

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, April 22, 1991**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 91/04/22

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head:

Prayers

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We, Thine unworthy servants here gathered together in Thy name, do humbly beseech Thee to send down Thy heavenly wisdom from above to direct and guide us in all our considerations.

Amen.

head:

Introduction of Visitors

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly Gediminas Vagnorius, the Prime Minister of Lithuania. Mr. Vagnorius was elected as Prime Minister in January of this year. He is making his first official visit to Canada at this time. During his week-long visit to Canada he has been meeting with members of the Lithuanian-Canadian community and government officials, both federally and provincially, to discuss democratic and economic reforms currently occurring in his homeland. Prior to his election, the Prime Minister was vice-chairman of the committee on the economy. He is also an engineer by profession with a background in economics. On behalf of the government of Alberta, I would like to welcome the Prime Minister to Alberta and wish him and his countrymen the very best of success in achieving peaceful political reforms and economic prosperity for the benefit of all Lithuanians.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly Dr. Egidijus Klumbys, a member of the Lithuanian Parliament who is accompanying the Prime Minister on this visit to Canada. Dr. Klumbys has been a member of Parliament since the spring of 1990 and currently serves as the vice-chairman of the Lithuanian foreign affairs committee, including responsibilities for the republic's international activities. Prior to his election, he was the director of the Kaunas Neurosurgical Research Institute.

I would now ask that the Prime Minister and Dr. Klumbys rise in your gallery and receive the recognition and warm welcome of the members of the Assembly.

head:

Reading and Receiving Petitions

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, last Friday I presented a petition, and I was hoping that the Clerk would read that petition into the record today.

MR. SPEAKER: Together with the appropriate deletion taken into effect. Thank you.

CLERK:

To the Honourable Legislative Assembly in and for the Province of Alberta:

We, the undersigned Petitioners, being both citizens of the Province of Alberta and tradesmen who have completed an apprenticeship through the most efficient apprenticeship training system yet devised, that being the Alberta Apprenticeship System, humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly in and for the Province of Alberta shall direct the Honourable Minister of Career Development and Manpower to cease and desist with the policies and legislation that is being attempted through the Training and

Certification of Alberta's skilled Work Force and rather seek to reinforce the highly successful Alberta apprenticeship system.

head:

Introduction of Bills

Bill 11

Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 11, Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act.

This Bill has been developed after considerable public and industry consultation and research to govern the apprenticeship training and trade certification systems in Alberta and to accommodate the full range of industrial demands now and in the future. It will replace the existing Manpower Development Act passed in 1975.

[Leave granted; Bill 11 read a first time]

head:

Tabling Returns and Reports

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the 1989-90 annual reports for both Athabasca University and the Department of Advanced Education.

head:

Introduction of Special Guests

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, not more than an hour ago I had the privilege of presenting, as the first official action in National Consumer Week, two certificates of appreciation to outstanding consumer advocates in the province of Alberta. I now have the pleasure of introducing those individuals and others with them to you and to members of the Assembly. Betty Hunter has been a long-standing consumer advocate, president of the Consumers' Association of Alberta, very involved in environmental issues, and has worked for more than 30 years with the association. Ruth Wood has worked on many of our committees and has been president through parts of the '70s and parts of the '80s of the Consumers' Association of Canada and of the local association. Both of these people have given outstanding dedication, many hours, and much commitment to the people of the province of Alberta. I would like them to stand; they're in your gallery, along with the current president of the Consumers' Association of Alberta, Lynne Arling; Sally Hall, who is chairman of the consumers' education task force, a previous national president, and a president of other consumer association activities; and Rick Solkowski and Gord Rosko from our department. Would they all please stand in the Speaker's gallery. Could we particularly thank Betty Hunter and Ruth Wood for their outstanding commitment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Solicitor General, followed by the Minister of Agriculture.

MR. FOWLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a particular pleasure for me today to introduce to you and through you six outstanding young men from the city of St. Albert. On March 24 these young men, all members of 533 Sabre Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Cadets, St. Albert, were holidaying in Waterton national park. They were mountaineering, and while camping, they noticed a half-ton truck which missed the turn and went over an embankment, plunging 300 feet into the valley. The six young men took immediate action: went down the bank and attended upon the injured. One had died at that time, and two were very seriously injured. They got extra help from the townsites of Waterton, and both men were taken out. One

unfortunately died at a later date; one survives. These cadets, who are with us today, met in my office and received some special recognition. I would ask that they stand as I introduce them to you and through you to the House: Warrant Officer 2nd Class Doug Gregg, Sergeant Aric Fleming, Sergeant Ian Glas, Sergeant Travis Schneider, Corporal Selwyn Sanjivi, and Corporal Sean Heuchert. Ladies and gentlemen, these young men are here this afternoon.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. Member for Drumheller, it gives me pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly the former Member of the Legislative Assembly for Drumheller Mr. Lewis Mitchell Clark, who is seated in your gallery. He served that riding from 1979 to 1986. He's back to check to see how we're doing things. I would ask you to welcome Mickey Clark.

2:40

MR. SPEAKER: Redwater-Andrew, followed by Lacombe.

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today for me to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly a group of young and energetic grade 10 social studies students who I know are studying politics, from the H.A. Kostash school at Smoky Lake. They are accompanied by teachers Mr. Keith Dorin, brother of MP Murray Dorin, and Mr. Mike McNamara. They are seated in the members' and public galleries, and I'd ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislature 38 members of the 50-plus group. They'd originally started out from the town of Tees but have now expanded into the eastern half of the Lacombe constituency. They are accompanied today by their group leaders Ruby Pregitzer and Mert Nicholson. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask them now to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder.

MS MJOLSNES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to introduce, on behalf of my colleague from Edmonton-Centre, two groups of high school students from St. Joseph high school. There are 16 students in each group, and they are accompanied by their teachers Ms Basarab and Mrs. Jan Dunnigan. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask that they stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head:

Ministerial Statements

National Consumer Week

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated earlier, this is the start of National Consumer Week across Canada. The theme is Team Up for a Stronger Marketplace. The success of this year's National Consumer Week depends on consumers, business, and government working together in the interests of consumers today.

Alberta is facing challenges. The rapidly changing consumer marketplace has resulted in this government's initiative to encourage the use of plain language in contracts and forms. We are also making significant progress in our partnership programs. New initiatives are proposed in the automotive, funeral, real estate, financial consumer, securities, and landlord and tenant areas.

This week I encourage all Alberta consumers to think about how we can raise business standards, educate ourselves to be better consumers, and work together to resolve disputes in the marketplace. We should all be working towards a fair and honest marketplace. Let National Consumer Week be the kickoff for an even stronger partnership between consumers, business, and government.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, this is one of the ministerial statements that it is hard to disagree with. Obviously

the success of this year's National Consumer Week depends on consumers, business, and government working together in the interests of consumers today.

In an ideal world we wouldn't even have to state that.

As the minister is well aware, we have certainly agreed with his initiative dealing with plain language in contracts and forms. The minister goes on to talk about

new initiatives [that are] proposed in the automotive, funeral, real estate, financial consumer,

and Lord knows the millions of dollars we lost; we certainly need better laws there,

securities, and landlord and tenant areas.

Mr. Speaker, if I may go to the landlord and tenant area, because it's one of the most important areas that we deal with in the province, I'd suggest to the minister that we've been waiting for a fairly long period of time. We've had hearings across the province. We're told that this is imminent and coming, and we're still waiting for a new Act. I would say to the minister that there's a crying need to beef up at least a part of it and give tenants some rights in this province. I hope that we are going to see that in this session, because there are going to be a lot of disappointed people if we don't. They may be more disappointed after they see the Bill, but at least we should be seeing the Bill.

So I would encourage the minister to move in all of these areas but especially in that area, and I hope we do see it in this session.

head:

Oral Question Period

Export Loan Guarantee Program

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Over the last five years Albertans have seen government ad hoc – and I stress "ad hoc" – loan guarantees: bailout after bailout of friends of this government. Frankly, they've seen it blow up in their faces time and time again. But because of this government's secrecy what Albertans have perhaps not been aware of is the massive amount of money awarded under the export loan guarantee program. In 1989 that was over \$140 million. This is a program which uses taxpayers' money, though this government refuses to let them know who is getting it. We will do the government's job: I'd like to file with the Legislature a copy of these \$140 million and the companies that got it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. You know where filings take place; sorry. That's fine, but now let's have the question.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to get to the question. It's an important matter that people want to know about. Will the minister now finally agree that Albertans have every right to know who they are giving money to and agree from this day forward to publish this program's recipients in the public accounts?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has raised the issue of our export loan guarantee program and the backstopping that we have provided for those companies that export outside of the boundaries of our province. It's interesting to note that we backstop 85 percent of that loan guarantee. We do so on the basis of the financial data that the financial institutions themselves gather, because there is an exposure on their part of some 15 percent. We involve ourselves because we acknowledge that the exportation of goods creates jobs within this province.

It's interesting to note, too, and I could quote *Hansard*, whereby the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway indicated that he was supportive of the export loan guarantee program.

MS BARRETT: Not its secrecy.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Let's get on with the answer.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I only ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition to be somewhat responsible. He has letters in his own file, and I wish he would table them also, whereby individuals have written to him as it relates to the exposure that he put their companies through. It has proven harmful to those individual companies, because it creates a psychological impact.

MS BARRETT: That's because you created months of secrecy.

MR. ELZINGA: I wish the hon. member would allow me the courtesy of answering. [interjection] I don't interrupt the hon. Leader of the Opposition; I wish he wouldn't interrupt me.

MR. McINNIS: I thought this was question period, not speech period.

MR. ELZINGA: I only ask the courtesy of that.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that we've got an obligation to create a strong economy, an obligation to develop the exportation of goods that are produced within this province, and we're going to continue with that obligation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

In response to Edmonton-Jasper Place, it is not speech period, but he had exactly the same amount of time as your leader did.

Let's have the supplementary.

MR. MARTIN: Nonsense, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: What's the nonsense?

MR. MARTIN: The minister's answer is nonsense, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the point is that we're not talking about the program, and there may be some good programs in there. What we're

talking about is secrecy with taxpayers' money. What the minister must realize is that there's an accountability, to deal openly with taxpayers' money, not hide behind private, closed-door meetings. I again want to ask the minister this. He's sort of gone into the idea of business accountability and how they'd be disadvantaged. Given that what we're asking for here today is to publish the companies that received money under this program in the public accounts – and I remind the minister that these come out one year after the year in which the loan guarantees are made – will the minister explain how this jeopardizes business confidentiality?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, let's take it one step further, and the reason I raise this is because we're in the process of creating jobs. I recognize the hon. member doesn't want to create jobs; he wants us to continue to hand out welfare cheques, which we totally disagree with. Is he also suggesting that we should indicate in a public way those who are receiving welfare cheques? Is he also suggesting that we should indicate the names of those who receive student loans? We've got an obligation. Under set programs there are set procedures to follow whereby there is public disclosure, which we're not about to alter, because we believe it is the right procedure. We've also got obligations to those individuals who are receiving support from their government, whether it be welfare, student loans, or accessing through their financial institutions the export loan guarantee program.

