

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, April 23, 1991**

**2:30 p.m.**

Date: 91/04/23

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Our Father, keep us mindful of the special and unique opportunity we have to work for our constituents and our province, and in that work give us both strength and wisdom.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislature Assemblyman Chuck Hardwick of the New Jersey General Assembly and Ms Roseanne Swan of the State Legislative Leaders Foundation. That foundation draws its members from state legislators who hold leadership positions in their Legislatures; that is to say, Speakers and majority and minority leaders. Since 1986 I've had the honour of representing Canada on the board of that foundation. The group is planning to hold its 1991 summer meeting in Kananaskis in July, and Assemblyman Hardwick and Ms Swan are here to make arrangements for the meeting. That meeting will give approximately 35 U.S. legislative leaders and 15 business executives an opportunity to examine overall how Canada addresses significant health issues, with a special emphasis on the experience in Alberta. I would like now to ask that our honoured guests rise in your gallery and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

### **Bill 305 An Act to Amend the Public Service Employee Relations Act**

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 305, An Act to Amend the Public Service Employee Relations Act.

This Act, if passed, will allow employees of the Legislative Assembly to bargain collectively like other workers in the province.

### **Speaker's Ruling Screening of Bills**

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. The Bill will not be introduced today. Perhaps you'd like to see me after the House. It has not been properly cleared.

Thank you.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file with the Assembly today four copies of Alberta's International Offices Report to the Alberta Legislative Assembly. Copies will be available for all members of the Assembly.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the prospectus of Northern Steel Inc. on the sale of Northern Steel Inc.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to table the report of the Municipal Statutes Review Committee's recommendations for a new Municipal Government Act. The

committee has received advice from a number of Albertans and organizations, and this will give the opportunity for Albertans to review this submission between now and the spring of 1992.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure, sir, to introduce to you and through you 27 students from St. Theresa school in the constituency of Sherwood Park. They are joined by their teacher Miss Connie Poschmann. I had an opportunity to meet with them earlier. We are delighted that they are here to watch the legislative session in action. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask that they rise so we could extend a very warm welcome to them.

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and members of the Assembly some 30 students from the public school Delton elementary in the constituency of Edmonton-Norwood. They are accompanied by their teachers Ms Cameron, Ms McFaull and parent Mrs. Love. They're in the public gallery. I'd like them to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome from Members of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege for me to introduce to you today 29 individuals who are largely responsible for Alberta being the strong and free province it is today. They are 29 members of the Red Deer seniors group. They are here with their leader Mrs. June Wade. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Glenarry.

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 14 students from Queen Elizabeth high school who are ESL students. They are accompanied by their teachers Miss Kalebaba and Mrs. Mitchell. I would ask that they stand and receive the traditional welcome of this Assembly.

head: **Statement by the Speaker  
Anticipation**

MR. SPEAKER: Before we start Oral Question Period, we have this brief Speaker's ruling, please.

The Chair would like to review for the benefit of all hon. members the practice and precedents of this House with respect to the rule of anticipation. Specific references on anticipation can be found in Standing Order 23(e), which reads:

A member will be called to order by Mr. Speaker if that member . . .

(e) anticipates, contrary to good parliamentary practice, any matter already on the Order Paper or on notice for consideration.

*Beauchesne* 513(1) reads:

In determining whether a discussion is out of order on the grounds of anticipation, the Speaker must have regard to the probability of the matter anticipated being brought before the House within a reasonable time.

Again *Beauchesne* 708 reads:

The House is not supposed to be informed of the proceedings of a committee on a bill until the bill has been reported; discussion of the clauses, with the Speaker in the Chair, when the bill is still before the committee, is consequently irregular.

A review of *Hansard* of April 19, 1988, and June 15, 1989, indicates that the Chair has on almost a yearly basis made a

statement to the House with respect to anticipation. Since last Wednesday the issue has again been before the House on three separate occasions. As stated in the House yesterday, the Chair has attempted during this and prior years to determine if there is some way to be able to allow some questions to proceed. However, it is apparent that the most practical way to deal with anticipation during question period when estimates are before the House is to rule that no questions whatsoever will be allowed with respect to the ministry whose estimates will be called on that day.

Furthermore, with respect to Bills and motions the Chair's ruling of June 15, 1989, stated:

Questions can be developed and not ruled out of order if a Bill has been introduced in the Assembly. Once the Bills reach second reading stage, then they're going to be ruled out of order in terms of question period. Questions developed after a Bill's introduction should not be detailed and should relate to the general policy rather than a clause-by-clause examination of the Bill. If this occurs in question period, these questions will be ruled out of order.

This, hon. members, will remain the practice of this House. Thank you.

head:

### Oral Question Period

2:40

#### Loans to Industry

MR. MARTIN: My questions are to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. The minister of economic development's 1989 briefing book stands out as a unique testament to this government's financial incompetence and utter recklessness with the public's money. Mr. Speaker, the public has the right to know. As a result, I'd like to file copies of these briefing notes with the Assembly today. Not only is it bad enough that we're losing all this money; it's done behind closed doors with their corporate friends so nobody knows what's going on. This has been fiscally stupid and undemocratic at the same time, and Albertans think this is wrong, wrong, wrong. My question to the minister is: given that this is the public's money that this government is so carelessly throwing away, how does this minister continue to justify the backroom deals made with his corporate friends?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted, too, to table for the hon. member the financial programs that are available from the government, and let me file copies with the Legislative Assembly. We outline in a very straightforward way that the basis on which these export loan guarantees are offered is not our financial data base or our analysis but the bank's analysis. I indicated that to the hon. member yesterday, and I'm more than happy to repeat it to him again today.

If one examines the bases on which we give them, there are strict criteria, criteria which are outlined both in that booklet and in the legislation that enables our department to function. The criteria are such that, firstly, the chartered banks or the credit unions or the Alberta Treasury Branches have to accept the financial data and accept the issuing of that loan themselves before we involve ourselves. Once that is done and once the criteria have been established, we in turn do a thorough analysis, both by the Treasury Department and by our department, and then we only guarantee up to 85 percent of the export loan guarantee itself. In addition to that, we charge a fee to those individuals that take advantage of the export loan guarantee program. These are done on the basis of creating jobs within the province of Alberta so that we can have greater exportation of goods outside of the province.

I must say, though, that I am somewhat surprised at the hon. member not understanding the commercial confidentiality nature of this. The hon. member is aware that there are many, many areas where individuals come to us whereby we have to take into account the confidentiality aspect. We just recently saw where his party lost a valuable member in the Ontario Legislature because she broke that confidentiality. If the hon. member is suggesting that we should have no regard for the contracts or obligations of the business community whereas we should have for student loans or those individuals on welfare, there's a real irony to his statement.

MR. MARTIN: This minister knows that that is total and absolute nonsense. Business confidentiality. We're suggesting putting it in the public accounts two years later, Mr. Speaker. No, the reality is that they don't want people to know what they're doing. That's why it's done behind closed doors.

I'm not only talking about the export loan guarantees. There are millions – millions – that have been given to Peter Pocklington and failed companies all over that we can look at from these briefing notes. We've talked about that before. The bottom line in terms of the figures we have is that we've lost – and I'm using a conservative estimate – over \$1.3 billion. I want to ask this question of the minister: rather than the phony figures that they've put out that nobody can check on, isn't it true that since 1986 over a billion dollars have been lost by this government through bad loans, loan guarantees, equity possessions, and regulatory failures?

MR. ELZINGA: No, Mr. Speaker, it is not true, and it's distasteful that the hon. member would indulge in such falsehoods.

MR. MARTIN: You say falsehoods, but you never will come clean and lay it out to the public. I say to this minister that the epitaph for this government from this briefing book is: incompetence and secrecy. If that's not the case, if he wants to get into a dispute over figures, will the minister table in this Legislature today the secret deals that this government has made; for example, the ones with Mr. Pocklington? Do it, then, if you're so sure about your figures.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I just explained to the hon. member the process as it relates to the export loan guarantee, which I indicated to him yesterday also. Let me also indicate to him: he relates a number of other involvements whereby we backstopped companies. He should talk to the mayor of the city of Edmonton, who suggests that we offer further support to Gainers to make sure that we maintain the jobs in the city of Edmonton. That's what we're doing; we're maintaining jobs in the city of Edmonton. We're maintaining jobs as it relates to Northern Steel. He should talk to his union counterpart, whereby they're suggesting that we continue our support.

I indicate to the hon. member that we are accountable through a number of sources: number one, the public accounts. The export loan guarantees are highlighted in the public accounts, as are our involvements as they relate to other loan guarantees. We're more than happy to respond to the hon. member as it relates to the specifics of the questions, as we have done before. We also recognize that we have the responsibility which the hon. member does not have – and watching the way he behaves himself, I'm delighted that he never will have that responsibility – of governing and carrying out an obligation as it relates to commercial confidentiality and personal confiden-

tiality, such as I indicated to him whereby a member of his party violated that confidentiality in Ontario and, as a consequence, lost her job.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, this minister knows full well that in public accounts you can't get export loans. That's why we put it out yesterday. They've lost over a billion dollars behind closed doors, and they don't . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Now we will have the second question.

### Senior Citizens Programs

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my second question is to the Associate Minister of Family and Social Services. Seniors are very upset about the fact that the benefits they have received are being cut. Yesterday the minister responsible for seniors said that there was no link between the recent cuts and another secret document, a confidential review of aid programs for seniors. Well, perhaps the minister can explain a document which was prepared for discussion at cabinet in December which targeted a review of senior's programs in the interest of achieving, and I quote, "expenditure reductions," a purpose which the paper also states was determined by the Associate Minister of Family and Social Services along with his colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I have that document in front of me. My question to the minister: how can the minister possibly deny that the purpose of this confidential review most definitely is to cut back on the benefits available to seniors?

MR. BRASSARD: Well, Mr. Speaker, for starters the hon. Leader of the Opposition would only have to look at the proof to refute the document that he's referring to, because there has actually been an increase in the program spending this year over last year. Some time ago my department did put together a division - we're still working on that - to co-ordinate the services that are provided by 12 different departments of this government. The purpose is to co-ordinate their efforts so that we're not tripping over one another and so that we can indeed provide the best coverage of services possible. That is an ongoing thing, and there's nothing secret about it.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I just beg to differ. This is another secret document that we have, done behind closed doors: the typical way this government operates. In fact, some of the items outlined on this list of cuts have already happened, such as the elimination of the seniors home heating program and changes to the extended health benefits program. I want to ask the minister: is the minister, then, saying that it is just a coincidence that this secret document was presented to cabinet in December and then actually followed up on in the budget? Is it just a coincidence, Mr. Minister?

MR. BRASSARD: It's not a coincidence at all, Mr. Speaker. I didn't say that I am responsible for the programs; I said I am responsible for the co-ordination of the programs. The individual departments still have every opportunity to exercise good judgment and value decisions in their own department, and that will continue. Perhaps he should address his remarks to the Minister of Transportation and Utilities if he wants his direct question answered. There is, I repeat, no secret agenda, there's

no secret commission, and there's no secret committee running around the country, as the hon. leader would have us believe.

