permitted the formation of the Capital Region Sewage Commission, which included at that time two towns, four cities, three counties, and one

municipal district. So it is most evident that different jurisdictions – notwithstanding that they may differ in their corporate status as a municipality, a county, a city, or a town – could come together to face a very serious problem and deal with it. That was very quickly enlarged to 12 municipalities because the corporation accepted the fact that the town of Morinville and the town of Gibbons also had legitimate concerns and a legitimate right to enter that corporation as full members and were permitted to do so.

[Mr. Moore in the Chair]

As the mayor of the city of St. Albert at the time, I had the distinct privilege to be selected and act as the chairman of the Capital Region Sewage Commission from 1985 up to the time of my election to this House. I want to assure every member here that it was through the recognition of the government of the day that something had to be done in order to protect the environment from the discharge of sewage into a very major river of this part of the province, so \$55 million was in fact allowed by the government to build a major sewage plant and pipelines into the plant which is now located on the North Saskatchewan River, I believe in all probability in the constituency of the hon. Member for Clover Bar.

This board, instead of having long arguments over how many members were going to serve on the board of directors and if the greater user and the greater contributor to the sewage facility was therefore going to have a greater number of votes, very quickly decided that all 12 municipalities would contribute one director to the board and there would be one vote for each director. The major contributors of sewage to the facility were in fact the hamlet of Sherwood Park and the city of St. Albert. Neither one of the councils of those jurisdictions made any attempt whatsoever to try to control two-thirds of the votes of the board merely because they contributed two-thirds of the sewage to the facility, which also made up two-thirds of the gross revenue of the facility.

It was a totally co-operative approach, as I say, which ended up with four towns, four cities – not including the city of Edmonton – three counties, and one municipal district. There was considerable co-operation with the city of Edmonton as well, because without that co-operation the pipeline from the southern part of the overall system would have had to come right through Edmonton out to the north end of Edmonton to the facility. Through the city of Edmonton there was a sewer exchange agreement made. We ended up treating sewage from the northern part of Edmonton, and Edmonton treated sewage from the southern part of the overall system.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the co-operation that was in place for the building and the operation of this facility is indicative of the fact that it can be done. What we see now happening – it is certainly being talked about – is co-operation in respect to a regional approach for dry waste. But there appears to be, much to my distress, at least an appearance of certain distrusts that exist among the various jurisdictions. I am troubled by this because the municipal people that I talk to indicate that there does not seem to be the same apparent trust that exists in the current negotiations that existed in the past negotiations on the Capital Region Sewage Commission. I am distressed by this and, to the extent that I can, would advise all of the jurisdictions and the councils out there for the counties, the cities, the MDs, and the hamlets and all of the people to put aside their fear and approach this as a regional matter, as a provincial matter which must be resolved, to have less fear of who must control the

overall operation or have a greater control because of the size of the contributors to it.

The Capital Region Sewage Commission works well, and the hamlet of Sherwood Park and the city of St. Albert are up to 10 and 20 times larger than some of the municipalities that in fact vote on the Capital Region Sewage Commission board as well. The example is there for them to follow, and I would sincerely hope that they do so. Regional co-operation can be seen, then, as historically having been a way in which communities have shared their burdens and tackled very difficult problems. Solid waste management issues are particularly suited to regional planning and co-operation because they frequently cross political boundaries, and in fact it may be easier, Mr. Speaker, for no other reason than the fact that for every pipeline we built, we had to deal with municipalities and the private owners of land in that, which is never an easy matter. With dry waste this is not necessary; we're merely utilizing the highways for transportation.

There's a benefit to a regional approach, and waste management problems often highlight how interconnected our communities are. A landfill closure in one community definitely affects all neighbouring communities that rely on that landfill for waste disposal. This is all too clear to Edmonton and area communities attempting to deal with the pending closure of the Clover Bar landfill.

Another example is how the misuse or mismanagement of a water resource in one community can affect all other communities that rely on that water source, and it is a benefit to all people downstream that the city of Edmonton in fact has a fine treatment facility. It is also a benefit to the people downstream that the Capital Region Sewage Commission exists and also the fine treatment that the city of Edmonton provides to its sewage. Comparisons can be made by looking at the opposite sides of Canada on both coasts, at the pollution that's taken place in the oceans and the feeling that somehow or another the oceans are infinite and this can go on forever. But many of us, or all us here anyway, know that that is simply not the case; it cannot go on forever.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

In order for any environmental management program to be successful, there is a high level of co-operation and co-ordination necessary between the individual communities. Approaching integrated solid waste management issues on a regional level has a number of advantages, including the following.