2:50

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, that's precisely the point: there are no procedures. They come cap in hand, behind closed doors, to the minister, and if he likes them, he hands out money. That's what the reality is.

I remind the minister about General Composites. He knew this company was in trouble; he still handed out the money. It's being used as a slush fund, Mr. Speaker. My question is this: isn't it true that the only reason the government wants this program administered in secret is because it is treated like a slush fund and that they really don't want the public to know about it?

MR. ELZINGA: No, Mr. Speaker. Even with the stupidity with which the question was put, I'm going to give him the courtesy of an answer. The truth of it is that there is a process which one has to follow as it relates to a loan guarantee under our export loan guarantee program. The hon. member is aware of it himself. He indicated in his previous question that he put to me that there was a process; now he's swallowing himself and is indicating that there isn't. There is a set procedure. I indicated to him that it first has to go through the financial institutions, whereby they are involved up to 15 percent themselves. We only backstop at 85 percent. The reason is that the financial institutions themselves are involved. Plus there is a thorough scrutiny as it relates to our own department and the Treasury Department within our government, whereby if there is not viability – and it's done on the basis of sales already completed for the exportation of products from the province of Alberta. Mr. Speaker, to say that there isn't a process in place is totally inaccurate, and, no, the hon. member is totally out to lunch again.

MR. MARTIN: If that's the case, why not put it in public accounts? What are you hiding from then? That's the question.

Senior Citizens Programs

MR. MARTIN: My second question is to the Minister of Health. Another example of this government's operating in secrecy behind closed doors is the cuts that it's made to the seniors programs. Mr. Speaker, the Premier claims that seniors want to pay more. Well, the seniors that were out on the steps of the Legislature today didn't feel that way, and I don't think many seniors who have called us have. Now, they and many other seniors in this province are furious with the fact that they had absolutely no input into the decisions made by this government, decisions that they cannot afford and that were made behind closed doors. Why is it that this government continues to bluff about what seniors want when in fact it has not taken the opportunity to even consult with them?

MS BETKOWSKI: First of all, let's look at the process that we went through as a government to come up with newly revised and updated programs in both the areas of home care and our very expensive but very worthwhile Alberta Aids to Daily Living program. We looked at the issues of providing medical services and treatment services and home care services through a new perspective, and that new perspective was the Premier's council on the status of the disabled. That gave us a whole new way of looking at our programs. We were able to update our programs and provide protection for the low-income Albertan regardless of age. We were able to do that by updating, making far more benefits of the program available that were not able to be covered in the past. That is a new perspective. I would argue that it's a very progressive, '90s perspective on programs, all the while protecting the low-income Alberta senior and all other Albertans. In fact, it's a very important way, and the consultation process to get to that point was a very important one.

MR. MARTIN: All the seniors' groups, every one of them, are saying that they were not consulted. If she wants to call that progressive, she can, Mr. Speaker.

It was not only the seniors but the members who have to implement the charges who were not consulted. Dentists, denturists, optometrists, pharmacists: all of them have said that they weren't consulted. Because the seniors and these groups weren't consulted, will the minister admit that the cutbacks in programs now are ill advised and agree to put on hold any changes until she has consulted directly with those service providers affected as well as seniors?

MS BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, let's take one of them. Let's take, for example, the pharmacists. Pharmacists are part of an ongoing review of our Blue Cross program in this province. Frankly, in the area of pharmacy there are some things we need to do in Alberta in order that we can get broader generic uses of drugs. This is something that the opposition have been screaming about in the last several years while I've been Health minister in this Legislature. So now we have a process in place by which we can review things like a defined drug benefit list, so that we can review things about interchangeable drug programs along with consultation with the pharmacists. It is in order to make our programs more contemporary and for the very important goal of ensuring that we can deliver our health programs within a defined budget and make them affordable and sustainable. It's a very important issue. We happen to believe in this health system in this province, and ensuring its sustainability is something we take very seriously as a government.

MR. MARTIN: Everybody else in the whole province is wrong but this government, Mr. Speaker. The pharmacists are complaining about the administration of this program because they weren't consulted, and the minister is well aware of that.

I want to direct my last question to the Deputy Premier. This decision was made without consultation. Further evidence of this mind-set is the Premier's proposed seniors advisory council, Bill 1, which makes absolutely no provision to make sure that seniors will even be on the council. Will the Deputy Premier ensure that the Bill is amended so that seniors can be assured that they will occupy the majority of seats on the council and thus be able to present their concerns directly to the government so we don't run into this mess again?

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I expect that Bill will be up in committee in the Assembly very shortly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Glengarry on behalf of the Liberal Party.

MR. DECORE: Sir, I'd like to designate that to the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Apologies. Too many things up here.

Westlock-Sturgeon.

Lily Lake Road

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the acting minister of highways. The Wildlife Park, Aunt Helen's zoo, just northeast of Edmonton is in trouble, caught between a rather opinionated Minister of Recreation and Parks, who doesn't like giraffes, and an MD council, that wants to build a road right through the middle of the park as well as the adjoining lake. The engineering estimates have shown that the road through the lake could cost anywhere from \$800,000 to \$1 million more than one around the lake. Since the Minister of the Environment recently recommended in a letter that the road go around the lake and not through it and since a major part of this road cost is paid by the provincial government, is the minister going to go the way the council wants to, put a road through the middle of the lake, or insist that the cheaper, more environmentally sound road around the lake be the one that goes?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I have not had an opportunity at all to discuss this matter with the MD of Sturgeon, but should there be some information that the MD would like to provide to the government with respect to this in April of 1991, I'd be very happy to take a look at it.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the minister has been the last year, and I'm not referring to his presence in the House. It's probably one of the most widely known controversies in his area.

This next question, then, is to the Minister of the Environment. Since the Minister of the Environment only recommended that the road go around the lake and not through it, does this mean that the minister does not have the authority to stop a road through the middle of the lake or that he hasn't got the guts to rule against it? Which?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, as usual we will do what is prudent and what is right. In this particular case the proponent, that is the county, has been asked to address certain deficiencies. If those deficiencies are not addressed to the satisfaction of the department, I guess we can invoke regulations under either the Clean Water Act or the Water Resources Act or any other Act that might be applicable to make sure that whatever is done is done in an environmentally safe manner.

MR. TAYLOR: The final question is: in view of the fact that there has been an independent study by the university, there has been a study of the environment hired by the MD council, and there has been a study done by the Minister of the Environment, would he not say that all he's doing is knuckling under to the prodevelopment lobby that wants to put a road for hazardous wastes in Redwater straight through to Swan Hills and he hasn't got the guts to stop it?

3:00

MR. KLEIN: This minister, Mr. Speaker, has the guts to do whatever is right and responsible. To say that we're bowing to the pressures of a prodevelopment group is utter and absolute nonsense, and the hon. member knows it. Very simply, our department acts in a regulatory role, and when deficiencies in an environmental impact assessment are identified, we ask the proponents to rectify and address those deficiencies. If they're addressed to the satisfaction of the department, the director of standards and approval, then a permit will be issued. If they aren't addressed, then a permit will not be issued. It's as simple as that. [interjection]

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Westlock-Sturgeon. You asked your three questions. You really don't need to carry it on.

I'm sure that while all of us here have the guts in one form or another, we'll follow the tradition and find better words to use. It's been ruled out of order since '83. Thank you.

Agricultural Assistance by Federal Government

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Alberta farmers are today a bit concerned about what's happening with the programs for farmers that are shared by Alberta Agriculture. In the cabinet shuffle we now have a new Minister of Agriculture. Could I ask the minister if he has been in contact with the new Minister of Agriculture to see what his opinion of the programs is?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I can inform the House that I talked last evening on a very preliminary basis with the hon. Mr. McKnight, the new Minister of Agriculture Canada. I congratulated him on his appointment, identified some of the ongoing joint programs that we're working on, and I will be following that up once he is more fully briefed later on this week.

MR. MUSGROVE: Farmers are particularly interested in what is happening with the new gross revenue insurance program, which is in the process, and whether or not this will be carried out now with Agriculture Canada.

MR. ISLEY: I'll defer that one, Mr. Speaker, to the Associate Minister of Agriculture.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the revenue insurance option and the crop yield option are in place, and the contracts are available for farmers. That program will continue, as will the review of the program over the interim year. We look forward to working with our new colleague in Ag Canada in the further development for the use and, we hope, the stability of the grains and oilseed sector in Alberta.

I would just like to add, Mr. Speaker, that the deadline for registration for that program has been extended to May 15, and I thank you for your indulgence in letting me put that information out for our producers.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn, followed by Calgary-Buffalo.

Export Loan Guarantee Program (continued)

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a number of occasions government ministers have referred to the fact that a member of the Official Opposition chairs the Public Accounts Committee. As Chair of that committee, there's nothing more frustrating than having the government refuse to provide information to the committee which is necessary to account for the expenditure of taxpayers' money. My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Given that the most recent Auditor General's report criticizes this government for its failure to properly account for government guarantees and indemnities and given that guarantees of up to \$5 million per company can be granted under the export loan guarantee program, what possible justification can there be for denying the Public Accounts Committee information about the companies which receive guarantees under the export program?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the truth is just to the contrary of what the hon. member suggested. I'm more than happy to appear before the Public Accounts Committee, which I have in the past, to answer any questions they'd like to put to me.

MR. PASHAK: The information is not provided, and we're just asking for justification of why that information is not provided, Mr. Speaker.

Now, a number of these companies that received guarantees under the export loan program have also received other types of government financial assistance, and some of this assistance obviously goes to bailing out companies that the government has backed. Will the minister now provide the real criteria on which companies are approved for export loan guarantees?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the real criteria have on a consistent basis been outlined to hon. members. If hon. members don't want to listen to what the real criteria are, I don't know how we can present it to them more forcefully. I'm more than happy to reinforce with them that the procedure is, as such, that we involve ourselves with the lending institution. It's done on the basis of their having contracts for sale to areas outside of the province, whereby we only backstop 85 percent; the other 15 percent is backstopped itself by the financial institutions. There is a thorough review by both the Treasury Department and our department. There's a lengthy process of checks and balances that they have to go through to make sure that there is validity in us issuing that support so that we can have exportation of Alberta goods creating jobs in the province of Alberta for the benefit of all of our citizens.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo.