MR. MARTIN: Well, what's this document about? If it's for the public, why didn't you put it out to the public before you announced these cuts in the budget? That's what you did.

My question is to the minister. As they go on to talk about some other possible cuts to seniors that could go up to . . . [interjections] Oh, the Minister of Health is screaming; she's upset. It says in this document that \$113 million could be saved, and I want to ask this minister to finally be honest. Isn't it true that this government again has a secret agenda to cut back on benefits for seniors and that this already started in the budget? Why don't they at least be honest about it?

2:50

MR. BRASSARD: Well, Mr. Speaker, it continues that the strongest words show up in the weakest arguments. I can't believe this.

Let me put this whole matter to rest. The budget for seniors' spending was increased to \$1.2 billion this year. There was \$22 million, to quote his numbers, of programming that had changed or been altered to better reflect the needs of the seniors. I'd point out that just over 1 percent of that total budget towards seniors programs has been altered to better reflect a response to the needs of seniors today. I really resent the alarmist tactics that are being used in this instance.

### Northern Steel Inc.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the Alberta government has a dreadful record of involving taxpayers' moneys in a number of failed industrial ventures in Alberta. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been squandered, taxpayers' moneys have been squandered, by ineptitude and mismanagement by the government. Now we have a situation where ministries are attempting to recoup moneys from these failed companies, and we see continued ineptitude and mismanagement. In the document that I filed today, a leaked prospectus on the sale of Northern Steel, I believe there is misinformation, information that is grossly misleading. My question to the minister of economic development is this: assuming that the minister is responsible for this document and before casting blame, I would ask the minister to confirm that he reviewed the prospectus and that he sanctioned all of the statements and figures that were set out in that document. Will he do that?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, let me first indicate to the hon. member that I do not agree with his statement that led into the question: that we should not attempt to recoup taxpayers' dollars. He's suggesting that we shouldn't try to recoup any of the money that we have invested in these companies. We're going to do our utmost to husband that money properly. We are going to attempt to recoup the money that we invested in Northern Steel as it relates to the prospectus, as he indicated. I have asked individuals within our department to do their level best to involve themselves in the privatization of this steel company. I, naturally, am responsible. The buck stops with this minister, and I'm happy to accept that responsibility.

MR. DECORE: All right; if the blame is clearly at your door, Mr. Minister, why in the prospectus does it encourage prospective buyers by stating that there is some \$500 million of projected sales of steel to customers in Alberta over the next

few years when in fact 40 percent of those projected sales are to companies like MagCan, the magnesium company that went under; OSLO, that isn't going; projects in the forestry industry that have publicly been shelved? Why are you setting out that kind of information to prospective buyers that is erroneous? Why?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, obviously the hon. member is not listening to what takes place in this Legislative Assembly on a daily basis. We just recently highlighted in excess of \$20 billion worth of projects that are on stream or that are coming on stream within the province of Alberta. It's important that individuals who wish to engage themselves in the purchase of this very important company are aware of the economic activity within the province. I have here a document whereby we highlight in excess of \$20 billion worth of projects, making us the economic leader of any province in Canada. If the hon. member wishes copies of those documents, we're more than happy to share them with him.

MR. TAYLOR: What about the prospectus?

#### **Speaker's Ruling Decorum**

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. Is Westlock-Sturgeon going to ask this question or Edmonton-Glengarry? I assume Edmonton-Glengarry, so please . . .

MR. TAYLOR: He's doing quite well, sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Just keep it down.  
Edmonton-Glengarry, please.

MR. TAYLOR: Always correct; always protecting the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. member.

#### **Northern Steel Inc. (continued)**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, a prospectus is supposed to be an honest statement. It is supposed to encourage prospective buyers with honest information. This is not honest information; this is anything but honest information. Will the minister commit to amending or changing this document so that it is honest and that it invites people to honest information and not a bunch of baloney?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the only baloney that we're hearing is coming from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry. The information within that documentation is factual. We want to make people aware of the economic well-being of this province, whereby we are continuing to lead economic growth in this country. In addition . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order.  
Hon. minister, please.

MR. ELZINGA: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Speaker, the information within that documentation is factual information. We issued it to . . .

MR. DECORE: It is not factual.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister.

MR. TAYLOR: Saved again.

#### **Speaker's Ruling Interrupting a Member**

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Glengarry, you asked your three questions. It isn't up to you now to keep harassing the minister by yelling back and forth.

MR. DECORE: I wanted to ask the question . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. And it's not your point to be harassing the Chair either.

MR. TAYLOR: Or the Chair us.

MR. SPEAKER: Or Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Or the Chair us.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I'm sorry that you happen to be a slow learner, hon. member, my dear friend.  
Red Deer-North.

#### **Economic Outlook**

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Provincial Treasurer. The recent budget document shows that our economy has moved away significantly from total dependency on the energy sector, but it's a reality that we still are dependent on those prices and those revenues. The budget has projected \$23 a barrel; it's been hovering around \$20 a barrel. Could the minister indicate to us: how long can our projections continue, still be on target, while this stays at the \$20-a-barrel level?

MR. TAYLOR: Three hundred and sixty-four days.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member. Are you now the minister of the Treasury?  
The Treasurer, please.

MR. JOHNSTON: The Member for Red Deer-North does raise an important point. I would like to put on the record some of the thought behind our assumptions, because it is important to Albertans to recognize three of the points that the member outlined.

Number one, in fact the Alberta budget and to a great extent the Alberta economy has moved away from a large dependency on oil and gas. The budget documents which I filed recently indicate that the provincial revenues are based about 25 percent on nonrenewable resource revenue, a significant change over the decade, moving from about 50 percent down to 25 percent. But that's also typical of our economy, Mr. Speaker, because we do have a diversified economy, diversified across a variety of sections with added value in the agriculture and energy sections as well. That's why we have a very strong economy in contrast to what you see in other parts of Canada.

What you will see, though, and it should be important to Albertans to know, is that our revenue forecast, the oil and gas forecast that we put out there as a proxy for the people of Alberta to look at and to judge how we have set our course of action and our plan for the year ahead, starts on April 1, '91,

and it goes to March 31, '92. That's an important fact, because through the strong demand season in '91-92, you'll see the price start to rise considerably.

A year ago, Mr. Speaker, the price of oil was about \$12 to \$14 in some places, and I remember the opposition at that time questioning the efficacy of the price. Today the price is over \$21, early in the cycle, at a period when the demand is normally low. We think that over the course of the next 12 months starting April 1, our revenue forecast of \$23 will hold. As I have pointed out in the budget, in three out of the four years the market has been above our forecast; that is to say, we have been below what the market has done. So I think the value . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Provincial Treasurer.  
Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, the other external factor affecting our economy here in Alberta, of course, is interest rates. I'd like to ask the minister if he has taken the opportunity yet to sit down with the new federal Finance minister, who happens to reside in Alberta, to explain our dissatisfaction with the interest rate policy? Has he taken that opportunity, and if not, why not?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I have not done that at this point. I know that some of my colleagues have had contact with the new ministers, and I'll have an opportunity to do that very soon. I would say that it seems to me that Mr. Mazankowski will more fully understand the problems of Alberta in terms of the macroeconomics, such things as interest rates, exchange rates, getting jobs, getting the economy going, because he shares the view that we do that that's an important mandate.

3:00

I can conclude that our Premier and other ministers over the course of the past three years have argued strongly and long that we have to get the interest rates down to ensure that our economy is as robust as it has been over the first period of '91. Mr. Speaker, with those interest rates moving down, as we expect they will, and with mortgages coming down, as now evidenced by the marketplace, the Alberta economy will snap back like no other economy in Canada, continue to generate jobs, have the lowest unemployment of any province in Canada, and experience real economic growth. Interest rates are significant to it, very . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Edmonton-Highlands.

#### **Air Travel by Executive Council**

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, on an annual basis the government used to file with the Assembly documents about this size that showed every single flight on the government fleet by every cabinet minister. They stopped doing that in 1985. Now, as a result of information that the minister finally made available yesterday, taxpayers know that cabinet ministers, Executive Council, not their departments, booked some 550 charter flights on the government fleet in one year alone. That comes to on average about one and a half flights per day, and nowadays it looks like even their business associates can hop on for free.

AN HON. MEMBER: What a deal.

MS BARRETT: Yeah, what a deal.

My question is to the Provincial Treasurer, Mr. Speaker, and it's this: why on earth does this minister expect the taxpayers of Alberta to foot the bill for free air taxi service for this government at its whim, including its business friends?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the policy with respect to government aircraft falls clearly under the responsibility of the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. I'd love to give you a real answer, but I know the minister has an even better answer prepared.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, priority use of aircraft in the province of Alberta is dispatched according to four priorities that the government has made very, very clear publicly for a great period of time. The number one priority is in the conveying of individuals who may be impacted in terms of human life situations. If an individual in any part of the province needs to be transported to a hospital in another part of the province of Alberta, that's priority number one in the dispatch priorities in terms of aircraft. The second priority in terms of dispatch in the utilization of government aircraft is for environmental disasters: floods, forest fire fighting, and the like. The third priority is Executive Council travel, and the fourth priority is departmental travel.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, in the information that we have made available and make available upon request, as I pointed out on several occasions in this Assembly, approximately 17 percent of all aircraft usage is by Executive Council, 83 percent is by various departments of government, and the vast majority of aircraft utilization in this province is for forest fire related activities. That is the reality, and that is the fact. As I indicated a week or more ago, any individual who would like to review the information is welcome to my office to look through the travel logs.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, between June of '88 and June of '89, 111 Executive Council flights were between Edmonton and Calgary. The following year 120 were between Edmonton and Calgary. I checked earlier today, and you know how many commercial flights are available every work day between Edmonton and Calgary? Sixty-two, one every half hour. My question to the Provincial Treasurer, who's telling everybody else to tighten their belts, pay more, and get less, is: when is this government going to trim its excesses and stop using expensive government flights and start taking commercial carriers?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, the policy that the province utilizes in terms of use of the aircraft is very, very clear. Essentially we do have guidelines: first of all, ground travel should be used for destinations within 150 kilometres of the capital city when practical, and secondly, the government aircraft should only be used if in fact regularly scheduled airlines make it difficult for ministers to return.

Mr. Speaker, I give you an example. A few days ago I was asked to attend the summit conference of the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists, and Geophysicists of Alberta. That particular function was in Calgary and did not end till nearly midnight, 12 o'clock. Well, my looking at any schedule would indicate that there is no aircraft flying from Calgary to Edmonton at that time. It was my responsibility as the minister responsible for the engineering legislation in this province to be there, and there were six other people with me. The choice was very simple: should we charter a government aircraft, a King Air, at approximately \$450 an hour, or should this group

of seven have stayed overnight in Calgary at hotel rates that may have been \$40 to \$50 or \$60 a night? It was very, very much cheaper to use the government aircraft. That saved dollars for the taxpayer, and that is the priority in terms of the utilization of government aircraft in the province of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

**Northern Steel Inc.**  
(continued)

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The prospectus for Northern Steel includes a requirement for the prospective purchaser to invest some \$5 million, provided at least \$4.4 million goes towards government loan guarantees to the CIBC for special term and interim operating loans. The document further states, and I quote, "The balance of the new funds may then be utilized to pay-out minority shareholdings," despite the fact that that would leave Alberta taxpayers on the hook for more than \$11 million. To the minister then: in case no one has told him, his responsibility is not to minority shareholders but in fact to the taxpayers of this province. My question to the minister is very simply this: why is his department and this government worried about minority shareholders when, in fact, the potential risk is \$11.3 million if a buyer can even be found for Northern Steel? Why would you put us on the hook like that?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, our concern is for all the shareholders. We on behalf of the population of the province of Alberta own some 83 percent of Northern Steel. We've got an obligation to that 83 percent but also to that other 17 percent, and we recognize that obligation. I'm glad now that the hon. member will finally retract his foolish statement that he made earlier, whereby we're going to sell this company for \$1.