Consistency. One of the primary advantages of regional co-operation is the resulting consistency of local laws, regulations, policies, and practices with a regional approach. The city of St. Albert cannot have a different set of laws and a different approach than the city of Edmonton, the hamlet of Sherwood Park, the town of Stony Plain, or the city of Spruce Grove. This is important whether or not provincial and federal governments have provided a common regulatory framework.

There's an efficient management of resources, Mr. Speaker. Although regional co-ordination is time-consuming, its goal is to make the planning and implementation of waste management strategies more efficient. Regional co-operation enables communities to share information, expertise, and resources to reach a workable waste management strategy. This is so evident in the Capital Region Sewage Commission, where certain municipalities had engineers with different expertise in different areas. The advantage of teamwork is that each player brings a different set of skills, strengths, and resources to the group.

Communities can share resources such as personnel, facilities, and equipment. The ability to share the costs of waste management is a strong argument for a regional approach.

5:00

Sharing liabilities is another reason in favour of opting for a regional approach to waste management. Lawsuits and delay actions are common when siting facilities such as treatment plants, incinerators, and landfills. Therefore, it is useful for communities to be able to share costs and resources when responding to legal challenges.

The political arena. An organized, co-operative effort by a number of communities may also leverage support for a regional project from provincial and federal authorities. It is much easier in government for us to listen to a joint approach by a group of municipalities rather than one single one either in the middle of an area or outside or on the edge of it. Multijurisdictional co-operation can also assist communities in working with the private sector. Let me say here, Mr. Speaker, that the Capital Region Sewage Commission since the day it opened has been operated by the private sector. The Capital Region Sewage Commission, with now nearly \$100 million in assets and a very large operation for 12 municipalities, operates with two employees: a general manager and his secretary. The whole of the operation is in fact contracted out. That may not be thought to be a benefit to some members in this House, but to us on this side it is a very large benefit, and it shows, as they have shown without any direction from us, that in fact the private operation works very well.

Trying to identify and develop markets for recyclables is another area for the regional to operate in. A co-operative multicomunity effort quite often is more successful than a single community effort. A group of communities can offer a recycler a greater and more reliable volume in materials.

Co-ordinated public information and education campaigns are another advantage of regional co-operation. Again, communities can share resources and ideas, building a united front to assist in managing public opposition and building public support.

The benefits, Mr. Speaker, of regional co-operation are clear and undeniable. I certainly hope the 19 Edmonton-area municipalities continue their co-operative effort to develop an integrated solid waste management plan. I have enough faith that municipal people, in the municipal elected field, will continue their efforts in this integrated approach, and we will see in the greater Edmonton area an integrated, unified effort.

I urge support of the motion. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Clover Bar, to conclude debate.

MR. GESELL: Mr. Speaker, if I could have the opportunity to close on the motion. First of all, I'd like to say I appreciate the participation and the comments that have been made by all members of the House on this particular motion.

There are a number of items that haven't been addressed yet that I might want to touch on very briefly, and then there are certain comments that have been made as well by certain members that I believe require a response. The first comment that I think requires a response is the discussion of the Aurum dump site that the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark raised. I want to re-emphasize, Mr. Speaker, on that particular issue that the decision on those municipal waste management facilities

rests solely with the municipalities. Provincially we assisted the municipalities by providing funding to study the concept, the necessary funds for the feasibility study. That feasibility study determined that the northeast site in the city of Edmonton was the best solution. Then it goes to the municipality to determine, on a political level, the decision. We've all seen what has happened there. I do not want to get into the discussion of pointing the finger, as maybe has been indicated by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark. I don't think that really solves the problem. We do have a problem; we need to solve it.

Mr. Speaker, on the other comment that was made by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, I appreciate the sentiment, but I need to correct him there as well. He indicated that schoolchildren are perhaps ahead of the provincial government in their desire and their perception of what we should be doing with our environment. Well, the member hasn't gone quite far enough, because I believe schoolchildren are ahead of any adult in that field, and that includes me and the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark. We have a generation of people growing up that will be the decision-makers of the future, that will have that sensitivity and the desire to protect our environment. I find that to be a beneficial objective.

The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark also indicated the economic argument about the diaper service that I guess he utilizes himself. If I remember correctly, he indicated that the disposable diaper service would cost some \$2,500, and the washable linen diapers might cost \$1,200 if one uses a service, but it might be even further reduced if he were to wash them in his household, somewhere around \$600 I think was the number that was mentioned. Well, Mr. Speaker, the economic argument makes a lot of sense to me, but the member neglected to discuss the environmental argument on that particular issue. I think that needs to be realized as well, and I'm not quite sure which alternative is more environmentally sound. The debate is still going on.