Natural Gas Pricing and Supply

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Energy. Recently a Calgary energy analyst suggested that there may be a financial disaster in the making as a result of continuing downward pressure on natural gas prices caused by oversupply due to expansion of the Nova pipeline system. Nova is one of only two pipelines in all of North America which is not regulated. Now, the matter has to be addressed since low Alberta spot prices can drive down the prices that we are going to be renegotiating in Ontario and ultimately in California at great cost to producers and to provincial royalty revenue. I'm wondering whether the minister can answer, since it's now 14 years since there's been any public hearings in Alberta with respect to natural gas issues, why the minister has not called a public hearing on the pros and cons of regulating Nova and other important natural gas issues.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Calgary-Buffalo asks an important question and a contemporary one. Many of the producers today are wondering whether or not Nova should be regulated given the fact that they are planning a \$3 billion expansion over the next five to seven years. Many would say that adding that capacity and bringing on new supply exacerbates the low price regimes we have right now. Others would say that producers should exercise some discipline in bringing on new supplies in a time of oversupply. Traditionally the producers have made that decision. The question as to whether or not there should be full evidentiary hearings is one under consideration at the current time.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the industry is going to be paying \$800 million in 1991 in tariffs to move its gas in the province, I'm wondering whether the minister thinks it is proper that Nova does not have to divulge any of its specific rate information to these producers. Will he do something to rectify that, public hearings or no public hearings?

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, from time to time and on a regular basis Nova meets with the producers under the auspices of the Canadian Petroleum Association, IPAC, Independent Petroleum Association, and the small explorers. At those meetings Nova discusses matters that go into the rate base and provides information as to what those costs are. The hon. member will have noticed, as we all have, that Nova is going to be carving out the pipeline side from their operations. Many believe that will bring greater integrity to the rate base. It will be specifically and solely dedicated to transportation costs.

Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, there is active consideration being given to whether or not public hearings are necessary. Some believe they are; some believe they are not. It is a traditional way of doing things. I don't reject the idea. Personally, I believe it may be a good idea for the ERCB to sit down with Nova and some of the gas producers and have a good discussion on this matter. In any case, I will look to the advice from the industry and the ERCB before making any decisions in this connection.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Smoky River, followed by Stony Plain.

Waste Recycling

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last November the Minister of the Environment toured the Peace River country and met with many constituents who expressed the difficulties they were having in trying to establish a regional recycling program in a rural, depopulated area. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Anticipation

MR. SPEAKER: Estimates are up tonight, and I'm waiting to see if the question has a financial overtone. [interjections] Maybe we'll know more . . . [interjections] Thanks very much. I appreciate your help.

3:10

Waste Recycling (continued)

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At that time the constituents in the Peace River country expressed concern about the difficulties in trying to establish a recycling program or project in a rural, depopulated area. The minister assured the people that he would take this back, spend some time with his staff, and see if it would be possible to establish such a program. Could the minister share with the constituents and with the House whether indeed he has discussed this with his staff and advise the constituents in the Peace River country whether indeed such a program is being formulated and put together?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, this is a timely question notwithstanding the fact that estimates are today, because I happened to be up there on Friday, and I think it's very timely. [interjections] What would the opposition have me do? Answer the question three or four months from now? Of course it's timely, because I was up there talking to the hon. member's constituents, and we talked about meaningful, grass-roots kinds of things, where people want to get involved in recycling. We as a government want to help them accommodate meaningful and worthwhile recycling programs. [interjections]

AN HON. MEMBER: Why does it apply to them and not to us?

MR. SPEAKER: Oh, thank you very much. I think there's some kind of trouble with your sound system probably. Let's hear the supplementary briefly.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Anticipation

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. If this persists, question period will be adjourned right here and now. [interjections] Order. Order.

A short supplementary, and it had better not have any financial implications. The first was a representation. Let's hear this.

Waste Recycling (continued)

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, it's of much greater concern to the constituents of the Peace River country than it is to our neighbours to the left.

Does the minister have any time lines as to when and how he will be implementing this program?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, basically we've asked that the various municipal jurisdictions involved form a steering committee and work with the department to co-ordinate a regional approach to recycling, where the smaller communities that really can't accommodate recycling programs on their own would feed into a regional system where the recyclables could be consolidated and shipped on a cost/benefit basis to the larger centres like Calgary and Edmonton. This is all part of the new program called Action on Waste.

MR. McINNIS: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Stony Plain.

Health Unit Boundaries

MR. WOLOSHTYN: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, *Hansard* will show that last Monday I asked the Minister of Health to allocate \$175,000 in additional funding to the West Central health unit so that the residents of the municipal district of Brazeau, just east of the North Saskatchewan River, would not be denied basic health services. I did not take the position this minister is taking, which is that money should be taken away from the Leduc-Strathcona health unit. My question is this: how can the minister maintain this position of pitting one health unit against another resulting in a denial of basic health services to Albertans? [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MS BETKOWSKI: Is that a question, Mr. Speaker?

MR. WOLOSHTYN: I guess the minister, rather than misstating my words, doesn't choose to answer, and that's fine.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans know that our health units are underfunded, and to expect Leduc-Strathcona to give up part of its funding is ridiculous and extremely unfair. As the minister has a total budget of over \$3 billion, how is it that she will permit 2,200 residents of Brazeau to go without basic health care services because she is unwilling to provide an extra 22 cents per day per resident? Compare this with the amount of investment the government is losing, the bad money thrown away, Ms Minister.

MS BETKOWSKI: Well, I'm glad to know, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Alberta are listening to the questions. Let's look at the issue. We have 2,000 people who have been accessing health services in a particular health unit and find it more convenient to do so. We now have those exact same people, at the request of a boundary adjustment, to be served by another one. My simple question is: why should it only be a matter of adding new dollars? Throughout the whole health system, with the backing of the Rainbow Report, we've got the issue of reallocation right before us as a very, very strong recommendation. Contrary to what the hon. member says, it's \$4 billion that are in our health system. The Rainbow Report is saying that we've had all these resources; it's a matter of how we spend our dollars, not a matter of adding more to it constantly.

If you want to look at community health this year in this budget, it's increasing by 20 percent. I happen to think that's

very reasonable, in fact very generous support for public health in this province. So if those 2,000 people are going to be served elsewhere, I think they should be able to find the resources somewhere from someone who is not serving them: a simple principle of reallocation that we believe in in this health system.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton Meadowlark, followed by Banff-Cochrane and then Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Automobile Insurance

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In theory the facility insurance pool program allows auto insurance companies to share the high risk of insuring bad drivers. In practice, however, there are no uniform criteria to determine who will be forced into the facility insurance pool program and who will therefore pay as much as two to three times a normal auto insurance premium. My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. What concrete steps is the minister taking to, as he would say, Team Up for a Stronger Marketplace, a marketplace in which there would be uniform selection criteria designed to prevent arbitrary and inconsistent industry decisions about who will be put into an expensive high cost facility insurance program and . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the hon. member's question we share any concerns that are there with regards to the number of people being put in the facility; in other words, those declared a risk. Where that's appropriate, it is indeed something that must be done to carry out the automobile industry's viability. Where it's not appropriate, I think insurers themselves would want to relook at that circumstance.

In answer to his question on what we are doing, I met with industry individuals on a national basis in Toronto not long ago, discussed with them the criteria and what is happening in automobile insurance in the province. We have met with the automobile insurance bureau here in Alberta and have had a joint meeting between parties involved not long ago to discuss that particular issue and others.

In the long term, Mr. Speaker, there are other solutions which we need to take a look at, those which the member may well know about or that I would be glad to inform him further on.

MR. MITCHELL: Lots of meetings. What we need is action. While we're awaiting action, Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs can tell us: what steps is he going to take to ensure that auto insurance consumers currently in the facility program have been put there fairly and not by some inconsistent and arbitrary industry decision which treats some consumers one way and other consumers another way?

3:20

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the hon. member is advocating government-run, government-owned insurance or not. I haven't been sure of the position of that part of the House in that regard.

I do believe that those who are insured in Alberta must be dealt with fairly. We are asking the Automobile Insurance Board to assess our industry overall and what will assist in ensuring that that takes place in the future. Obviously, any company that wants to maintain a viable clientele will look very carefully at who they insure. I believe that as our industry has

viability in the province, as it does away with that debt that's developed or those losses that have developed over the past while, people will see the numbers in facility move down. That has traditionally been the case in the past. We are looking forward to the automobile insurance report and to the options that it suggests. We will be reassessing the overall approach together with the industry when that happens.

MR. SPEAKER: Banff-Cochrane.

Hunting Licence Fees

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. Most members of the Assembly are aware of recent increases to hunting licence fees for both resident and nonresident hunters in the province of Alberta. Does the minister intend to discourage hunting in the province of Alberta as a result of these increases?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, it appears that there may be as much as \$3 million a year generated from these increased fees for hunters in the province of Alberta. I wonder if the minister could advise what uses these extra moneys will be put to.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, the projected revenue is about \$3.2 million for this coming year, and about half of that dollar number will go into a trust account. That trust account will be used to do such things as a wildlife enhancement program, looking at endangered species and trying to enhance habitat for those endangered species. Secondly, there will be a plan, because of the hunters' representation, to have a new hunter identification number, which will make it much easier for all of those recreational hunters that are in a draw. The balance of the money, about half of that amount, went into the provincial Treasury, and I'm pleased with this year's budget because out of this year's budget I was allocated dollars for the North American waterfowl management plan. So wildlife generally, I think, all in all comes out a winner.

Workers' Compensation Board

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. Recently the Alberta Restaurant and Foodservices Association held a meeting with MLAs to discuss concerns in their industry. It is unfortunate that the minister responsible for the WCB chose not to attend that meeting, because one of their main concerns was that WCB rates have shot up 43 percent in the last three years, way above inflation, in part due to the fact that they're now lumped in with high accident operators like ski operations. So I'd like to ask the minister now on behalf of the thousands of restaurant operators in the province: will he give a commitment today to accept their recommendation and review the WCB rates for restaurants to ensure that they're not unfairly penalized by other employers who are not related to the restaurant trade?

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, it wasn't that I chose not to be there; I had other engagements and couldn't be there. For the hon. member to insinuate otherwise is wrong.

I would like to see the request from the restaurant association. I have not received one to my knowledge, and should they come forward with one . . .

MR. GIBEAULT: It's in writing. If you had been at . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. You have a supplementary.