MR. BRUSEKER: That's the price.

Given that the principals of Northern Steel are also the principals of Premier Steel and given that \$340,000 of doubtful accounts were written off and also that there were \$2.3 million of related party transactions between these two firms, will the minister commit to investigating all the financial transactions that occurred between these two companies so that in fact we can get as much of our nearly \$16 million investment back to the taxpayers where it belongs?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, that is our purpose, whereby we are doing our level best to make sure that we recoup all of our backstopping and our investment in Northern Steel. [interjections]

MR. DECORE: But the prospectus writes it off.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order.

MR. ELZINGA: The hon. member . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Forget it.

MR. ELZINGA: Very good, sir. [interjections]

MR. DECORE: You can't forget a prospectus.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: Saved again.

**Speaker's Ruling**  
**Warning a Member**

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. member, you've been warned three times today. Next time . . .

Thank you.

**Northern Steel Inc.**  
(continued)

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, let me indicate to the hon. member that that is our purpose and our obligation: to make sure that we recoup all of our backstopping on behalf of the Alberta taxpayer. But it's obviously not the responsibility of the hon. members, because what they have done is their level best to discredit a very credible company in the province of Alberta. I'm amazed at the slander that the hon. member will participate in by trying to draw down what we consider a very viable company. They want to waste additional taxpayers' money by doing this, and we're not going to be any part of it.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River.

**Loans to Industry**  
(continued)

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been receiving complaints from constituents that the loan guarantee restrictions are too strict. They tell me that the banks are very, very strict in their eligibility rulings, that they have virtually ground the whole process to a standstill. [interjections] Obviously, the gentlemen in the opposition haven't been involved in trying to establish a business. Perhaps it might be wise to try and do that; you'd find out the difficulties that are involved. To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade: are you prepared to look at this situation? My understanding is that the process has virtually ground to a standstill because of the strict regulations that are in place today, and when you are considering these regulations with a view to perhaps taking off some of the restrictions that are there today, it would allow the process to flow as it once did.

3:10

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Member for Smoky River has indicated, there are very strict criteria. We tabled the booklet that outlines the criteria. In addition to that, they are outlined in our legislative authority. I should indicate to the hon. member that we do rely on the financial institutions to do the assessment because we feel that they have the methods at their disposal to do a proper assessment. We rely on them. If the financial institutions do not approve of us guaranteeing the loan, we do not proceed with it.

It's interesting to note, though, that in the six and a half years that the export loan program has been in existence, it has created the sale of some \$850 million worth of goods, thus in turn creating a substantial amount of jobs for Albertans. Mr. Speaker, we're delighted that we can create jobs. Unlike the New Democratic Party, who are not concerned with jobs, we are concerned with jobs and concerned with economic creation within this province, and we're going to continue to do that.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the fact that indeed this program does create jobs, and that's the essence to the success of the development of any province or any nation, would the minister share with us today the number of jobs, or do you have a handle on the number of jobs that indeed this program or this type of lending has created in this province?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I too share the concern that the hon. member has whereby we have make sure we have meaningful employment for Albertans. We go on the assessment that economists other than our own suggest: for every billion dollars worth of exports there are 19,000 jobs created. If one is to equate that with the \$850 million worth of sales, we have created in excess of some 16,000 jobs.

Just as it relates to jobs, it's interesting to note that the New Democratic Party does not care for jobs in this province, nor in the province of Ontario. I quote from an individual, Mr. Gerard Kennedy, the executive director of the Daily Bread Food Bank in Ontario. He says that the poor get poorer under the NDP. We don't want people to get poor; we want to create jobs. We're going to continue to create jobs rather than the New Democratic Party, which wishes individuals to remain . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

#### Women's Issues

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the minister responsible for women announced the 1991-92 action plan for women initiatives. Though some of these initiatives are new and welcome, I am disappointed in the lack of action these supposed initiatives reflect, particularly one to provide additional funding to women's emergency shelters. My question to the minister is: in light of the fact that this minister announced in her initiatives two years ago that funding would be increased to cover costs of essential services in all existing shelters, how is it that shelters still do not receive adequate funds to cover basic emergency services?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family and Social Services will want to respond in great detail, but let me say that with his assistance and that of other ministers in this government, the plan for action has had a steady effect on increasing funding in the area of family violence far and beyond what it was three years ago. With that I would invite the minister to add detail.

MR. OLDRING: The Minister of Labour is quite right in pointing out our commitment to shelters in this province, and I think we should set the record straight and look back over the years. I'd point out that this year we've increased the budget by 5.7 percent. Last year it was by 9 percent. The year before that it was 24 percent, 10 percent before that, and 30 percent before that. Mr. Speaker, our funding commitment to shelters in this province has increased by almost 300 percent in recent years.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize, though, that there is more to be done, and I appreciate the presentation that the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore is making. I can assure her that I'll continue to work with the Minister of Labour and a number of my other colleagues to address not just the shortages on the women's shelter side but the whole issue of family violence.

MS M. LAING: Well, Mr. Speaker, 5,000 families were turned away last year, and that is too many.

My second question to the minister. A second initiative announced by the minister is to develop a brochure providing information on women and pensions. My question: will this brochure explain the rationale for denying some persons pensions on the basis of marital status, and will this minister, who is also responsible for human rights, commit to changing this discriminatory legislation?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, that is among one of the 16 initiatives that we have announced this year, in addition to the many initiatives we had over the last three years. We felt that it was important for women to have access to a readily understood, brief description of pensions and the role pensions play in economic equality, planning for the future in particular, noting that poverty among seniors is most often experienced by women. There will be a full description of pensions in their generality, plus there will be resources and resource staff – phone numbers and so forth, shall I say – for people to get more detailed information.

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

#### Waste Management

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of the Environment's announcement last week of a waste minimization and recycling plan was not only a colossal disappointment for many who had higher expectations of what was to come, but it also did little to assist municipalities in expanding their very popular and successful blue box program. For instance, in my riding close to 90 percent of my constituents live in high rises and walk-ups, and they do not at all have access to the blue box recycling program here in Edmonton; hence most of the waste ends up in the soon-to-be-filled landfill. Will the Minister of the Environment tell the thousands of Albertans who do live in high rises and walk-ups just how much longer they're going to have to wait before they have full access to an environmentally essential blue box recycling program?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has lived in this city long enough to know that the blue box program in the city of Edmonton was instituted by the city of Edmonton because they have a very special problem here that the previous administration couldn't address, and that is that there's a deficiency of landfill in this city. There's a deficiency of landfill, and the landfill site that they bought to try and remedy the situation proved to be environmentally inadequate, and now they've got a big problem. So the blue box program is part of a city initiative. The Department of the Environment did not force the city of Edmonton into the blue box program. It was a city initiative, and a good initiative, to collect and separate recyclables to avoid putting more materials into the landfill. I would think that this is a matter that the hon. member should take up with the mayor.

The comprehensive waste minimization and recycling program is to assist those municipalities that are not now involved in systematic collection and separation of recyclables to become involved and to lend resources, as we are lending resources to the city of Edmonton, to help them sort out their overall waste management problems. Indeed, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment are working very diligently not only with the city of Edmonton but with the four

surrounding counties and nine or 10 towns and cities to develop a comprehensive regional . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Supplementary.

REV. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I can't believe we touched such a nerve over there. Obviously, the city of Edmonton has the political will to put the money where their initiatives are, not this government. Maybe you should take a cue or two from Mayor Reimer on what we're doing in Edmonton.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we've had pilot projects around recycling in apartments and high rises. There is job creation in the recycling of waste. There's so much good news here. When will the Minister of the Environment take some real action on waste and arrange for direct negotiations with the mayor of Edmonton and other municipalities to engage with them the ways and means of developing a comprehensive blue box program throughout the province?

3:20

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, this member has demonstrated how little he actually knows about what's going on in his own city. I am disappointed that a person, an individual, who represents the heart of the city would know so little about what's going on in his own municipality. In fact, as I've explained before, my friend and colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment have indeed for the first time in the history of this region brought together the city of Edmonton, the four surrounding counties, about nine or 10 towns, and we have a resolve from all these municipalities to find a comprehensive approach to the very critical waste management problem facing this particular region. I think that is a remarkable undertaking, and what the hon. member . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight.

### Medical Research

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Advanced Education. During the budget speech the Provincial Treasurer pointed out that Alberta is the leader in medical research. Yet the reality is that medical researchers are losing confidence in this province's desire to support their efforts. Recently, out of 17 researchers who had been funded by the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research during the last 10 years, only five were approved for continued funding in the scientist category. This leaves 12 researchers facing the end of their funding, and they are only the first group of scholars who will have their funding terminated over the next few years. To the minister: will the minister agree to provide universities with additional funding to make up this gap to ensure that these eminent scientists will not have to leave Alberta to continue their research activities?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the heritage fund medical research is within the jurisdiction of the hon. Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications. It just happens that the facilities in place, being the U of A and the U of C, fall under my jurisdiction. I don't think that I can respond on behalf of the hon. Minister of TRT, and I would take that as notice.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do believe that they are hoping that the universities could make up the shortfall.

In another vein, again to the Minister of Advanced Education: I'm wondering if this lack of confidence that the medical faculties at the U of A and the U of C now have in this government will help the minister to explain his rationalization plan, which is failing, and state very clearly that there is need in this province for two medical schools, not one?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I think it should be pointed out that of all the institutions in Canada in terms of the postsecondary system, the University of Alberta is about the fourth highest in attracting research grants. Indeed, the University of Calgary and the U of A are in the top 10. I believe that speaks for the quality of the people within those institutions. For me to make a judgment call as to whether we need two schools of medicine in the province of Alberta is not within my, let's say, common-sense attitude. I would simply point out that in terms of the number of medical practitioners in Alberta, Alberta is perhaps the highest in North America outside of the Mayo Clinic.

MR. SPEAKER: Lesser Slave Lake.