Let me just draw a small reference to particular items. Sure, if you have disposable diapers, they might end up in a landfill, they might not degrade, and so on, and that creates pollution, waste, no question. Similarly, so does the other alternative that the member alludes to, because cloth diapers you're going to have to wash; you're actually going to have to use phosphates on those in order to inhibit bacteria growth. That, in turn, creates pollution as well, of a different sort. The evaluation of which is environmentally more sound I am not certain about at this point in time. One needs to have a close look at that, and I'm certainly for the more environmentally sound method here, but I'm not sure whether the member has actually pointed us in the right direction. I'm not sure of that point.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member was also talking about source separation systems, and I wholly support that, totally, and I want to comment on that a little bit further. He also commented about the small entrepreneurs and the market development that government should be looking at in this environmental sector. I would draw the member's attention to the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, the motion introduced there, and as well to the Bill that I am proposing to introduce to amend the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act to allow for that environmental investment division, that initiative to provide a catalyst, the market development opportunities, for those industries that might be inclined to pursue the environmental objectives. In my mind, the motion that I have before the House here and some of those other

initiatives that I am pursuing are related. They are a cohesive strategy in order to look at an environmentally sound solution.

5:10

Now, Mr. Speaker, on the source separation issue let me draw some attention to the blue box program that is effective. I believe it's costly, but it is effective. It doesn't go all the way yet, because I believe that when we are looking for a solution to our waste management problems, the resource recovery, we need to involve all residents in the activities that generate that solution. The way we can involve all residents is through that source separation. That blue box program doesn't do it completely yet. If I understand the blue box program correctly, it allows residents to deposit all the items that may be recycled into one container. I feel we can go further than that. I think residents have bought in and will participate in separating totally into separate units. The D'Laras Corporation, I believe, has provided some inserts that might go into the blue box to actually achieve that. There are colour-coded garbage bags in order to assist in that separation as well, in the collection, I must emphasize, because the collection aspect of it is expensive as well. You need not have one recycling truck go by your house to pick up the recycled goods and then another one to pick up the other garbage. I think it can be integrated so that there is one vehicle that achieves both objectives.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to briefly touch on the economic situation. I need to stress to members that there are no longer cheap solutions to this problem. We may have had \$10 a tonne tipping fees in the past, but even if you were to develop a new garbage dump, a landfill, a regressive situation: now the cost would be somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$20 to \$30 per tonne. We're living in the past if we think we can provide that service cheaply. For Aurum the cost was higher because there had to be some special techniques to assure some additional environmental protection.

The point I want to make with respect to landfill is that it only looks cheap because it doesn't include all of the costs. The costs for the eventual reclamation of the site are usually not included in that initial cost that we are looking at or the costs that eventually might occur because of problems with the site, leachate coming from the site or the more severe cases where we actually have to reopen that old landfill and remove that garbage that has been accumulated there to a new landfill and start that whole cycle over again. If one adds those particular costs, landfilling becomes an extremely expensive solution. My position would be that we should solve the problem at the beginning and solve it all rather than prolong the agony in the landfilling situation that exists and will exist if we do not change our vision.

I want to talk about the vision. The member mentioned that what we have here are some very ambitious objectives. Yes, they are. But I think that's why we're here. We have to have that vision. We have to have the vision, and I have the vision that eventually, if we pursue these objectives, everything may be recycled, resource recovered, so that we do not end up with any residue. Hopefully, we will get to that point in time.

Mr. Speaker, there was an urging that there be meaningful support for this particular motion. I would urge again all members to provide that meaningful support. Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion carried]

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Dunvegan.

Health Care Cost Statements

206. Moved by Mr. Clegg:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to provide health care service recipients with a "costs incurred by Alberta health care" transcript for the patient/client's signature before the patient leaves the medical centre – hospital, clinic, medicentre – or before the home care professional leaves the patient and that a year-end statement be sent directly to all Albertans totaling these amounts as an information service.

MR. CLEGG: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to present Motion 206 to the Legislative Assembly today. What made me bring this motion to the House was that when I traveled around Alberta and through my constituency, I spoke to many groups – Rotary clubs, chamber of commerce groups – and the comment I got at those was: "Well, what's the government trying to do? They're spending all their money on recreation and parks. They're spending money on everything but health care." When I give them the figures on our social programs – and I don't like to stress those words "social programs," but I put health, education, and social services into social programs. When I told them that 65 to 70 percent of our total budget was used for those three departments, they couldn't believe it.