MR. TRYNCHY: Should they come forward with a request to take a look at their compensation rates, I would do so. But he must remember, and maybe we all should, that assessments are accident driven, so if your assessment goes up, you should have a look to see why that is. As I've said, assessments are accident driven, and when I receive the request from the restaurant owners, I'd be glad to sit down with them and talk about it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Supplementary now, Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, given that the association also recommended that the high costs of administrating the WCB ought to come under review by the minister, I wonder if he could give a commitment today that the squandering of employers' premiums on expensive knickknacks, like antique bronze desk ornaments, for executives will not be tolerated in the future.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, I've got the news release put out by the New Democratic Party, the member himself, and it's just so full of nonsense. It goes on to make a number of insinuations, such as to say that the reason the Workers' Compensation Board can't pay out their injured workers is because of the government budget, which has no connection whatsoever. It's the same type of question as he's raising now.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Substance Abuse Programs

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's policies towards the treatment of substance abusers are confusing to say the least. On the one hand, the government thinks the fact that it costs \$4 million a year for Albertans to get inpatient care at a U.S. hospital is no reason to establish a hospital program here. Then we have the government spending another \$6 million this year to set up this mysterious new drug foundation, but at the same time the cost of the highly successful AADAC counseling program, known as Alpha substance services, is too expensive. If you're looking for logic here, you're out of luck. My questions are to the Minister of Health. Will the minister please explain what measures were used to determine that the only internationally accredited program for rehabilitating drug and alcohol abusers costs too much? On what basis was that decision made?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I responded to the questions addressed by the leader of the Liberal Party on Thursday last in the Legislature, and those answers stand. For a response to the specific program, I would refer her to the chairman of AADAC.

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, when the AADAC board discussed the issues of funding the many programs that we have, in examining the best use of the resources to avail themselves of for this fiscal year, we made a conscious decision. Although sometimes the decisions are very difficult to make, we made a conscious decision based on the aspects of cost effectiveness of the program and the number of facilities we have available in the city of Calgary and in the province for these people that

need to be served. We felt that they were well served by the facilities we have in place and the additional work that is being done to encompass the overall additions services in the province.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, that doesn't give us any information at all about what measures were used to make such cuts.

To the minister or to the chairman of AADAC, whoever wants to answer: how does the government, then, magically know that the Alpha program costs too much, yet the program sending Albertans for treatment in the U.S. presumably doesn't cost too much? How do we decide those things?

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, there are two separate issues here, completely nonaligned to each other. Based on the best information and the best available resources to us, we made a conscious decision referencing Alpha House. Insofar as any other activities that are going south of the border, that is a totally separate issue, and I think it should be dealt with in that context.

Heritage Savings Trust Fund

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Mr. Speaker, Albertans' concerns are growing about the security of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. The Provincial Treasurer has indicated that he intends to sell off portions of Albertans' savings fund to help pay for the massive debt this government has run up. Instead of being a trustee for the fund, he's turning into the fund's executor or maybe more properly its executer. To the Provincial Treasurer: will he tell Albertans why he feels the need to plunder the fund now with no mandate from Albertans to do so?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I've dealt in part with this question over previous question periods, but I would be glad again to explain to Albertans the explicit and intrinsic strength of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund and the key role that it plays in terms of the fiscal plan of this government and the way in which it has responded to the so-called rainy days that the province of Alberta experienced through 1986-87. It is because of a key leadership role of this government that the heritage fund is in place, and this fund has provided us with a variety of options.

It has, first of all, diversified the Alberta economy. Now, the opposition has talked about some risky investments we made. One of those risky investments was Syncrude, and I want to point out to all Albertans that the Syncrude investment has been profitable. Risky, we agree, but it has done certain things. Number one, the heritage fund money has been used to develop this vast resource. Number two, during that period it has provided an ample amount of jobs for the people of Alberta. Number three, it's provided technology unexplored before: a worldwide concentration of technology here in Alberta. Finally, Mr. Speaker, what these opposition people don't like: it's gone up in value. It has made a profit. [interjections] It's made a profit. What we have said all along is that this fixed asset, which belongs to the people of Alberta, which is here to the government for a trustee relationship only, now can serve a better purpose. It can be put back in the private sector, it can provide rewards to those people who are driven by market considerations as opposed to other considerations that now are implicit in the heritage fund, and it can free up dollars within the fund to do other things. It can free up dollars so that we can reinvest those

dollars in other kinds of investments which do the following: generate jobs, generate . . .

3:30

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you. Supplementary.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Treasurer has indicated his intention to sell off shares in Alberta Energy Company, in Syncrude, even in Telus. In his answer he doesn't give us any indication of what he's going to be doing to safeguard the heritage fund instead of squandering it. My question to the Treasurer is simply this: how do Albertans know that at the end of this government's planned fire sale they won't be left with only the bad assets while the good ones are sold off and gone for good?

MR. JOHNSTON: If this fund ever fell into the hands of those Marxists-Leninists across the way, those socialists would give real meaning to the word "squander," and I'll tell you that, Mr. Speaker. They know nothing about prudent investment; they would spend that money. They have already said that they would eliminate the fund. That's what they would do with the fund.

What we are doing here is simply taking the profits out of the heritage fund and possibly using them for the General Revenue Fund to reduce debt. To reduce debt. Now what happens to the heritage fund under that model? Well, the assets are now converted to cash. To my mind cash is a real asset. Most people can understand the value of a dollar: it's worth a dollar. We would reinvest that money in a variety of purposes which would continue the diversification. Only the profits would go to the General Revenue Fund for debt retirement, and the rest of the dollars in the heritage fund would stay intact. The value of the fund would stay intact and would be used for new investment. That's how this plan works. That's why the heritage fund is so unique to a democratic system around the world, and that's why other people are looking at this model for a way in which you can work your way through the difficult periods using savings to stabilize your economy. We've done just that, and it's working well. Of course, the socialists wouldn't understand the terms "investment and profit" in any event.

Point of Order Anticipation

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark, on a point of order.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order under Standing Order 23(e) and under *Beauchesne* 512, both of which, of course, address the issue of anticipation. I want to say that I and my caucus colleagues certainly appreciate the difficulty of making judgment calls under rules of this nature in the heat of the debate and so on, and we're simply, in making my presentation, now looking for some clarification.

Wednesday the Deputy Speaker in answer to a question of anticipation said:

It was a question to the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, and, of course, his estimates were up that day,

but the Chair doesn't agree that no questions can be asked of a department at all. I think questions regarding the estimates cannot be asked when it's estimates day.

The Speaker the next day emphasized that point by saying:

I would hope that caucuses would at least save us all this hassle, that on a day when the estimates are going to be called we can

avoid questions on that department entirely so we don't need to worry about the fine line that's going on.

We would rather not see that ruling, and in fact we would accept the ruling that you made today on behalf of the Member for Smoky River. We believe there should be some flexibility. We simply ask for a clarification of the line along which we can have flexibility, along which we can ask a question. For example, with the Minister of the Environment's estimates being up today, in our caucus we made conscious decisions not to ask those questions, and we would like to have been able to do that.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place, is it basically a similar point of order or not?

MR. McINNIS: No, it's not.

MR. SPEAKER: It's different.

You are not in on a point of order? That's a separate issue? Thank you.

On this point then, Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Yes, I had just in the middle of that exchange announced that I also wanted to make the point of order.

I think the argument is pretty well outlined, but I'd like to read the exact ruling following the day that a series of questions was allowed on the day that the estimates for that department were allowed that night. The exact ruling the following day by the Speaker was:

The Chair has really been quite concerned about that last set of questions. I know that yesterday some other questions were offered by Athabasca-Lac La Biche, and there was some concern there: violation of the rule of anticipation. I would hope that caucuses would at least save us all this hassle, that on a day when the estimates are going to be called we can avoid questions on that department entirely so we don't need to worry about the fine line that's going on. This went across the line.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why worry?

MR. SPEAKER: Got a problem with Standing Orders, hon. member? [interjections] Thank you very much.

That's an exact quote of your ruling.

Now, it was I who had raised the matter on the day before as well, when the Deputy Speaker was in the Chair, because I'm concerned about consistency of application of Standing Orders. We had a series of questions that we wanted to go with today in question period that would have gone to the Minister of the Environment. This has happened on many an occasion, and we decide even if they're really pressing that they will not go because we're going to observe the rule of anticipation and the Speaker's ruling that is so categorical it is, I find, impossible to derive any other meaning from those words than that which was made so clear by those words.

I also find, Mr. Speaker, that it is confusing when it comes to the role of the Chair. We make the Standing Orders. If the Standing Orders are there, then they're to be observed and business of the Assembly is to be conducted on that basis. We cannot artificially or occasionally or arbitrarily change our interpretation of them. This was not your first ruling on the importance of the respect of the standing order regarding anticipation. It's happened every year.

Mr. Speaker, I beg that in future this rule be applied to the government caucus as heavily as it is applied to the opposition.

MR. SPEAKER: With respect to this particular point of order, Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I was the one that asked the question, and I think perhaps I should give a bit of a background because there was never any intention nor did I have any financial implications in the question.

The reason the question was asked was the minister was in the Peace River country.

AN HON. MEMBER: We knew that.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Some municipalities were present to hear the . . . [interjections] I would very much appreciate the opportunity to explain the reason for the question, Mr. Speaker.

The reason I asked the question was simply: some municipalities were present for the meeting, others were not. There were several municipalities not able to be present. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

MR. SPEAKER: Order, hon. members. There's no need for this shouting match. [interjections] Order. You're not to be shouting back when the Chair's trying to talk to you for a moment. The member has the right to be heard in silence according to Standing Order 13(4), and it's a right which you are very jealous of with regard to your own participation. At least let him get two sentences out so we can hear what's going on. [interjections] Order please.

Now, to the point of order, very briefly.

Point of Order Anticipation (continued)

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Several municipalities were not present to hear the minister's discussions. During the process of the weekend they had called and asked what basically was discussed and was there a program laid down. I suggested to them that perhaps we should try and clarify it in a fairly clear and concise manner that would be all encompassing. That was the reason the questions were asked. It has nothing to do with estimates and would have no implications whatsoever on estimates. [interjections]

3:40

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Well, hon. members, I'm sure you all appreciate the fact that it does give us this yearly problem, as has been aptly pointed out by the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark as well as the Member for Edmonton-Highlands. The appropriate citations are indeed valid, also the reference with regard to last week when the Chair said: let's not have this type of hassle.

The Chair is very much cognizant of the phrase, when one comes to the Chair, of being "the servant of the House." So from time to time in each year I've been trying to figure out: is there some way to be able to allow some questions to proceed? We have evidence of that again this year. We had it the day the estimates for Economic Development and Trade came forward, also with regard to Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, and it happened, indeed, today.