### Sawmill Operators Support

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have heard a lot about the forest industry in Alberta over the last year and a half. Most of the discussions have centred on major development. Some of us are still waiting for these kinds of developments to alleviate the 80 percent unemployment rate in our areas. Trying to address this issue are the small sawmill industries, which are major employers and have not received the attention they could. These sawmillers are experiencing some serious difficulties, and I would like to ask the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife what he and his department are doing to help the small sawmill industries.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake brings up a very good point. The small sawmillers in this province certainly are having a difficult time. The entire solid wood industry is having difficulty at the moment. In some ways market diversification would be beneficial to them; in other cases mill upgrades are really the solution. So we are working very closely with the forest industry. We recognize that both the large and the small sawmill operators are extremely important. We are now well along in the process of developing a tripartite agreement between the federal government, the industry, and the Alberta government, an agreement that would co-ordinate an overseas marketing program that would be called the western Canadian overseas marketing development program and will help our industry to tap into the European market. As well, we're working with individual sawmillers with technical assistance and on an individual basis to develop marketing plans. So we're very intent on helping our small sawmillers through this difficulty.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, final.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you. I appreciate the sympathy, and I'm very happy to hear that we are attempting to do a number of things. However, we have a specific situation where these sawmillers are being forced to harvest poplar in their spruce blocks, and this decreases the efficiency of the spruce harvest in what is already what I would call a short harvest season. When



can we expect some concrete action attached to the ideas which you've outlined, as well as to ensure that we do not burden these independent entrepreneurs?

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can be assured that we will move as quickly as possible, and we are working at present with some of the operators. I've met individually with some of them, and some are doing better than others. We are also working with some of our policies. In the logging policies, for example, we want to make sure there's proper utilization of all our resources, and the large companies that are cutting the conifer forest now have to work as well with the small sawmill operators to make sure that the forest is properly utilized. So I assure the hon. member that we're doing all we can at the moment to try and be of assistance to them.

head: **Orders of the Day**

MR. SPEAKER: Might we revert briefly to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.  
Associate Minister of Family and Social Services.

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

MR. BRASSARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly 53 members of the Olds high school that are in attendance today. They're accompanied by their teachers Mr. Garry Woodruff and Dale McFarland, and Mrs. Tami Gardner, Judy Wahlstrom, Veronica Dyjur, and Clara Leischner. It's certainly a pleasure to have you people with us, and I'd like you to stand and receive the very warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Written Questions**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that the following written questions appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places: 228, 270, and 281.

[Motion carried]

#### **Pension Liability**

148. Mr. Decore asked the government the following question: What is the government's estimate of the unfunded accrued liability under the following government-administered pension funds:

- (1) local authorities pension plan,
- (2) public service pension plan,
- (3) public service management pension plan,
- (4) universities academic pension plan,
- (5) special forces pension plan,
- (6) Members of the Legislative Assembly pension plan, and
- (7) Teacher's Retirement Fund, as of March 31, 1990?

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

#### **Loan Guarantees**

151. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question: What are the details, including beneficiary, amount, and terms and conditions, of all loan guarantees included under the "other" category as at March 31, 1988 and 1989, and December 31, 1989, on page 40 of the government's 1990 Budget Address?

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

#### **Government Loans**

152. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question: What are the details of the 1990-91 estimates of loans and advances of \$107,100,000 under the "other" category on page 38 of the government's 1990 Budget Address, including the identity of the recipient of each loan or advance and its amount and terms and conditions?

MR. GOGO: Reject, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Long-term Investments**

153. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question: What are the details of the 1989-90 forecast of "long-term investments" of \$18,371,000 on page 38 of the government's 1990 Budget Address, specifying each investment and its amount and terms and conditions?

MR. GOGO: Reject as well, Mr. Speaker. [interjection]

#### **Long-term Investments**

154. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question: What are the details of the 1990-91 estimate of "long-term investments" of \$6,732,000 on page 38 of the government's 1990 Budget Address, specifying each investment and its amount and terms and conditions?

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

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. They won't be called unless there's silence in the House.

#### **Royalty Projection**

155. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question: What is the estimate of the natural gas price upon which the Provincial Treasurer based his projection for natural gas and by-products royalty for 1990-91?

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

3:30

#### **Code Inquiry Legal Fees**

157. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question: What is the amount of legal fees paid by the government for Mr. Donald Cormie and members of his family with respect to the Code hearing and related matters?

MR. GOGO: Reject, sir.

### Principal Group of Companies

158. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question:

- (1) What are the expenses incurred by the government in respect of the Code inquiry to date, specifying all payees who received over \$5,000, the amount of the payment to such payees, and the nature of the service rendered in respect of the expenses, and
- (2) what are the other expenses incurred by the government from January 1, 1987, to date in respect of the financial problems relating to the Principal Group of Companies, specifying all payees who received over \$5,000, excluding certificate holders in First Investors Corporation Ltd. and Associated Investors of Canada Ltd., the amount of the payment to such payees, and the nature of the service rendered in respect of the expense?

MR. GOGO: The government rejects 158, Mr. Speaker.

### Pension Fund Investments

159. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question: What amount, if any, was invested by the pension fund in Principal Group, First Investors Corporation Ltd., Associated Investors of Canada Ltd., Northland Bank, or the Canadian Commercial Bank?

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

### Gainers Loan Guarantees

161. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question: With respect to the government's guarantee of the \$55 million Gainers Properties Inc. bank loan,

- (1) to what extent is the government guaranteeing interest on the loan,
- (2) what rate of interest is payable on the loan,
- (3) at what time or times is interest due and payable on the loan,
- (4) has all interest been paid on a timely basis in respect of the loan since the date of the province's guarantee and how much and when,
- (5) has the government itself paid any interest on the loan, and
- (6) what is the amount of interest which has accrued and is unpaid on the loan to March 1, 1991?

MR. GOGO: Reject, sir.

### Loans and Advances from Government

162. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question: What are the details of the 1989-90 forecast of loans and advances of \$126,200,000 under the "other" category on page 38 of the government's 1990 Budget Address, including the identity of the recipient of each loan or advance and its amount and conditions?

MR. GOGO: The government rejects 162, Mr. Speaker.

### Loan Guarantees

181. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question:

In how many cases has the government been called upon to meet third-party loan guarantee obligations in each of the years 1988, 1989, and 1990, who were the commercial lenders that called upon the government guarantees, and what was the total amount that each commercial lender called upon for each of the fiscal years 1988, 1989, and 1990?

MR. GOGO: Reject.

### Tobacco Tax Revenues

250. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question: What is the amount of tobacco tax revenues accruing to the government for the fiscal year 1990-91 from the following sources: cigarettes, cigars, and loose tobacco?

MR. GOGO: The government rejects 250, Mr. Speaker.

### High School Diplomas

276. Mrs. Gagnon asked the government the following question: What proportion of and how many grade 12 students who enrolled in Alberta high schools in September 1990 already held a high school diploma?

MR. GOGO: The government will accept that question, Mr. Speaker.

### Loans to Industry

283. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question: During each fiscal year since 1979 how much money has the government loaned or granted directly or indirectly through interest forgiveness to XL Foods Ltd., LK Resources Ltd., or XL Food Systems Ltd.?

MR. GOGO: Reject, Mr. Speaker.

### Gainers Inc.

284. Mr. Wickman asked the government the following question: With respect to Gainers Inc.,

- (1) who pays the travel expenses for the president and vice-president to commute between Toronto and Edmonton, and
- (2) where do the president and vice-president maintain principal residences, and where do they pay provincial taxes?

MR. GOGO: Reject.

### Travel and Hosting Expenditures

301. Mr. McInnis asked the government the following question: With regard to the statement on page 21 of the Budget Address that "since 1985-86, total expenditure on travel and hosting has been cut by 23%",

- (1) what was the expenditure on travel for 1985-86 and on hosting for 1985-86, and
- (2) what is the estimated expenditure on travel for 1991-92 and for hosting for 1991-92?

MR. GOGO: The government rejects Written Question 301, Mr. Speaker.

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. SPEAKER: The Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. GOGO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the motions for returns appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places except for the following: 199, 202, 222, 223, 230, 231, 232, 234, 235, 252, 258, 267, 289, and 291.

[Motion carried]

#### **Provincial Park Concession Revenue**

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

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I would like to accept Motion 199 for the following reasons. I have just in front of me the 15th annual report that I tabled some days ago. You will see that page 23 in that report lists the fees, licences and permits, and revenue from concessions, utilities, rental housing accommodation, other miscellaneous revenues in Kananaskis Country and the Department of Recreation and Parks. Camping fees, special user fees in our centres: they're all listed there. In due course I will table a return showing this and am indicating to the member that if he picks up the annual reports from 1983 to 1990, he will be able to look at these himself and therefore show what a tremendous record we have of recouping fees. An indication of that: some \$3,700,000 was recouped last year. Of course, the estimates for Recreation and Parks will be coming up shortly. In Kananaskis Country alone the fees that have been collected represent about 10 percent of the operating cost of that fine resource, and that's returned to the province on a yearly basis. Next year I hope the hon. member will look at the 1991 annual report. He will see that the fee increases indicated in the recent budget will return an extra \$1.3 million to the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing undue about this motion for a return, and I would be pleased to answer it following some of those comments.

[Motion carried]

MR. SPEAKER: Might we, before we go on, have permission of the House to revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services, briefly.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much, and I thank the colleagues as well. In the members' gallery are two individuals from the town of Swan Hills, and I'd like to introduce them to all members of the Assembly: first of all, Councillor Laurie Hamilton, and Town Manager John Morrison. I'd ask them to rise and receive a warm welcome.

head: **Motions for Returns**  
(*continued*)

#### **Goods and Services Tax**

202. Mrs. Gagnon moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing all studies or papers completed by or submitted to the government examining the impact of the federal goods and services tax on the operating and capital costs incurred by school boards in Alberta.

MR. DINNING: In response to the hon. member's motion I must refer her to *Beauchesne*, sixth edition, section 446(2)(m), and more particularly to our own Standing Order 23(g)(i) and (ii) where it states that matters that are pertaining to a matter that is before the court "or before a judge for judicial determination" is not a matter which you, Mr. Speaker, would consider to be in order. As a result, I would ask hon. members to not vote in favour of this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I might just make the point that this government was quite aware that the goods and services tax was coming for many years. In fact, they knew it as soon as they started to talk about the free trade deal, yet they pretended that they want the free trade deal without the goods and services tax, knowing full well that they would get one. They've had lots of time to prepare some impact assessments of what the goods and services tax would do to various sectors of the economy in this province.

One they should certainly have looked at was the education budgets and how it would affect local school boards. I think it's ridiculous that the minister now stands up and says that we can't do this because of some technicality or another. The fact of the matter is that he doesn't have one study telling him what the effect of the goods and services tax is. He doesn't have a study telling him what the goods and services tax effect will be on anything in this province. This government has done no homework on this. They just allowed the federal government to railroad it through, pretended they were against it, and washed their hands of it.

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, I find it hard that the minister would resort to *Beauchesne*, because I don't see what could possibly be of a confidential nature in this whole area. It is so important for school boards to be able to budget, to know exactly what the impact of the GST will be in all of their areas of operation, in all of the supplies that they purchase, and so on. Without this information they won't be able to tell if funding is adequate – of course, we know that it never is – but knowing the impact of this will make that determination more easily done. I do believe it's very, very important, if they are going to do realistic budgeting, to know what the GST will do to them in years to come.