Certainly I am a great believer in health and education and, in fact, social services in this province. However, I've sat here many days, and I've heard this government say, "Well, the price of oil next year is going to be \$23 a barrel," and I've heard the opposition say that it's far too high. All I can say is that there isn't anybody in this House that knows what the average price of oil is going to be next year. We estimate the price of oil, and if anybody's been into any budget that's presented, an estimated budget, there's no budget that comes out exactly the way it's presented. I am sure that it is the best estimate. There's nobody here who can say that the price of oil isn't going to go down in 1993 and 1994. Nobody can say that. Really, we have to get control over social spending. There is no question in my mind that we have to control those spendings. If oil was \$40 a barrel, nobody was concerned. Just keep spending. That's all the NDP and the Liberals believe in, just spend, spend, spend. They never worry about where the money's going to come from. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: We'll spend a certain amount of time with enough quiet here so the Chair can hear what the Member for Dunvegan is saying.

MR. CLEGG: Anyway, I am so concerned that the people of Alberta don't know the extreme cost of our health care in Alberta.

MR. TAYLOR: Better hope they never wise up. You'll lose an election.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, Westlock-Sturgeon. Thank you.

MR. CLEGG: Certainly it's important that they do know. Many people have said to me: "Well, I pay a premium. I should be able to go to the doctor every day or three times a day or four times a day. I should be able to run to Peace River

one day and down to Grande Prairie the next day, and there are four doctors in Fairview. That's my right. I pay a premium for that." That's what I hear out there. I'm really concerned about what I'm hearing. But if the people really knew, the premium covers approximately 35 percent of the health care cost. And we all know what the federal government – and I'm not totally blaming the federal government. They've got a budget to balance too, and roughly 12 percent of the cost comes from them. We have a real problem on our hands unless we educate the people that are using our health care, and boy, we all want the health care system. But we've got to be careful. We've got to let the people of Alberta know that health care is very, very costly. We've got to do everything possible to in fact make sure that they know.

5:20

There are many questions that I just want to run over. How many members of the Assembly can reasonably guess the cost of the medical service that they received from Alberta health care insurance in 1990? How about the cost accumulated by your family? How many Albertans believe that their health care premiums fully cover the cost of basic health care? There are many people out there that believe they pay that premium and that's what the premium is like. They believe it's like an insurance program for car insurance or fire insurance: everybody pays a premium and it's all covered. Those facts aren't true. How many Albertans know that each time they go to a new clinic, hospital, or medical centre, an additional charge is made to the insurance plan as the health care practitioner has to take a medical history and open a file for his new client? How many Albertans know that if their family doctor is called to an emergency ward from his or her office during working hours for a basic medical service like having a cold checked, the physician may bill the Alberta health care \$53? If that same person went to a doctor's office, the health care would be billed for \$21.75.

That's what I'm trying to bring in this motion, to let people be aware of what's happening. Motion 206 aims to provide Albertans with information on their health care system and the services provided within it.

AN HON. MEMBER: What's this going to cost us?

MR. CLEGG: Somebody asked a question. Yes, there is going to be an absolute cost, and I'm glad it's brought up, because we don't need any more costs to government. The amount it's going to cost is probably in the neighbourhood of half a million dollars. The information is there anyway, so it's not going to be a large increase in spending. It's going to be a fraction of 1 percent. When we consider our budget is over \$4 billion, it's going to be very, very little.

Motion 206 would have health care service providers prepare a transcript, not a bill but a transcript, at the site where the service has been provided to a client. The client would read the information, sign the transcript, and take a single copy of their

own record for information. The transcript would clearly state the service that they were provided with and the associated fee charged to the health care plan. Motion 206 would further require that the year-end cumulative cost incurred be sent to every family in Alberta. Motion 206 also establishes a mechanism which is easily understood and relevant to each health care user, which aims to increase system appreciation and accountability as well as communication and co-operation by all parties involved in the delivery and receipt of health care services.

It will give Albertans a real appreciation for the health care system in Alberta. May I add – and it's been said in this House many, many times – that we have the best health care system in Canada and in fact the world. I'm sure there isn't one person in this House or one Albertan that doesn't believe that if they think about it, and I'm sure every person in Alberta wants the best health care system in Alberta.

The motion complements the direction of the government and our minister . . . I'm like the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. He sent me a note here, and now I've lost my thought.

As the number one priority for the vast majority, it is reasonable to expect that provincial governments would place health care as its number one in spending. When I travel, again around the constituency, when I talk to hospital boards, and when I talk to people that are concerned about health care, they say that health care is number one. Then I go and talk to the teachers and the school boards of this province, and they say that education is number one. Well, I don't think anything would be any higher priority than health, because you can educate somebody all you want, but if they haven't got any health, then they're not much good, are they? Health care, in my mind, is the number one priority in this government and in Alberta. Certainly, every department is number one.

In view of the time, I beg leave to 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. Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that when members reconvene this evening, we do so as the Committee of Supply.

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 5:26 p.m.]