It also happened that the rule of anticipation was violated in the very last question, this very last supplementary to the second set of questions as given by the Leader of the Opposition where

he asked a question which was clearly violating the rule of anticipation dealing with regard to Bill 1, which is at the committee stage. Here we are back in this whole thing. Yes, indeed, take a review of the Blues, please.

For the last time, the Chair appreciates the comments, but the Chair will abide by its decision of Friday and says to all parties in the House that there will be no questions with regard to estimates that day. We will soon be through estimates, and then you can go back to asking your questions.

In that respect the Chair accepts the admonition of the House. In an effort to try to be fair and to try to get a question out that may not have related to the estimates, I went too far in allowing that question to proceed. That's part of the wonderful fun of being in the Chair. So duly noted.

With respect to further estimates, there'll be no questions whatsoever with respect to that ministry on that day.

Point of Order

Explanation of Speaker's Ruling

MS BARRETT: A second point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: There is a second point of order?

MS BARRETT: Yes.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, during the wonderful fun earlier I thought I heard the Chair say: you just lost your place in question period. I didn't know if that was a reference to this hon. member, but if it was, I'd like to request under 13(2), if that was the ruling, what the reasons were for the ruling.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, I'm sorry you're so sensitive, but it wasn't directed at you.

Point of Order

Anticipation

MS BARRETT: Point of order, please.

MR. SPEAKER: This is yet another one?

MS BARRETT: Yup.

Mr. Speaker, in your ruling a moment ago you referred to a Bill on the Order Paper that had proceeded to committee reading. Is it then the interpretation of the Chair that if the Bill is on the Order Paper at all, no reference at any time outside of debate can be made to it? The reason I ask the question is this. Bill 1, which, by the way, is being sponsored by the Premier and whose busy schedule prevents him from being here an awful lot of the time – we all know that – has not been called for committee reading yet. It will be called when the Premier is available. Everybody knows that that's the system. In other words, what we also know through the Government House Leader is which Bills are likely to be called at any stage on any given day. So I'm looking for clarification for the application of the anticipation rule with respect to Bills on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair's understanding is that once it has cleared second reading and gone to Committee of the Whole, it's no longer subject to questions during question period. That's been our practice. I'll review our matter and come back to you on that one tomorrow.

MS BARRETT: Okay.

head:

Orders of the Day

head:

Government Bills and Orders

head:

Second Reading

Bill 24

Municipal Taxation Amendment Act, 1991

MR. CLEGG: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure today to move second reading of Bill 24, Municipal Taxation Amendment Act, 1991.

May I add that a lot of the changes in this Act were again recommended by the councils throughout this province. I made a couple of notes here just to simplify it. The purpose of the first amendment is to allow a municipality to tax processing plants at a different rate. For many years if there was an oil well or lease land that went onto farmers' land, then it would be assessed as farm land, and this allows municipalities to put a different assessment on it.

Section 93(13): "may, by by-law," exempt all or part of taxation on "land and improvements that are owned by a municipality or leased from the Crown."

Section 96 allows municipalities to establish a rate on vacant residential land that is not more than residential property. Again, that's something that's been debated for years. It's always been that a municipality had to put the same rate on residential property as it did on nonresidential, and it caused some hardships. So they have the right if they want to.

Section 113(1.01): under the Act municipalities had to send out a special tax notice to everybody for every parcel of land they had. This just allows the municipality administration to send out one tax notice and simplify their process.

Section 117 allows a municipality to put a penalty on business tax. It would work exactly like they do with property taxes. The Act now states that you can't put a penalty on until July 1, so this would allow them, just like they do with property, after 30 days.

The last amendment is to add drainage ditches, lakes, et cetera, because in some cases they are hooked into the local improvements. It allows the municipality to include that.

I look forward to any comments on Bill 24.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to rise to speak to Bill 24, Municipal Taxation Amendment Act, 1991. This is, as I think the member has outlined, a rather technical Bill, and the changes might well have been suggested by councils throughout the province. I don't notice any particular issues here that are any problem for us. I think it's proper that we were finally able to identify various operations, identifying things like the gas plants and oil refineries and so on that the municipalities can in fact exempt.

I think section 96(2) is a good proposal. I know there are some municipalities that in fact now do have provisions that they can have different tax applications to nonresidential property versus residential property. What it really does: it's a tax that prevents some developers and landholders to get a piece of land and hold onto that development for some period of time and not pay the proper, adequate taxes on it. This, I think, will remedy that particular problem.

Section 113(1.01) I believe also is a good change. Certainly I think it's an economical move from a municipality's point of view.

Section 117: while I guess one can argue that it should be applauded, I think it's a difficult call here. I think an application of penalties to a business before the present allocations could indeed provide some difficulty, if not a great deal of difficulty for some businesses, when a penalty might be applied to their business as a result of a late payment.

The application of local improvements. Again, I think it's a normal sort of thing that's done in most municipalities. I note that the storm sewer drainage facility and the cleaning of or removing obstructions from storm sewers is added in here. My experience would be that there should be discretionary provisions applied to this kind of local improvement, because I think there are some sewer problems that should be the problem of an individual resident or a business. To without question simply apply a local improvement because of storm sewage drainage and cleaning I think is maybe a bit harsh.

We will talk more about these during the Committee of the Whole hearing. By and large, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to support Bill 24 in second reading.

3:50

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two questions to the Member for Dunvegan, and possibly he can respond to those two questions when the Bill is in committee.

The first question. My understanding is that all of the various amendments that are in this particular Bill did come forward as a result of resolutions or as a result of input either directly by municipal councils or through the Alberta association of districts and municipal councils or the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. Now, that's my first question: whether all of the amendments came forward as a request from specific municipal councils or organizations representing those councils.

My second question, Mr. Speaker. There has been a bit of controversy, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs has addressed it to a degree, and that is to do with some thought of change to the level of assessment when it comes to recreational properties. Now, when I read this particular Bill, I don't see any reference to that. I assume because it's an assessment matter on a much larger scale that it's something that the Minister of Municipal Affairs himself would be addressing. If the Member for Dunvegan could also respond to that either today or when the Bill is in second reading, as to whether that matter is still on the table or whether that matter is in the hands of the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Dunvegan, summation.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll just remark on the two questions from the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. Certainly these amendments have been circulated to the AUMA and to the AAMDC. He brought up a very controversial subject when we talk about assessment and taxation on parks, on recreation sites, on cultural centres. It's not addressed in this Bill, but certainly it is controversial. It's my feeling strongly, and I think the government's feeling, that the local government should always have that authority to exempt rather than the provincial government making very tough legislation. I just think of legions, for example. Some legions in the province should be assessed and taxed and some legions should not be because they're totally different. So it does bring up something, and certainly next year it could be looked at, but it doesn't address the problem in this, if in fact there is a problem.

With those few remarks I would like to move second reading of Bill 24.

[Motion carried; Bill 24 read a second time]

Bill 26 Planning Amendment Act, 1991

MR. CLEGG: Mr. Speaker, I want to move second reading of Bill 26. I haven't got a lot of remarks on it except that I look forward to remarks from the members. If you go through the Bill, it's clarification in some cases. It gives the municipality the right on municipal land for reserving public utilities. What's always had to happen is the municipalities had to keep this reserve and in many cases didn't want it. It was taken because of the Act, but they had to take it. This gives them authority to lease out this land for a period of three years. You know, it doesn't all grow to weeds or whatever. So it does do that, and certainly there are some other amendments.

I just look forward to comments from any of the members.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.
Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. EWASIUKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Bill has a number of amendments, actually quite a few amendments from the old Bill. I think in many cases it's a clarification and an overall improvement of this particular Bill. I'm pleased that it's going to allow the Planning Board to specify lands as environmental, municipal, and for school reserves.

I have a question, however, and a concern as well. The provision that's going to allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council to exempt with or without conditions any action, person, or thing from this Act: I wonder if the member may want to speak to it later this afternoon or perhaps during Committee of Whole. There may well be an explanation and interpretation of this particular change. I'd like to hear from him on it.

I think it's again a simplification, a case in point being changing "lots" to "parcels" and allowing more than one dwelling on a parcel. I think that's of course necessary because of some of the provisions of allowing more than one family to live on a parcel of land, such as a grandmother or someone like that.

Environmental reserves, as the member has spoken, may not be sold but certainly will be leased. This will certainly be of assistance to municipalities.

It's interesting that the fines for anyone who might want to obstruct or hinder a person from carrying out their duties relative to this Act have been increased quite substantially, by some \$2,000. Again, I think a proper application and change in the Act.

With these few comments, Mr. Speaker, I, too, will suggest that we support Bill 26 for second reading.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, just a couple of questions that pertain to this particular Bill 26, also brought forward by the Member for Dunvegan. The first question, again similar to the question dealing with Bill 24: whether these changes are basically as a result of input from the AAMDC and the AUMA. Now, my understanding is that they are and simply a mechanism to tidy up the Bill, the piece of legislation based on previous discussions and decisions that have been made.

My second question pertains to the area of the grannie suites or the in-law suites, mother-in-law suites, whatever expression, I guess, is used. When this concept was first brought forward –

and I know it came as a result of a number of requests that were made by municipal district councils; for example, the county of Parkland had specifically requested it – my recollection of the matter, going back a number of years ago when I wasn't a member of this body, was such that there were a number of designated areas that were specified to be used for experimental purposes and that those, let's say, evaluations were very successful. Now my question is: will the applicable amendment allow grannie suites to be approved in municipal districts at the discretion of the municipality and also recognize the appeal mechanism that may be there at that municipal level, such as a development appeal board, the Alberta Planning Board, and so on and so forth?

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Dunvegan, summation.

MR. CLEGG: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got to apologize; I didn't hear all the remarks from the Member for Edmonton-Beverly. What I will do is read *Hansard* and get the answers for you in committee, if in fact there were some questions; I'm sure there were. Certainly the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud did have a question. For the second question, I'm not exactly sure of the answer. The first question: he did remark that they have gone through the AUMA and AAMDC, and certainly I will get him the absolute answer for Committee of the Whole.

With that I'd like to move second reading of Bill 26.

[Motion carried; Bill 26 read a second time]

4:00

head: **Government Bills and Orders**
head: **Committee of the Whole**

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I would ask that the committee please come to order.

Bill 5 Mines and Minerals Amendment Act, 1991

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We will be dealing first with Bill 5, proposed by the Member for Calgary-Foothills.
Are there any remarks, hon. member?

MRS. BLACK: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just as a very brief background, because we went into quite lengthy detail at second reading, this Bill has three basic changes. They are: one, to allow quarriable and metallic minerals to be combined into a single new regulation; secondly, the inclusion of a new provision to deal with the matter of accretion of Crown minerals; and several housekeeping provisions.