[Motion lost]

#### **Social Services Caseloads**

222. Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of every report or study on the issue of caseloads for all services offered by the Department of Family and Social Services since April 1, 1985, to April 1, 1990.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I'm recommending that Motion 222 be rejected. I think the member would appreciate that in the administration of a department involving some \$1.4 billion and some 6,000 employees and with something as sensitive as contract negotiations involved, it wouldn't be appropriate nor would it be reasonable to be able to provide for every report as it relates to this particular matter. I think what is important are the results. The results are very clear that we've made some substantive changes and adjustments to be able to provide more appropriate caseload ratios for the workers themselves.

3:40

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm of course disappointed, and I'm sure many social agencies and workers throughout the province within and outside of government will be disappointed. We all recall with dismay the most uncomfortable strike of social workers some months back. One of the major concerns expressed at that time was the size of caseloads, and the minister assured us that this would be dealt with, that his government and his department were studying it to determine what was appropriate for the different sections of the department, and that adjustments would be made. Now, to be sure, we have been told about the reforms that are taking place in the department, and one simply hopes that caseloads have been adjusted along with it.

Mr. Speaker, I plead on behalf of the workers in the department who are very hard pressed. Now, the minister has told us that additional workers have been retained and in fact have been moved out of some units to the front lines to relieve some of the stress and pressure that is on workers. As yet we have not found out what the rationale for that is, how the department has decided what is an adequate or an inadequate caseload for child welfare, for social assistance, for whatever elements of the department a worker is involved with. I am not convinced that the reports have been adhered to, the reports that I know were done. I'm sure and I'm confident that the minister had reports done on this issue, and I think the workers themselves and the public need to know how closely the minister's reforms go along with the kinds of recommendations that would be in those reports about what was adequate.

Mr. Speaker, we also need them so that we can monitor how changes take place as caseloads rise and fall in our province, and I believe that is the very least that we should expect. These are reports that were done at public expense in response to a situation that everybody understood and deplored, and I see no reason whatsoever that they shouldn't be made public so that each member of this House and others outside of the House can in fact monitor whether or not the caseloads are adequate to serve the needs of the people of the province.

I'm disappointed, Mr. Speaker, but I suppose I'm not surprised.

[Motion lost]

#### **Community Facility Enhancement Program**

223. On behalf of Mr. Wickman, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing the amount of money allocated from October 1988 to March 1, 1991, by the community facility enhancement program by group and by constituency.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, if ever there has been a program initiated by this government that's hit the mark and the needs of the people of Alberta, that program is certainly the community facility enhancement program. Now, when we go back in history, when we look back at October 17, 1988, we recognize that on that day the Premier of Alberta stood up and said that we were going to allocate some dollars from the Lottery Fund, that we were going to set those dollars aside for three years. Birth was given to the community facility enhancement program on October 17, 1988. A year later we initiated a document which put in place all of the programs we had. Last fall, October 17, 1990, we issued another document. It was my pleasure on March 15, 1991, to table that document in this particular Assembly which listed all of the programs and the projects associated with the community facility enhancement program. That document, which is a public document and which was tabled in this Assembly well over one month ago, basically has some 1,823 applications approved under this program for a total figure of \$58.8 million. An open government provides this information. This is what this government has done and has done it repeatedly on the first anniversary and certainly on the second anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, the community facility enhancement program is lottery based, lottery funded. It applies to all groups throughout the province of Alberta.

What is really very interesting in all of this is that this motion for a return today basically says that it wants more research done with it. Well, you know, the Liberal Party has asked this Assembly to allocate it \$551,000 in the fiscal year '90-91, '91-92. If the Liberal Party can afford to pay their high-priced help \$60,000, \$70,000, \$80,000, \$90,000 a year, may even have a pilot on standby so that he can fly the leader of the Liberal Party around, and pay him \$50,000 or \$60,000 or \$70,000 a year, it seems to me that some of those very important research dollars might be allocated to asking some very specific questions.

Mr. Speaker, now that they have raised the question of the community facility enhancement program, I think it's incumbent upon me as the minister responsible for it to at least allow all members of this Assembly to know a little bit about this very worthwhile program, this very worthwhile project that has helped so many groups, so many citizens throughout this province. I want to repeat again: to October 17, 1990, 1,823 approvals at a total fiscal allocation of \$58.8 million.

What's really interesting, Mr. Speaker, is the distribution throughout the whole province of Alberta. It's almost that all of the 83 different regions, call them constituencies if you wish, have benefited and have benefited very, very well under the altruistic purposes outlined by the government to help family and community. That document, which was filed in this Assembly well over a month ago – and it appears that the Liberal caucus is unaware that it was filed, but I repeat today again: March 15, 1991 – lists all these particular projects. In fact, there are 84 pages of projects.

In looking at them, you take a look to see what we have done, what we have done hand in hand and in consort with the people of Alberta. What kinds of projects really have been funded? How have we assisted through the Lottery Fund? It's really important to know that community halls improvements received about 26.5 percent of these very important lottery funds by way of projects; outdoor recreation playgrounds, 22.3 percent. Mr. Speaker, there are dozens and dozens of school-related community playgrounds that now have children playing in sandboxes,

on swings, on slides. It's very important to allow the young people in our province to be able to communicate in a social environment, to be able to grow, to be able to be friends with one another, to be able to really enjoy the great outdoors of this province whether or not it be in January or whether it be in April or in March and the like.

Mr. Speaker, 10.6 percent of all the projects that we have approved fall in the arenas/curling rinks category. That's one in 10 projects, and that's pretty good, because a lot of citizens like to get out and participate, like to make sure that they're physically toned up and tuned up, want to get involved in a little bit of competitive sports. If it's dealing with figure skating or ringette or hockey or curling and the like: all very, very important.

Indoor multipurpose recreation facilities received 9.6 percent of the funding; cultural facilities, libraries, and museums, 8.2 percent. Mr. Speaker, that's over and above the generous funding that the province is already providing either through the General Revenue Fund or the Alberta Lottery Fund for cultural facilities, libraries, and museums. It was only yesterday that we issued statements covering some \$114 million worth of allocations under the Alberta Lottery Fund for fiscal year 1991-92.

Mr. Speaker, day care centres and day care facilities help young children and young moms and young dads who have to participate in the work force to have their children play. Well, we've assisted day cares to 5.6 percent of all the projects that have been identified; senior citizens' facilities, 5.3 percent of the funds. We've worked hand in hand.

Some scurrilous statement was made, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if it was a person inside this House. I can't believe it. It must have been outside. Some person basically said, "Most of this money is just going to golf courses." Well, I don't know what anybody has against young people and mothers and fathers and senior citizens getting out and enjoying the great environment of the province of Alberta, but we've assisted golf courses to the tune of 3.2 percent, as we have for social community services facilities that also received 3.2 percent of the funding. Swimming pools received 3 percent, and those recreational facilities associated with places of worship, churches – not the church itself but the meeting hall – received about 2.5 percent.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at that, you get an incredible record of accomplishment, of a government working hand in hand with the people.

#### Point of Order Relevance

MR. McINNIS: Point of order. The minister appears to be making the point that the list that's asked for is already public.

AN HON. MEMBER: The citation?

MR. McINNIS: The citation, hon. member, is *Beauchesne* 459.

It appears that the member who asked the question is not in his place. This long recitation perhaps should be inflicted on him, but God save the rest of us.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair has looked at relevance, but given the scope of the motion itself, it does allow this broad-ranging debate. Perhaps the minister could take into account your final comment.

3:50

#### Debate Continued

MR. KOWALSKI: The government has always taken the view that when it has an opportunity to respond to a question of an

hon. member, it would. If the request basically is for the elicitation of information with respect to a very worthwhile program, the government has always really believed that the people have the right to know. It really becomes a very frustrating situation at times for one hon. member to be asked a question and then that hon. member, being in a position to basically want to provide some information, being told, "Gee whiz, you're straying," or something. Then somebody quotes something from *Beauchesne*. So, Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the judicious manner in which you've evaluated the question and in which you have ruled. That will certainly caution me as well to make sure I do not stray away from the very important program, the community facility enhancement program, and do nothing that would really mitigate from the spirit of the moment and the debate at hand.

You take a look at Motion for a Return 223, a very important motion. I've tried to provide members with all of the information. The community facility enhancement program: I repeat, if ever a program was invented that really hit the mark, this is the one.

There's absolutely no doubt at all in my mind that a large number of members have come to me in recent months and said: "Hey, this program's due to terminate on October 17, 1991. Will you provide a report, then, to that date about all the accomplishments?" I most certainly will, Mr. Speaker. Let there be no doubt at all about the fact that the government is very proud of this program, as are a lot of members. I really appreciate those members, from all sides of the House, who have attended with me at various presentations or have made presentations on behalf of the government, hand in hand with the people. I really appreciate the presence of these hon. people to participate with me when they do get an opportunity to get away from the very hectic schedule they have. I recognize that sometimes it's difficult for them to do that, but their presence is always warmly received and warmly welcomed, and it also affords me an opportunity to let all the people assembled know full well that this is a government program. Oftentimes some hon. members who may sit in a different corner of the House say that they are opposed to this government program, but I take the opportunity to let everybody in the public know that this is a government program and that everybody really should feel very good about it.

To those hon. members who've said, "Will the program be continued beyond October 17, 1991?" Well, the answer to that question is we don't know. We're currently working hand in hand with the people, asking them for their thoughts about the community facility enhancement program, and we've had a survey out for some period of time now asking all groups that have benefited to fill in and give us their views and opinions. I also indicated previously, Mr. Speaker, that I would make all of that information public when I have it all assembled, perhaps in the latter part of June or the first part of July.

Mr. Speaker, we're very, very anxious to provide requested information with respect to the community facility enhancement program. I repeat that the second anniversary report of approved projects was tabled in this Legislative Assembly on March 15, 1991. I was so enthusiastic about it. If all members will recall, this Assembly reassembled on March 14, 1991, and the first opportunity that the government had to make this information public was made the day thereafter.

Please note as well that each month a statement is issued from my office which outlines all of the awards in the previous month with respect to the community facility enhancement program. Please recognize as well that the media in some parts of the

province of Alberta are enthusiastic about this program and have reported enthusiastically about this program. Please recognize as well, Mr. Speaker, and hon. members will recognize that we want to thank the volunteers who've participated in the community facility enhancement program. Where feasible and where possible we will have a sign erected thanking the volunteers in the community for their fine co-operation and work, and where those community groups would like to have a plaque to recognize the importance of this program, we're very, very enthusiastic about providing such a facility to commemorate the occasion.

Mr. Speaker, if any program has ever, ever been aboveboard – I mean, you've got quicker reporting in this program than any reporting that I'm aware of. You don't have to wait for a year to go by and for public accounts or anything else; we'll give you information. You ask for it, hon. member, and we'll give you the answer as quickly as we possibly can and provide it on a month-to-month basis. So it seems to me the motion for a return is rather redundant in terms of all of the information we've provided. On March 15 we responded to the request, and really how much more unnecessary paper do we need?

I would ask all hon. members to reject this motion. Let's just go on working hand in hand with the people harmoniously for the betterment of all citizens of this province from north to south and east to west, and there will be peace and harmony and good faith in the land.

MRS. HEWES: Well, Mr. Speaker, I suppose it was designed to be entertaining, but it didn't quite meet that requirement, and it certainly wasn't an informative answer or explanation as far as I'm concerned. As I stand here I'm quite sure that the minister has the information and that he's got it by constituency and that he could give it to us today. It's probably on a corner of his desk. I am as sure as I'm standing here that he has it and it's available. I see no reason whatsoever why he should play cute with this and suggest that we've had the information and all we need to do is a few hours of research to find out what constituencies got what amounts of money.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Liberal caucus have deplored from time to time how applications to the community facility enhancement program are dealt with by the government, the kind of participation that is invited from government members representing a constituency and not invited from opposition members representing the constituency, the assumption I suppose being that those of us who represent constituencies didn't get elected by people, somehow just grew over here and that we don't represent them and we don't know anything about our constituencies. I can assure you that is not the case. I would like very much to be consulted, and I have had opportunities to work with members of my constituency who have applied for grants and who have received them. I've been grateful to the minister and have so expressed when they've gotten them.

Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about the generous funding other than that that comes from the province. I would remind him that the funding is from the taxpayers of the province. This money does not belong to the government; it belongs to the people of this province, and it is not simply at the whim of the government that it should be spent.

We have expressed longtime concerns about lottery spending. When challenged on this, the government simply changed the legislation so that the government can control and use lottery funds that are available as politically expedient. We have questioned the priorities the government has used. This year the government simply dumped surplus funds into the general revenue to try to convince the public that the government is

living within its means. Well, I tell you, Mr. Speaker, they are not fooled, and they are not fooled when the government declines to give answers of this kind which could be politically questioned. I'm sure the public will be interested to know the minister's response to this, the length of it, the kind of time that's used, and the kind of silly explanation he gives to try to justify why this kind of information can't be made public.

[Motion lost]

### Professional Outfitters Association

230. Mr. McInnis moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all correspondence between the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife and the Professional Outfitters Association of Alberta from April 1, 1989, to March 14, 1991.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I move that we reject this motion for a return. The reason for rejection is that we do not table correspondence in the Assembly. If there are specifics the hon. member is interested in, he can have that put on the Order Paper.

4:00

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like speak briefly to this motion because there has been quite a bit of concern expressed by professional guides and outfitters in the province not necessarily belonging to the Professional Outfitters Association of Alberta. The Professional Outfitters Association of Alberta has been created with some controversy, I think would be a kind way of referring to that, and there have been a number of concerns expressed by persons who are not members of the POAA that the policies as implemented by this department and this government are, in fact, not in the best interests of either the industry or of particular individuals. I think one of the best things we could have by this government would be a release of information and documentation and communications that have occurred so that people don't get a feeling of things going on behind closed doors to which they're not privy.

I would support Motion for a Return 230.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife has asked for some specifics in relation to my request for the tabling of correspondence with the Professional Outfitters Association of Alberta. The specifics relate to the fact that the POAA is one of the instruments that the government has used to drive a number of people out of the outfitting and guiding industry in the province of Alberta. The government decided at some point in the mystic past that there were too many people involved in this industry and set for it itself the agenda of eliminating some of them from the industry. In so doing there's no question that the government has taken some sides: has helped some and has harmed others in the process. That's the type of awesome power that a minister of the Crown and a government have for which there must be some accountability somewhere, and I say the buck stops here.

The specifics relate primarily to the creation of the bid system for licences, nonresident hunting permits, and tags that people in the guiding and outfitting industry now purchase from the government on a bid system which is modified by a live auction and numerous other wrinkles that are involved. They relate to the internal affairs of the association, which the government is wont to meddle in from time to time, extending even to the point where the government appears to have been involved in a

conspiracy with some members of that association to actually unseat the elected executive of the organization following an annual meeting at which they were duly elected; the government was involved in setting up another meeting at which the services of someone called a parliamentarian were used to unseat the elected executive. They relate to the fact that very many outfitters have been driven out of business over the new policy. The government did say publicly that there would be a hardship committee put in place to deal with some of the people who have now lost their investment and have probably given our province a bit of an unfortunate reputation in that they took deposits from hunters abroad to go on hunts which could never be delivered and in some cases things were so bad that the deposits could not be returned.

There arose some circumstances in which too many animals were sought in certain areas, especially in the southern part of the Peace River country. It is my understanding that the minister has allowed some members of this association to take nonresident hunters out during the rut in the moose season and shoot moose during the rut, which option is not available to Albertans.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

So there are a great many specifics that are doubtless covered by the correspondence over the period indicated, which is just under two years in duration. Those are the specifics and the reasons why I think members of the Assembly should seek tabling of this correspondence.

[Motion lost]

### Alberta-Pacific Pulp Mill

231. Mr. McInnis moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all correspondence, agreements, and related material which constitute undertakings on behalf of the Crown in right of Alberta and Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, perhaps a couple of words by way of introduction. I think this is a very important motion to come before this Assembly at this point in time. Members will recall that the Assembly adjourned last December and the Chamber was barely cold when the government announced that the cabinet had approved construction of the Alberta-Pacific project near Athabasca. This decision seemed to be held until the Assembly was no longer in session at a time when the project is announced as having cabinet approval.

It's very important to know exactly what the elements of that approval are. This motion simply asks for those items of "correspondence" and "agreements" which can be construed as "undertakings on behalf of the Crown in right of Alberta." Now, that's an awkward wording which says simply: what is it that the government has agreed to with this company on behalf of all of the people of Alberta? A reckoning that I think at a very minimum they should provide.

I'm aware, for example, that there were funds put forward to Alberta-Pacific to help pay for their feasibility study in the early days. I'm certainly aware that there were undertakings at various points related to a forest management agreement, that there are undertakings that are related to the so-called income debentures. An income debenture apparently is a device whereby the taxpayers' representatives in government borrow

money on the New York market and pay it over to Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries, who then spend it on their purposes. Al-Pac is not required to repay it until such time as they may show a profit in their books, or they may not. That's one aspect of the undertaking.

There's an infrastructure commitment in the amount of \$75 million, one part of which includes a grant to the company to build a railway. Now, I find that a little unusual because in all of the other cases the Crown built the railway on behalf of the people of Alberta and turned it over to the Alberta Resources Railway. It would be interesting to see in these undertakings why the funds are paid over to the company for their purposes to construct the railway.

So this is a very important deal which has the potential not only to pollute the Athabasca River but to tie up development options within an area the size of the province of New Brunswick for upwards of three generations. We also have the evidence in that the Alberta Forest Service is not being provided with the tools and equipment necessary to do their job under the Forests Act. Is that part of the undertaking as well?

These are the things we need to know, and that's why the motion is here before us today.

MR. FJORDBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I ask for rejection of this motion. I might say to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place that his comments about the rail link that was tied in to the plant: all that was made public when we announced the project itself. Since we do not table any correspondence in the House between companies and ourselves, I ask for rejection.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would just like to speak briefly to this particular motion. I understand the minister's concerns with respect to correspondence. However, there are other sections in here which are agreed. In particular the word "agreements" is something that we in the Liberal caucus have been attempting to obtain through a variety of means: written questions, motions for return. There always seems to be some reason why they cannot be supplied.

Mr. Speaker, our concern is that we have here a government that is really involving itself with allowing foreign multinational firms to come into the province and to harvest what has been our forest products for centuries. In fact, we have some native tree stands that have never been harvested at all. Our concern with respect to this particular motion, why I'm supporting the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place in this particular regard, is that we have a government that is making a substantial commitment on behalf of the people of the province of Alberta, and it's not simply a financial commitment. There is an environmental commitment which in the long term is perhaps even more important and has a greater long-term effect than the financial commitment. We know that the government has made financial contributions, loans and loan guarantees in the development of infrastructure for this mill, but there is concern about water quality if we have pollution of the water, the Athabasca River passing by, in terms of what's going to be going into that river. We have concerns about air quality: what's going to be going into the air and how much and what's going to be monitored and how well is it going to be monitored, because we see in various other government departments that inspections and monitoring programs that have been instituted in the past don't

seem to be being fulfilled as rigorously as they had been. That is a major concern.

#### 4:10

I think also, Mr. Speaker, that what we're trying to find out here is: where are we going down the road? What is really the underlying government policy? We learn these things by implication, but we really should have more information than is available to us. It's simply not acceptable for a minister of the Crown to stand up and say, "Well, I'm sorry, but that's personal correspondence." When we have a minister of the Crown acting on behalf of all of the people of the province, we really need to have access to that information.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all members to support Motion 231 because really what it tries to get at is information being made available. We heard the Member for Barrhead wax eloquent earlier on about all kinds of information being made available, yet just a few seatmates down we find another minister who says: "No. Sorry; that's not going to be made available." There's a real contradiction in terms there between what's really happening.

I would encourage all members, because it's the right thing to do, to support Motion for a Return 231.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, followed by Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motion for a return asks for

all correspondence, agreements, and related material which constitute undertakings on behalf of the Crown in right of Alberta and Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc.

Mr. Speaker, it's true that the public accounts indicate that the minister of forestry has a some \$175 million budget to administer, and that will be debated in this Assembly, but none of those dollars directly account for the contract with this company. You see, what the government has been able to do over the last few years particularly, is give budgets to various departmental ministers. I think that in Economic Development and Trade, for example, it's some \$70 million, yet we know that the Minister of Economic Development and Trade is involved in making decisions about hundreds of millions in loan guarantees, loans, and investments. We see the same thing here with the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. I'm sure he was very involved with deciding that Al-Pac should get a \$400 million loan guarantee from this government, and I'm sure he's been intimately involved along with the Environment minister in setting the terms under which they will get that.

I guess what bothers me is that the government thinks they can pass a \$12 billion budget document, \$175 million in the case of this particular department, and do so many things outside of that document that are beyond the ken of what's in that document. There's not one line, I'm sure, in the minister's budget estimates that says that Al-Pac will get this \$400 million, just like there are no lines we can find anywhere that say that Gainers was going to get so many dollars. They put that in after the fact, after they made the contract. There was nothing in their budget last year that said that they were going to get any money out of selling AGT, yet they have the power to do that halfway through the year, make that decision behind closed doors as a cabinet and not bother to bring that before this Assembly so we can talk about what's being done with the taxpayers' dollars in this province.

This government has been ruling this province more by order in council and in secret than they have in the Assembly and in public, and so when they start doing things like that, then you have to put something on the Order Paper. The Premier and other members opposite are always telling us, you know, "Oh, put it on the Order Paper and we'll give it to you," sort of thing. Well, we've been putting things on the Order Paper and asking for a lot of information, and sometimes we've even had some pretty good debates about why we didn't get things at least to get the issue on the floor, but certainly the government is moving to close off the debate on this kind of motion and to make sure that we don't get the information we seek.

So we really have a government that doesn't put before the Assembly and before the people of Alberta their true plans of where they're going and what they're doing, and this is perhaps one of the most alarming cases because it's setting a pattern for the northern development of our forestry resources that is totally frightening, particularly when we know that we can't trust this government to protect the environment or to get the best use out of the resources. We don't see anything much in the way of upgrading of our resources. We're just going to pulp the forest and ship it off to Japan, and of course the market is already getting flooded. It's bad economics. It's putting it in the hands of foreigners. It's using taxpayers' dollars to pay somebody to take our resources at a fire-sale price. We did that with the oil industry; now we're going to do it with the forestry resources of this province.