I would just like to respond. There was a question from the Member for Edmonton-Highlands in second reading as to whether the Bill was retroactive by nature in section 66. The Bill is not retroactive. The terms of the leases were laid out in the '70s, and there was just a clarification as coal leases deal with those that pertain to road allowances and those that do not.

I'd welcome any comments on the Bill at this time.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there any concerns, questions, or amendments?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill 5 agreed to]

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move that the Bill be reported.

[Motion carried]

Bill 7 Turner Valley Unit Operations Amendment Act, 1991

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, this is a relatively straightforward Bill. It simply affords the Energy Resources Conservation Board discretion in convening hearings for minor amendments which are of a purely routine and administrative nature to the unit orders.

I would certainly be willing to entertain any questions that hon. members might have.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there any concerns, questions, or amendments?

The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. It's not normally in my sphere of operations, but maybe I could ask the hon. member. The Turner Valley Unit Operations Amendment Act, 1991: is this just the unit that applies to the Mississippian gas and oil, or does it cover other horizons that could be picked up?

MR. TANNAS: There are many formations in which oil is found, and I am not familiar with any of them. If the hon. member wanted to ask that question specifically of me, I would take notice and endeavour to find the right answer for the further information of the member.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. I wasn't trying to be smart, but I came to it late. Turner Valley is one of the oldest units we've had in the province, and I once was a member of it many years ago. They had changed the units around, and I was just kind of curious, trying to update myself without being ambitious enough to go read through all the material. Is it that one unit – maybe the Minister of Energy could help me too – now covers all the producing area, or is there more than one unit in the Turner Valley area?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Any further discussion?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

[The sections of Bill 7 agreed to]

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Chairman, I would move that we report Bill 7.

[Motion carried]

Bill 12 Rural Electrification Long Term Financing Amendment Act, 1991

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Drayton Valley.

MR. THURBER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to briefly reiterate the main points in this amendment. Under the

proposed amendments to the financing itself it will allow a change in the interest rate on the loans made under this Act but at the same time it will save the loans that are already in existence and grandfather them. Any new loans coming out after July 1 will come in at a new interest rate, and this interest rate will be designated in the regulations as opposed to being in the Act. This allows it to be kept up to date with the scope of the business and today's conditions in the workplace.

Mr. Chairman, I should make sure it's in the record that these loans will be grandfathered and that any sale of a property with one of these liens on to the owner's son or daughter will also be grandfathered at the 3 and a half percent interest rate. Now, at the present time it is being proposed that probably in the regulations it will go to 7 percent, and this is just to bring it into scope with the business world. If it's in the regulations, it would allow that to be changed from time to time to meet the conditions. There are times that probably 15 percent is reasonable, but there are times that 7 percent may not be reasonable.

The other changes in 6(1)(c) just allow for two interest rates to be in effect at the same time: the grandfathered ones and the new ones. The lien notes

may be executed under subsection (2) only if, at the time the land is sold, the payments due under the existing note are not in arrears. This provides additional protection to the land purchaser and to the province of Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, the one other thing I would bring to your attention is that the time lapse has changed for a notice of lien to be filed on the property: it's gone from 30 days to 60 days. By increasing this time frame it provides more time for a new farmer to complete his mortgage arrangements. It should be noted that liens are often registered prior to the loans being funded. Prior to this proposed amendment we were precluded from transferring one lien to another title without a court order, and this would allow that to flow with the system.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I think I would leave it open to debate for now.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments with regard to the amendments?

The Member for West Yellowhead.

4:10

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Bill 12 is a Bill to take the financing of electrical utilities away from the Act and put them into regulations. In fact, allowing it to go from the Act to the regulations will allow the director of the regulatory bodies to raise the rate to whatever figure they may want to raise those rates to.

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley suggested that 7 percent would be the rate. There's nothing written in this Act. In fact, taking it from the Act and putting it in the regulations would leave some question as to what the power rates would be for new installations of electrical utilities after July 1, 1991. In fact, somebody looking forward to farming in the next two or three years would have no way of making a long-term plan as to what kind of financing they would need or how many spare dollars they should have on hand to get into farming. It would not only hamstring those who have saved for years to go into farming but especially the young farmers who are trying to make a start in the great industry of farming.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would like to propose amendments to Bill 12, which I'll pass to the page and circulate to the House. These amendments would strike out section 3. Section 4 is

amended by striking out clause (a), and section 5 is amended by striking out clause (a). Section 10 is totally struck out.

Mr. Chairman, the reason for doing this is that over many years government departments have been funding these new services to young farmers and to farmers of every age at 3 and a half percent. In this day and age when we are doing our best to see that rural Alberta is re-established with great communities to live in and great areas to farm, to develop new farming areas, and to see that families are raised on farms where they're quite often more close together than those who are raised in urban centres, giving the opportunity to young people to settle in rural Alberta is a most important item. This government has said that they are trying to repopulate rural Alberta, but at the same time they're discouraging people by allowing the interest rates to rise for new electrical services.

For many years, Mr. Chairman, I was with the power companies of this province. I met with hundreds if not thousands of people who were applying for loans in order to put power in. It's basically the very first thing that you need after you have your roadway in; it's hard to build your house or get your well going unless you bring in a power plant. More often than not they will come and see the power company as soon as they are thinking of going to the farming area, because they realize that electricity is needed to run a farm these days. Furthermore, the cuts in transportation to the natural gas fields and the cuts to helping propane subsidies in rural Alberta: people will be making decisions whether or not to use more electricity than natural gas in heating and other sources that they could do electrically rather than by gas.

Mr. Chairman, I don't agree that this interest rate should be raised only upon those who are trying to invest in rural Alberta and begin farming in a different structure of life, in a clean environment and with good family support when they're raised on farms. I have to question why they would just raise this on July 1 to new people and not in fact look at some of those figures that were given out in the past. In fact, the 3 and a half percent of fixed rescheduled payments of the last 10 to 25 years amounts to \$35,954,228. The majority of these loans are for the full 25 years. Although most of us know that many of these farmers of course pay their loans back - they can pay them either every three months when they're billed or they can pay them back yearly, if they so wish - at 3 and a half percent I can understand that they were never in a hurry to pay those loans off completely. I see no reason why this government should not now look at some of those areas. If, in fact, a farmer has been on a farming property for some 10 years, indeed he must be doing well to maintain his farm and perhaps he could put a little more money into it rather than having new farmers and new people who are moving to rural Alberta start paying at 7 percent.

As of March 31, 1989, \$4,738,812 had been loaned for 10 years while \$29,932,768 had been loaned for 25 years. Of course, in the original days the part 1 loan was the only part that had to be paid back. The part 2 loan was carried by the Public Utilities Board, the lending body, to cover those extra costs if you were living, say, miles down the road. As new customers tied onto that electrical service, then they picked up their portion of the cost of putting that maybe long extended line into service.

REAs, of course, have done a great job throughout Alberta over the years in making sure that everybody had an opportunity to have new electrical service. In fact, in the early days REAs had a system where you paid a minimum of \$1,100 and the maximum I believe was \$2,500. We've changed that now. A person now has to pay back at least the \$10,000 cost, and the

part 2 loans take care of the balance. The part 2 loans, of course, are only used for that expensive new electrical service for farmers. As I said, they are interest free and repayable when additional services are connected to the facilities that benefit from the interest free funds, although as of March 31, 1991, \$29,312,240 was out in that field.

The part 2 loans for capital rebuild, with repayable schedules of up to 25 years, amounted to \$1,961,662. The REA capital rebuild program provides REAs to borrow up to 30 percent of the rebuild and the systems improvement required. Mr. Chairman, again this is going to cost an awful lot to REAs, and over the years we've seen many REAs disappear simply because they were going in the hole. If it was allowed to change, if these REAs were to go in the hole, to fail in their endeavour to keep rural rates down and to see that young farmers and farmers of all ages have the cheapest source of electricity in this province that is made possible, then the mainline companies, the suppliers of energy like TransAlta Utilities and Alberta Power, which is owned by the landlord of the Tory Party, Ron Southern, would capture and gain profit from new electrical services through this province.

Mr. Chairman, another part of Bill 12, 4(b), comments on striking out the word "may" and substituting the word "shall." If members would like to discuss the first amendment first, I will be making another amendment in regards to section 6.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Speakers on the amendment proposed by the Member for West Yellowhead, starting with the change to section 3.

The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

4:20

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to take a moment to say that I support the amendment. You will be voting on it, I suppose, all at once: A, B, C, D; they're all applied to the same number.

I want to congratulate the Member for West Yellowhead for pulling his foot back at the last minute from the bear trap I set for him the other night when we called a standing vote on him. I caught the member with his wires down, if you'll pardon the expression. He was voting for exactly what he has now introduced to be against. I've got to admire your intelligence if I can't admire your speed at understanding what a trap had been set for you, but now I'm back on your side and congratulate you.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, when it comes to a vote, I will not only vote for it but I will try to encourage some of the NDs to stand so we can have a standing vote, because I'd like to get those little bantam roosters who are wearing blue and orange underwear . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order. Order, hon. member. Editorializing is not necessary. You've spoken on the amendment. Do you have something further to offer?

MR. TAYLOR: It is unnecessary to what? I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, would you speak into the speaker?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I did.

MR. TAYLOR: You said it was unnecessary to do something.

MR. MAIN: Editorialize.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, Mr. Chairman, if you're not editorializing in debate, what the dickens are you doing?

I'm speaking on the amendment, and I'm just saying, Mr. Chairman, that when the amendment is called for a vote, I'm going to challenge them whether they will stand for a standing vote so I can pin down the tails of the PCs with their blue and orange underwear as to what their stand is. Now, if I'm not allowed to say that, you're getting more dictatorial than some other people I know that have occupied that chair.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please.

Further speakers on the amendment?

The Member for Drayton Valley.

MR. THURBER: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the hon. member coming up with some amendments that maybe make some sense to him. I have a problem understanding what he's talking about. Perhaps he might clarify it. I have to speak in opposition to this amendment that he's talking about. It says that section 3 is struck out, but there is no offer to replace that with anything that makes any sense, where it deals with the interest rates. Section 4 is amended by striking out clause (a): I can't find a clause (a) in section 4 in the Act itself. Section 5 doesn't seem to bear any relationship to it, and section 10 is struck out without anything being put back in place. So I would have to speak in opposition to it.