I guess in an accounting sort of way, that's what really bothers me most. We have here a statement asking for the information needed to know what commitments this government has made with this company in relation to the resources of northern Alberta. The minister says: no, no, that's not your business; we're not going to tell you; it's okay if I just get \$175 million to run my department; that's all you need to talk about; we'll of course pass that; we'll take care of this behind closed doors with cabinet decisions, and we're not going to tell you. Down the road if something shows up in the public accounts a year to two years later, that's fine, but you're not going to get to talk about it ahead of time. You're not going to be told what's going on even after the decision's made until they're darn good and ready, and then they'll only just release what little bits they want when they want and how they want to try to get some propaganda effect out of it when they think they can. When there is no propaganda effect in it, then they hold it secret as long as possible or at least until the House is not sitting so that they don't get any flak from the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, it's scandalous what this government is doing. All members should insist that the minister release this information.

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

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to assist in making the case that the government should accept and in fact respond favourably to Motion 231. It seems, on the one hand, not unreasonable that undertakings made on behalf of Albertans with Alberta taxpayers' money by the government of Alberta to a private-sector company should be open and public information for not only the Legislature but for all Albertans. That case, it seems to me, is a case that hardly needs, under normal circumstances, to be argued. It should simply be the kind of information that a government that isn't afraid of being



held accountable, a government that is doing what it should be doing, would be more than happy to reveal, and of course we must immediately become suspicious when they are reluctant to do that.

There are some specific matters that I think need to be mentioned in this particular case, which heighten the requirement of our seeing these particular documents which would outline undertakings, promises, commitments, obligations made by this government to Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc. Throughout the debate, throughout the process of public hearings and not-so-public hearings – Jaakko Pöyry, for example – over the Alberta-Pacific pulp mill, a nagging question seemed to arise in many conversations that I had with people who were concerned with this project. The question was: why did it seem that in spite of the obstacles, in spite of the very clear arguments that were being made for at least a delay on this pulp mill until it could be studied properly, this government found itself obsessively forcing this project through?

At face value there didn't seem to be a particularly good reason. Arguments could be made that the economic development inherent in this kind of project might not be as great as the government felt it could be. The general population of Alberta, for example, seems by and large to have been predisposed to delaying this particular pulp mill until studies could be done properly. There was, it would appear, therefore, very limited political advantage in driving this project in the way that this government did.

#### 4:20

So we began to ask ourselves the question: why, when at face value it would seem logical and proper, even politically acceptable to delay this project, to rethink it, to study it properly, would this government be so obsessed with forcing it through in spite of evidence and argument to the contrary? Well, Mr. Speaker, there seems to be the logical conclusion that there must be some kind of result or some kind of event that would occur were they to delay this project or say no to this project and that that might be some kind of undertaking, a commitment that had already been made upon which Alberta-Pacific began to invest large sums of money. This government may well have made an undertaking two or three years ago to Alberta-Pacific that yes, this project is going to go ahead, that yes, despite the fact that we haven't done the environmental assessment yet and we haven't had the public hearings or we're not even thinking of having public hearings, and that yes, despite the fact that we have not given you the licences that you would require, you can proceed as if it were given that you will get those kinds of licences and you will get the authorization that you need from this government and you will get the money that we have promised for infrastructure and for loan support that you apparently need.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we can all imagine what a travesty it would be if a government would say on the one hand, "Proceed as if this is going to be approved, because we are going to approve it," and in doing so, usurping, precluding the possibility that they would ever listen to an environmental impact assessment process that might say, "No, don't build that project." You can imagine what a travesty that would be, how that would appear to the people of Alberta and how that would reflect upon this government, a government that would have made an undertaking to Alberta-Pacific to proceed and spend money and that would then have to turn around and authorize that at any cost or be taken to court by Alberta-Pacific: a great deal of embarrassment to the government, a clear indication of a faulty, manipulated

review process. All of this would be public. All of this would be very, very politically damaging to this government.

Mr. Speaker, not only is there a *prima facie* case to be made for us Albertans and legislators here having this kind of information, but it is particularly important because of the suspicions that arose in many people's minds as to why this government wouldn't have halted the Alberta-Pacific project. I believe that documents that are being requested by this Motion 231 would reveal that this government made undertakings that it never should have made and was afraid of the embarrassment it would have incurred had it responded as it should have responded to the environmental review process that it ultimately implemented over this particular project.

It's also interesting for us to learn whether or not this government made certain kinds of concessions, whether they have said to this company: "If you can't meet this given environmental standard six months or a year or two years after that mill begins to operate, then that'll be okay because we have flexibility. We'll give you a warning or we'll give you a control order, but don't worry. We'll work with you to make this project work, so don't worry about our standards." It may be that undertakings of that nature were made to that company in that particular way, and I believe, Mr. Speaker, given that an undertaking of that nature would seriously test the integrity, seriously undermine the integrity of this government's environmental standards, that we have a right to know. We cannot evaluate those standards against the prospect of this project until such time as we know whether this government was clear to this company: "You will meet these standards, or we will shut you down." Was such an undertaking made, or on the other hand, was an undertaking made to say: "Well, don't worry so much about it. We'll work it out. These standards can be flexible"?

This is particularly a heightened issue, I think, given the second Al-Pac proposal, a hastily prepared proposal, a hastily reviewed proposal, Mr. Speaker, that claims to be able to bring organodioxin and furans, organochlorine emissions down to a certain level. Well, what happens if that level isn't achieved? What we would like to see and what is a reasonable expectation is information as to whether or not this government made an undertaking. They might have said, "Don't worry; if you don't meet that standard, we'll work it out."

Mr. Speaker, it is, I think, the measure of a worn-out government that is afraid to reveal information. There were years, years ago, when this government had the moral depth, the character, the strength of character not to be afraid of information, not to be afraid of accountability, not to be afraid of being held responsible for its actions. It is, I think, a rather sad observation for us and for many Albertans to sit here and look at a government that no longer can lay claim to that kind of moral high ground, and that, in a sense, is far from the kind of government, the level of government, the quality and character of government that the people of this province deserve.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, to close debate.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the various members who have supported the request for an accounting of what undertakings have been given to the Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries company and their parent companies, which are chiefly Mitsubishi and the Honshu Paper Co., in respect of the pulp development in Japan. I think there's some pretty serious recognition that the accounting needs to be made.

The minister protests that the information was made public at the time the announcement was made. Methinks the minister doth protest too much, because there is a very large discrepancy already noted between what the spin doctors put out in the news release and what actually turns out to be. I can cite two instances of that right here and now today. Number one is the question of the loan. The public of Alberta was never told that that loan didn't have to be repaid until and unless the Alberta-Pacific entity started to show a profit on its books. Now, we've seen agreements like that before and how they end up. The taxpayers are in the process of eating one of those on the Syncrude project right now because it was made contingent upon an expansion that never happened. This loan has been made contingent upon an event that may never, ever happen in the future: that this entity called Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc. shows a profit on its books. That may never happen, and we as taxpayers may end up liable for that.

In researching and finding out that item, I passed it on to some people in the news media who asked Stuart Lang, the chairman of that company, if that was the case at the news conference up in Athabasca that black day when the government made the announcement, and he denied it. He denied it outright. Of course, subsequent events have shown that in fact that was the case, but that was never made public in the press release.

The second instance is one that I referred to earlier. That was the question of the method of financing of the railway. It was never stated in the news release by the spin doctors that that would actually be a grant from the taxpayers to Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc. so that they could indulge in the construction of a railway, because that's not the way any of these other projects have been handled. There is a sum of some \$30 million in this year's estimates, and we didn't find out until the execution of the agreement that in fact that's what the undertaking was.

So if I can cite you two instances where the full details were not revealed in the news release, then I think it's a fair bet for everybody that there are more things involved in the undertaking which haven't been part of the press releases, haven't been part of the story today. That's why it's so very important that this Assembly assert its ability to require the government to make public not just the version of it that happens to appeal to it politically on this day or that day or the other day but the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Today is the day we find out whether the government is prepared to at least go that far and level that much with the people of Alberta.

What else is in the undertakings that the government doesn't want us to know about? Is there an undertaking that the company can run non-union? That's certainly in the plans of Alberta-Pacific; there's no two ways about that. They prefer to operate without a union. Is that part of the undertaking?

4:30

What about this whole question of sympathetic administration, a bankrupt philosophy whereby other governments have allowed forest industries to indulge in questionable forestry practices to the detriment of the resource and to the detriment of the public finances in order to brighten up the bottom line of these companies? I think it's no joke in this Chamber or anywhere else that there are some very interesting things happening in the chlorine bleached kraft pulp market, things that the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche should be aware of if he's going to tie his star and the star of his constituents to that industry. There is a veritable collapse in demand for bleached kraft newsprint

around the globe. There's paper company after paper company declaring losses in the last quarter or two, which the optimists choose to believe is related to a recession – you know, a temporary situation which is going to get right again – and we're going to go pedal to the metal and we're going to be building pulp mills the size of Al-Pac all over the globe. Well, it isn't necessarily so. It isn't necessarily cyclic this time. It may very well be that what we're seeing is a profound and a long-term shift in consumer preference in the marketplace supplemented by laws brought in by other governments.

What is the position of the taxpayers of Alberta vis-à-vis that project under those circumstances? That's been alluded to by some members. My late colleague, Gordon Wright, used to sit beside me in this Chamber, and we were discussing this one day. He said: "What's all the fuss about? I can't see that it could possibly be legal for taxpayers' funds to be expended under a secret agreement." I said, "Well, I'm not so sure about the legality, but I have a suspicion it happens all the time." I think that somebody has to pose the question: if they're not to be made public, how many of these undertakings are actually legal? If they're not legal and lawful, then I think the members of the government better think hard about their position, because they may be buying for themselves a whole lot of trouble that they think may be spread around to all the taxpayers when in fact it could actually involve a few individuals.

I think the case has been made; it's been made well. You've got to let us know: what's the deal you made on behalf of all of us with Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries? Put it on the table.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Would all those members in favour of Motion for a Return 232 as moved by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place please say aye?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's Motion 231, not 232, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oh, I'm sorry. We haven't come to 232. Will the Assembly agree that the vote just taken applies to Motion for a Return 231?

AN HON. MEMBER: No, because I didn't vote.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No? All right; the Chair will place the vote again.

[Motion lost]

### Ecological Reserves

232. Mr. McInnis moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all reports and studies prepared by or for the Department of Recreation and Parks on candidate ecological reserves which have not received designation as of March 14, 1991.

MR. MAIN: Hang on to something solid; here we go.

DR. WEST: It breaks the monotony a little bit.

Mr. Speaker, this motion certainly highlights a very positive area in the province of Alberta. Our ecological reserve program over the last some 10 years has brought us to a position of protection in this country of some of our lands that will certainly stand the test of time, as it goes statistically anyways. We have in this province some 168 million acres. Protected under legislation or protective notation are some 25,200,000 acres, or some 10 acres per every man, woman, and child in this province. The ecological reserve program is just one of those. Under the motion the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place is asking for

all reports and studies prepared by or for the Department of Recreation and Parks on candidate ecological reserves which have not received designation.