I don't think there's anything wrong with having the interest rate at a level that meets society's needs as of today. The old ones are grandfathered, and certainly there are lots of precedents in all government areas and business areas for trying to adjust an interest rate to meet today's standards.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to respond to the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon where he said that he seemed to feel I was in some kind of a waffle situation. Indeed I was not. The reason I voted in favour of Bill 12 at second reading was so that we could bring it into committee so that we could make some amendments. I wanted to clarify that, Mr. Chairman.

The Member for Drayton Valley suggests that I proposed these amendments without putting anything else in. The Act exists as it is with section 3; there would be no changes to that. We'd only not allow these portions of Bill 12 to proceed as proposed by the Member for Drayton Valley because we feel that it is only fair that we allow new farmers and the farms that are building new services – maybe a family member is going to take over the farm from the father and mother, and in most cases they leave the father and mother still in the REA or on the farm. The farm loans do not make them a residential customer. It would allow them to pay down their loan if there's still a loan on it, but the new person looking after that farm should still have the same rights as those at the 3 and a half percent over the years.

I think the member well understands me that they should look at a different structure and in fact would raise more money more quickly by asking those who have had electrical service for some 10 years or thereabouts to raise their rates to perhaps, as you suggested, the 7 and a half percent. You would generate more money quickly. Some of those loans would be paid off much more quickly, because some of those loans that are between the

10 and the 25 years – if the maximum that was allowed out in that time was \$10,000, surely to heavens it's down to where a farmer who is making any success at all would perhaps come forward and pay that off, but at 3 and a half percent we all understand that there's no great benefit to pay off any loan, I don't suppose, when you have to go on the market and borrow at much greater.

We're talking about development of rural Alberta here, Mr. Chairman. I don't support this government's penalizing those who are possibly trying to move to rural Alberta, because we do need that population in rural Alberta; it's very important to the economies of municipalities throughout this province.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Any further speakers on the amendment? If not, all those in favour of the amendment proposed by the Member for West Yellowhead to sections 3, 4, 5, and 10, numbered A, B, C, and D, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The amendment is lost.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

4:30

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Barrett	Hawkesworth	Mjolsness
Chivers	Hewes	Pashak
Decore	Laing, M.	Roberts
Doyle	McEachern	Sigurdson
Ewasniuk	McInnis	Taylor
Gagnon	Mitchell	Wickman
Gibeault		

Against the motion:

Ady	Gesell	Oldring
Anderson	Horsman	Orman
Betkowski	Hyland	Osterman
Black	Klein	Paszkowski
Bogle	Laing, B.	Severtson
Brassard	Lund	Shrake
Cardinal	Main	Sparrow
Clegg	McClellan	Speaker, R.
Drobot	McCoy	Tannas
Elliott	Mirosh	Thurber
Evans	Moore	Trynchy
Fischer	Musgrove	Weiss
Fowler	Nelson	Zarusky

Totals:	For – 19	Against – 39
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[Motion on amendment lost]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Further discussion with respect to Bill 12?

The Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Yes, Mr. Chairman. In Bill 12 in section 4, for section 6 they want amended where it says "may" rather than "shall." It presently reads:

When land against which the association has a lien pursuant to section 16 is sold, the association may refuse to supply electricity to the purchaser of the land until the purchaser becomes a member of the association and executes a lien note.

When people are purchasing farms, it takes them some time, of course, to come up with their financing. But at the point when they're going through the legal documents, they must sign up with the REA, or they should sign up with the REA, before they actually move onto that property. The power companies are notified, in fact, and if they're lax in getting to the REAs, it's up to the rural electrification areas to see that those documents are signed.

Those members presently will also be left at that 3 and a half percent. Again, we're penalizing these members to sign these documents or not sign them. It says they will be striking out "may," and they put "shall." Well, Mr. Chairman, the signing of those documents is incumbent on the person who purchased the land, on the lawyer, and on the person who sold that land to see that all the transactions – it's no different than signing a loan on the farm. You must sign your lien notes on your property for any loans that are held against that property.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to note that in 1988-89 there were 1,384 loans processed for new farm services for a total of \$5,422,266. There were also 18 loans totaling \$53,011 which were refinanced loans. The province has been very kind in financing these farms over these past many years. I can't figure out for the world of me why they're now changing the rules on the young people in not an easy time to settle in rural Alberta. I understand by the way the members stood in the House that they don't care much about rural Alberta or they don't care very much about young farmers starting up in a new livelihood in the province. Again, it's a sure sign that this Conservative government only cares about re-election and cares not about how the economy of Alberta goes or does not go today unless they can support their very wealthy Conservative friends.

4:40

These young people in Alberta must be allowed to settle whenever and wherever they want at whatever cost that was allowed to the people who have settled in the rest of the province in past years. But in 1987-88, for instance, for new farm electrical service there were 1,400 loans for a total funding of \$6,096,542, and 21 loans were issued to REA capital rebuild and financing for \$507,510 and \$101,504 respectively. Of new loans made for new electrical services, \$4,357,786 carry fixed rebate repayment schedules and bear interest at this 3 and a half percent. Well, Mr. Chairman, I can't see why the government now wants to penalize these new people that want to go into farming. The people of Alberta, regardless of what field they go into, should be allowed to have the same benefits as people who went before them.

So, on behalf of the Member for Vegreville, Mr. Fox, I would like to bring forward his amendments on Bill 12. Section 4 is amended in clause (b) by adding "subject to proper notice" after "shall." Section 6 is amended in subsection (2.1) by adding "subject to proper notice" after "the Director shall." In other words, Mr. Chairman, if someone didn't give the proper notice, they should not go out there and just disconnect the electrical service from any farmer, whether they be a young farmer or a new farmer or a farmer of any age. I think it's only fair that we would add these words "subject to proper notice" to "refuse to supply electricity to the purchaser of the land until the

purchaser becomes a member of the association and executes a lien note."

Mr. Chairman, I would ask for these amendments to be distributed and will listen to the debate from the other members.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, while they are distributing the amendments, which are good ones, I would like to suggest through to the House leader that this is such a poorly drafted Act that they should pull it off the agenda and go back to the drawing table, because that's just a second set. There's another problem in the area here, too, and much as I exult and get a kick out of seeing rural members in the government have their hides nailed to the barn door, I think on the other hand I prefer to have fair and equitable legislation as far as the farmers are concerned. I would like to suggest to the House leader, who is listening and holding his furrowed brow now, that unless he wants to have both brows furrowed, he might suggest to the hon. proposer of the Bill, send a note across to him, that they pull it off the Order Paper now and do a proper refitting, retooling, realignment job on it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Although we're waiting for distribution here, are there any further speakers on the amendment?

The Member for West Yellowhead, on the amendment.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Chairman, while the pages are distributing the amendment, I would like to point out that the need for electricity in Alberta is becoming more and more relevant now that the government has discontinued the remote heating grants, and they've also discontinued the senior citizens' home heating grants. Natural gas, of course, has been penalized by cuts to grants for new installations at the same time that they cut the subsidies to propane users. I had no problem with them cutting the grants to propane users where natural gas was available, but now the people in rural Alberta will be looking for another source if electricity indeed might become cheaper than natural gas for many of their operations on the farms in rural Alberta.

On that, Mr. Chairman, I would hope that the members stand in support of rural Albertans and not be penalizing these people who are looking forward to moving to rural Alberta and diversifying this economy in the way that supports families and good family relationships rather than forcing people to stay in urban areas simply because they cannot get the same financing as people before them.

Mr. Chairman, if we do not add to this Bill or take this Bill back to the drawing board, the people of Alberta are going to be discriminated against. I don't see any of these rural members of the Conservative Party standing up and defending the young people who want to move to rural Alberta. We must put in this Act the amendment by the Member for Vegreville. To section 6 must be added: "subject to proper notice." We can't just go out and cut people's power off without any proper notice. The member suggested that we have to raise the time from 30 days to 60 days for people to sign their REA contracts and their lien notes. Well, we have no problem with the 60 days; we don't see the need for it. In 30 days, if people are doing their bookkeeping properly, they should have things done. In fact, they are not responsible for the power on their farm until such time that all the legal documents have been signed.

Mr. Chairman, I think it's a shame to stand here and look at the rural members standing up here discriminating against young people who want to settle in rural Alberta. I would hope that

the members would come to their senses and support the amendments in Bill 12.

MR. THURBER: Mr. Chairman, I find it very strange that the member of the New Democratic caucus stands up in this House and accuses this party of discriminating against rural Alberta and young people starting farming. The reason I find it strange is that they continually sit in this House and advocate getting rid of the paved roads in rural Alberta, the hospitals in rural Alberta, and a variety of other things that we do to try and protect the family farm and look after rural Alberta and the agriculture economy as a whole.

Now, they have said here in this amendment, Mr. Chairman, that it has to be "subject to proper notice." Are they so little advised in the standard business practices that people carry on out there that they imagine that somebody like a power company will come in and just cut it off without writing you a letter, without notifying you? I've had power for a long time, as a lot of other people have in rural Alberta, as the hon. member has. Has he ever had his power or anything else go wrong without having a notice first? My gosh, I think the amendment is ludicrous to the extreme, and I move we defeat it.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Chairman, I take exception to the Member for Drayton Valley suggesting that the New Democrats have been trying to shut down rural hospitals in Alberta. If anybody is trying to harm rural hospitals, it's this government that's trying to harm rural Alberta by putting big deficits against rural hospitals.

Mr. Chairman, this government pays no attention to rural Alberta except when they can get some conniving deals going with some of their Conservative friends out there in rural Alberta.

Mr. Chairman, I well know about electrical service in this province. I worked for a power system for 18 years. I also know who the friends of those power companies are, those who gave those power plants for \$1 to the power companies so the people of Alberta could have cheap power. Now what are they doing? They're going out there and grabbing money from young people in Alberta, young people who want to start up farms in rural Alberta and people who want to expand the economy in a productive way rather than cutting down our trees, polluting our waters, and disturbing the infrastructure of local municipalities by heavy loads being hauled on roads that were built by the province and by the people in rural communities.

Mr. Chairman, this amendment is maybe not the one the government likes, but I want to tell you that this Bill is not the Bill that the people of Alberta like either.

4:50

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Further discussion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the amendment to sections 4 and 6, proposed by the Member for West Yellowhead on behalf of the Member for Vegreville, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It's defeated.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Barrett	Hewes	Pashak
Chivers	Laing, M.	Roberts
Doyle	Martin	Sigurdson
Ewasjuk	McEachern	Taylor
Gagnon	McInnis	Wickman
Gibeault	Mjolsness	

Against the motion:

Ady	Horsman	Oldring
Anderson	Hyland	Orman
Black	Klein	Osterman
Bogle	Laing, B.	Paszkowski
Brassard	Lund	Severtson
Cardinal	Main	Shrake
Clegg	McClellan	Sparrow
Drobot	McCoy	Tannas
Elliott	Mirosh	Thurber
Evans	Moore	Trynchy
Fischer	Musgrove	Weiss
Fowler	Nelson	Zaruský
Gesell		

Totals	For - 17	Against - 37
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[Motion on amendment lost]

5:00

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Any further debate on Bill 12?
The Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to point out to the members of the Legislature on the Tory benches that in no way will this caucus support a Bill that's going to penalize young farmers in rural Alberta and in fact rural Alberta. I'd like to know how many members in this House have farm loans at 3 and a half percent. I'm sure the Member for Whitecourt can hear me over there.

Mr. Chairman, the reason that this Conservative caucus is penalizing these young rural Albertans is because many of them carry loans themselves with the revolving fund for farm loans. I think it's shameful that they would not make some amendments and bring a Bill in that's fair to Albertans rather than a Bill that's penalizing the population of rural Alberta. It's this government that caused the depopulation of rural Alberta, and now they're trying every scam in the book to try and get the population built back up. Well, this is a sure sign that they're fighting against the repopulation of rural Alberta, and the New Democrat caucus will not be supporting Bill 12.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Perhaps we could have debate appropriate to committee study rather than second reading.

The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, we have already plowed some ground, and the weeds have all shown up on the other side of the House. I don't think you'd mind me doing a little crowing

in noting that the members over there, many of which have availed themselves of 3 and a half percent loans, couldn't see their way clearer to see that the future generations should. The Member for West Yellowhead pointed that out quite well.

On a less disputatious note - now, this is as a point of information to the hon. member introducing the Bill - I've shown this to a lawyer. I don't know if he was a good one or a bad one. I don't even know which list he might have been on for the judgeship patronage that's going to be handed out in the future. But clauses in this particular - I think I'd better hold it, Mr. Chairman, because I'm asking him a question, and I maybe should get his attention before I can do that.

To the proposer of the Bill, the hon. Member for Drayton Valley. I'm interested in knowing how he would explain sections 4, 5, and 8. As to interpretation by some lawyers on those three areas, it could be that if a new buyer of the property took over a property with a mortgage on it that was in arrears, the new buyer couldn't qualify for electrical service because the old electrical service loan becomes due and payable. In other words, one of the legal opinions given to me was that if there was a power debt or lien against a property, the REA would have the right to insist that the lien be paid up fully before they would consider the new farmer. Many young farmers might buy an older farm that had the old mortgage slightly in arrears, or maybe major in arrears, but the mortgage company was quite happy to let the transfer go; number one. Number two; maybe they couldn't stop the transfer. Here again is something that would impinge and discriminate against young farmers because of taking over a farm that was behind in the mortgage: they were willing to take on the payments, but they could find under this legislation that they couldn't get power to their farm because there was, in effect, a debt or lien against the property when they took it over. I'd be interested in hearing the hon. member's answer to that, about whether it's been addressed, or maybe he could give me a note later on it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Further speakers on the Bill?
The Member for West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Chairman, I don't take this Bill very lightly that the Member for Drayton Valley is trying to push through without considering or explaining the real reason why they would like to penalize people moving to rural Alberta, especially young farmers who are striving to maintain their livelihood on the family farm in rural Alberta.

They gave enough lead time, up to July of 1991, to allow people, especially those they may advise, to quickly apply for loans so they can benefit from the 3 and a half percent. But after July 1, Mr. Chairman, it's shameful that young people or any person moving to rural Alberta now could be penalized by paying 7 percent.

The member was very unclear as to the reasons why they would move this out of the Act and into regulations. He did say, of course, that they're moving towards the true cost of financing these days, but he should consider, Mr. Chairman, that there's several million dollars out there on these part 1 loans. If the member is trying to just bring money into the general revenue of this province, he should look at getting some of these loans paid down. I've given him the lead to charge the interest on loans that have been out there for 10, 15 - whatever year they want to pick. If somebody's been farming for some 10 years or operating in the farming industry for some 10 years, surely they must be on the road to paying all their bills and have their farm built up to where they can now progress to a

good livelihood and hold the people on the family farms rather than trying to send them off to the city by not succeeding. In 10 years surely a person's got a good start on the family farm.

But as of March 31, 1989, \$4,738,812 was loaned out on a 10-year loan while \$29,932,768 had been loaned on the 25-year. Well, Mr. Chairman, they're not afraid to make tax grabs by adding 2 cents to the price of fuel in this province through the provincial taxes, so I don't see why they shouldn't consider asking some other people rather than the young people. The people who are just starting in the farming industry in rural Alberta should be allowed the same rate that the farmers of many years before them had.

Bill 12 really is not a Bill that addresses the real needs of rural Alberta or the Rural Electrification Long Term Financing Act. It was brought in many years ago. I had the date here someplace; I just kind of lost it. But this has been in place for a long time, Mr. Chairman, and as the people that have benefited in the past, like many of the Conservative MLAs who sit in this Legislature – in fact, some are with us here today. I was involved with the power company for the last 18 years, and I know of many who have benefited by this 3 and a half percent loan. Now, of course, they want to . . .

MR. TAYLOR: Do you see any in the House?

MR. DOYLE: Yes. To answer your question, MLA for Westlock-Sturgeon, I do know of some that, in fact, are at this time benefiting from these loans.

Why should they go out there and penalize people that are trying to move into rural Alberta, who want to make a better life for their families and a continuation of family life in rural Alberta for generations to come? Mr. Chairman, I see this only as a gift to these MLAs to allow their 3 and a half percent loans to continue while they penalize the real people who are going to diversify this country in the future, and those are the farming communities of rural Alberta.

5:10

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

[Title and preamble agreed to]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: On the Bill itself, does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Carried.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung]

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Ady	Horsman	Oldring
Anderson	Hyland	Orman
Black	Klein	Osterman
Brassard	Laing, B.	Paszkowski
Cardinal	Lund	Severtson

Clegg	Main	Shrake
Drobot	McClellan	Sparrow
Elliott	McCoy	Tannas
Evans	Mirosh	Thurber
Fischer	Moore	Trynchy
Gesell	Musgrove	Weiss
Gogo	Nelson	Zarusky

Against the motion:

Barrett	Laing, M.	Pashak
Chivers	Martin	Roberts
Doyle	McEachern	Sigurdson
Ewasiuk	McInnis	Taylor
Gagnon	Mjolsness	Wickman
Gibeault		

Totals:	For – 36	Against – 16
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[The sections of Bill 12 agreed to]

MR. THURBER: Mr. Chairman, I move Bill 12 be reported.

[Motion carried]

Bill 14

Historical Resources Amendment Act, 1991

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments, amendments, questions?

The Member for Edmonton-Highlands.

5:20

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I looked at this Bill and tried to figure out how I could amend it to prevent the collection of fees from historical resource sites and museums, and I realized that you can't actually do that. The only way you could do that is to delete section 10.2(1)(3)(a), which says:

The following must be deposited into the Fund:

(a) admission fees to designated facilities.

In other words, the Bill is silent on the collection of admission fees but just says what shall be done with them once they are collected.

Now, the problem I have with this Bill is that it will deny when in force free – that is, without admission fee – access to facilities designated under this Act. I oppose that, Mr. Chairman. I think that's wrong. I remember the minister in sponsoring the Bill for second reading said that it was their plan to collect some \$1.7 million from charging the fees. That's about the amount of money that his budget was cut by, and we went around on this subject last Monday evening. The fact that his department carries so little weight with the Provincial Treasurer that it suffers funding declines and the fact that it's lottery funds that tend now to fund more and more of the cultural activities of the province, funds which don't come before the Assembly for deliberation, I consider to be a strong indication of the cabinet's and the government's absence of or declining commitment to the arts community and to the cultural community.

I point out that for every public dollar given over to the artistic community and the cultural community, more than \$1 is generated in taxation and income that goes back into the General Revenue Fund. I can't see why it is that they've done that. Now, the minister may think he was forced into sponsoring this Bill, into establishing this fund, and into starting to collect fees at museums and historical resources because his own budget has been cut. I say that if you're standing up for the cultural

community and for the history and especially the human history of this province, say so. If you don't like what your government is doing, say so or leave the cabinet. I can only conclude by his sponsorship of this Bill that the minister is going along with all this, that he's happy with this. I don't think there's a lot to be happy for.

I think the Bill is flawed in concept and that you're going to see, as happened in British Columbia upon the introduction of admission fees for museums and historical resources, a drop of at least 25 percent in visitorship. Now, these are the same guys that talk about the importance of tourism. Well, if you want to continue to attract tourists, give them some facilities that they can get into for free. We used to have free admission to parks, and now parks are going to be subject to fees. You know, there are going to be fees on all sorts of activities that tourists will attend.

MR. HORSMAN: Yeah, exactly. You have to pay for things; imagine that.

MS BARRETT: Well, the Deputy Premier says, "You have to pay for things; imagine that." I'd like to point out to the Deputy Premier that people are already giving a lot of money to this government in the form of taxation, only to see it being flushed down the toilet by ministers like the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and the Provincial Treasurer. I remind the Deputy Premier that when the current Provincial Treasurer first sat in his seat as the Provincial Treasurer six years ago, there was no provincial debt. That man singlehandedly gave us an \$11-billion debt. [interjections] That's right. Now these guys are wondering why they want to charge admission fees. It's because they couldn't manage the lemonade stand that they're in debt, and they're looking for any way they can to balance the budget. If that means double- or triple-dipping on the taxpayers, then that's what they're prepared to do. Well, I don't agree with that. The Minister of Economic Development and Trade has lost a few hundred million dollars of taxpayers' . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order. I would ask the hon. member that perhaps now that the introductory remarks are completed, we could deal with committee study of the Bill.

MS BARRETT: Sure; no problem, Mr. Chairman.

What I was getting at was the fund that is established into which admission fees to designated facilities must be deposited. I think that admission fees are wrong. It's the way that this government is trying to cover up for all the bungling that's been conducted by the Minister of Economic Development and Trade,

the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications, and the Provincial Treasurer. I say the taxpayers shouldn't let these guys off the hook. Now, I know what the taxpayers are going to do come the next election. They're going to junk this Bill, and they're going to junk this government, but by then we'll be \$15 billion in debt.

Anyway, Mr. Chairman, in view of the time I'd move that we adjourn debate.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of adjourning debate, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no. Carried.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee rise and report progress.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain Bills. The committee reports Bills 5, 7, and 12, and reports progress on Bill 14. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in the report?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that when the members reconvene this evening at 8 o'clock, they do so as the Committee of Supply for the purpose of considering the estimates of the Department of the Environment.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

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