Well, to date, Mr. Speaker, we have 12 ecological reserves designated in the province of Alberta, over 60,000 acres. I'm holding in front of me the sixth annual report of the Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves. This report was prepared by a group of individuals selected across the province of Alberta to study our wilderness, natural areas, and ecological reserves and report back to the Minister of Recreation and Parks as well as the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. In this report I'm holding – and this was tabled last year in the Assembly – it indicates the 12 ecological reserves already designated. As I say, it's a proud record. It extends all across this province to all of the natural regions that are identified in this province: the grasslands, the parklands, the foothills, the boreal forests, Rocky Mountain areas, and the Canadian Shield.

Specifically, these ecological reserves are named throughout the province, and I trust that many of you will have a chance to go and visit them. If I look at them, the Athabasca Dunes have some 3,769 hectares that are set aside. I'm going to convert that; that's over 9,315 acres. I like acres. I don't know; some of the rest of you can convert now, but some of us that were educated in the early days of this country carry the nonmetric position. Crow Lake has 2,319 acres designated; Goose Mountain has 3,080 acres; Hand Hills, 5,507 acres; Kennedy Coulee, 2,640 acres designated; Kootenay Plains, 7,917 acres; Marshybanks, 2,050 acres; Silver Valley, 4,460 acres; Upper Bob Creek, 6,426 acres; the Wainwright Dunes, 6,970 acres; and Whitemud Falls, 2,113 acres. Rumsey was designated last year for 8,480 acres, making a sum total of over 60,000 acres that are set aside in this province under ecological reserves.

Now, the motion for a return asks for information in regard to those not designated and all of the studies and reports that have been put forward. Well, I'm holding the report of the advisory committee on ecological reserves. They are the sole delivery of reports to the government of Alberta, a public committee. I don't know how much more responsible we can get than having a committee formed of responsible citizens throughout this province to report to us on such important issues after they have accumulated the information from certain groups from across this province.

Now, in this report, their sixth annual, they had indicated that Rumsey, Ross Lake, and Plateau Mountain were being looked at. They had made recommendations in this sixth report that Rumsey be designated, and last year, lo and behold, we designated Rumsey ecological reserve, again, as I say, some 8,000 acres of aspen parkland. I don't know how many of you have visited it, but it's a beautiful area of the province south of Stettler, Alberta. It sits in some of the last aspen parkland in the world that is untouched.

Of course, ecological reserves, as we all know, are laboratories for the future to study backgrounds of our landscape that may give answers to certain medical problems in the future or designate some of the history of this world. They're protected areas that haven't been hurt yet. As I say, last year, from one of the recommendations of this report, we designated Rumsey. Also in this report were recommended Plateau Mountain and Ross Lake.

4:40

Now, the motion for a return indicated that they wanted "a copy of all reports and studies prepared by or for the Department of Recreation and Parks." I've taken some time to discuss this report because I think it's very important. It's a very important area of our province today that we look at our protected areas and our endangered spaces. This report is available to every individual in this Assembly and to every individual in this province. As we go forward in the future to take the recommendations – and I will be tabling the seventh annual report very shortly for the Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves. When I table that, you'll be able to look into this report and also see, for those ones that aren't designated to this point, what is being recommended, where they are in the province, and how we're going about it.

Mr. Speaker, I'm a bit torn here today. I have accepted a motion, and now I'm going to reject this motion on the same basis that I have just discussed: an annual report that is full of details of this great program in this province. Now, I don't want to continue, as the hon. Member for Barrhead has indicated, tabling tonnes and tonnes of paper in this Assembly. I stood up and defended a previous motion, 199, and said that I would accept it on the same basis, that the information had already been tabled in an annual report. Again I'm turning up and going to reject this one on the same basis, that the information is available in an annual report. Yes; isn't that unusual?

Mr. Speaker, I would like to have your guidance. If you look at *Beauchesne* 428 as it relates to questions – but it relates also to motions – and you go down to (ff), it says that a question must not "seek information set forth in documents equally accessible to the questioner, as Statutes, published reports, etc." Now, under statute I am required to table this report, as all ministers of the Crown are required to table information to make it readily accessible to the people of Alberta and to the opposition so that they in their research can come back and ask those intriguing questions. So I ask for your guidance under 428 as I reject this one but under the same premise accepted Motion 199 a little while ago. I would like a clarification in this Assembly once and for all of whether we can take the abuse of saying we're not giving information as stated under Motions for Returns when we are indeed doing exactly what is required by statute and tabling the information for the people of Alberta.

MR. McINNIS: I don't know whether the problem is that the minister doesn't understand the English language or that he doesn't understand logic, but I think we've got to try and unravel this one for the minister and especially for the member for Smoky Lake, who's got a big mouth in here but never says very much. I just want to say to the minister . . .

#### Point of Order Parliamentary Language

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. Provincial Treasurer is rising on a point of order.

AN HON. MEMBER: Got a citation?

MR. JOHNSTON: You know I have. Standing Orders, Mr. Speaker, under section 23 in particular and then 491 as well, which deal with unparliamentary language.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, the Chair will have to consult the list. The Chair is not familiar with that particular one at the moment but will take it under advisement.

A point of order? The hon. Member for Smoky River is rising on a point of order.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you. I think it should be pointed out that the hon. member from Smoky Lake is not sitting in the House at the present time.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is correct, hon. Member for Smoky River.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

MR. McINNIS: I'm sorry. I do apologize to the House. I meant to say that the Member for Smoky River has a big mouth but doesn't say very much in this Chamber.

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Provincial Treasurer, on the same point of order.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the simple repetition of the same mistake cannot be tolerated by this Assembly. If you want me to go on on 491 I'd be glad to, but parliamentary language is a respected tradition, and we must stay by it.

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

MR. McINNIS: Perhaps give us all a break and speak to the motion that's in front of us. Motion 232 – listen carefully – asks for "reports and studies . . ."

#### **Point of Order Request for a Ruling**

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.  
The hon. Provincial Treasurer.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, tradition has it that when a point of order is made, we are requesting a ruling as to whether or not parliamentary language is appropriate. Now, if you're going to hold that, that's one thing, but to have it repeated on a consistent basis, as the member has done, requires, I think, some direction from the Chair.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair said that it would be taken under advisement, and until that happens, the Chair would request the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place to leave that term alone. It's already been used once anyway. There's no point in using it over and over. You could be ruled out of order on the basis of repetition.

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate that.

#### **Point of Order Admissibility of Motion**

DR. WEST: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the hon. Minister of Recreation and Parks rising on a point of order?

DR. WEST: Yes. I brought up a point under my discussion, and I guess if you want it outside of the motion debate, then I would like your guidance on 428 under *Beauchesne* as to the relevancy of this motion on the Order Paper.

MR. McINNIS: Since the minister persists in preventing my speaking under this bogus point of order, I think we should analyze what the minister is indeed saying. With 428(ff) he accuses me of seeking "information set forth in documents equally accessible to the questioner." In his defence of this alleged point of order he refers to the annual report of the Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves, which does not contain copies of "reports and studies prepared by or for the Department of Recreation and Parks on candidate ecological reserves." It doesn't contain any studies or any reports. Got it? Zero, nada, none; none whatsoever. Those are not contained within that report. I've read that report. I've read it over again. It's not there. That's why the motion is on the Order Paper.

AN HON. MEMBER: The minister hasn't.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair is ready to rule on this point of order. The Chair feels it is a dispute between the hon. members as to what is actually being asked for and what the hon. minister says has already been provided.

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. McINNIS: Perhaps we can return to the business of the Assembly, which is the motion on the Order Paper. I think the problem, to repeat, is not one to do with a dispute over facts but rather over the meaning of the English language and very simple logic. When a member seeks a copy of a report or a study, that member is undoubtedly looking for information in the possession of the minister and his department regarding what areas of the province might be set aside in the future in ecological reserves. The minister has quite properly referred to the fact that the advisory committee is recommending such status in the areas of Ross Lake and Plateau Mountain. Those are candidate ecological reserves, and the annual report acknowledges that those are candidate ecological reserves. The report does not contain any background studies or reports dealing with that, and that certainly would be one element that would be captured by this motion if the government were prepared to approve it.

The next element would be those other candidate or potential ecological reserves which are not part of the recommended list of the advisory committee at this point in time. I have a very large list of them. Now, the minister did what he often does. He confuses a whole bunch of things into one pile that he likes to think of as some sort of wilderness protection. He includes national parks, the defence establishment at Suffield, the Primrose air weapons range, provincial parks. He includes all kinds of things.

The focus today is on ecological reserves and, specifically, a great many proposals. I have a chart on my wall, a map that

shows all of them in the 17 bioregions of the province of Alberta which different people have suggested to the government and to the minister should be considered as ecological reserves. I simply want to know and Albertans want to know what studies are being done, have been done, and are available on those areas, which would cover such things as the condition of the area, their importance from a biological point of view, the pressures that are on them, the needs, and so forth. That's the kind of detailed information that is not in the annual report of the Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves, and it's the type of information we need to have in this Assembly.

I hope I can clear up the confusion in the mind of the minister, who thinks that the mere mention of two candidate ecological reserves in a report of an advisory committee is the same thing as tabling copies of studies. You see, you got your annual report that makes mention of them, and you got your studies and reports that have the details: that's the difference we're driving at today.

4:50

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

#### **Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before calling for the question, the Chair would say that upon searching the list of unparliamentary terms, there's no reference to anything about a "big mouth." The Chair is not prepared to rule that those words are unparliamentary, although the Chair would ask all hon. members to pay as much attention as possible under the circumstances to proper decorum in the Chamber.

#### **Debate Continued**

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion lost]

#### **Winter Fish Kill at Utikuma Lake**

234. Mr. McInnis moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all studies into the causes of winter kill at Utikuma Lake in the winter of 1988-89.

MR. FJORDBOTTON: Mr. Speaker, the government rejects this motion for a return on the basis that, number one, there were no studies done because the causes of the fish kill were absolutely clear to everyone.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, if indeed there were no studies done, why is it necessary to reject the motion?

[Motion lost]

#### **Western Heritage Centre**

235. Mr. McInnis:  
That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of any applications and supporting materials for funding the western heritage centre at Cochrane and copies of any agreements arising therefrom.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, this is the chance for the minister of culture to show why he went into politics. It was to reform. He was on the Reform banner because he was after reform, so

today I expect him to show some of that reform spirit and open up and just provide the most basic of information regarding this western heritage centre.

#### **Point of Order Procedure**

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader is rising on a point of order.

MR. GOGO: I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker, if the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place is going to move the motion for debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, I believe the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place has 30 minutes in which to move his motion, depending on whether he stays relevant.

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. McINNIS: Not to keep the hon. minister and the Deputy Government House Leader in suspense any longer, I certainly will move Motion 235 standing in my name on the Order Paper, and appeal to the minister of culture in the reform spirit to provide just this most basic information regarding the incredible western heritage centre at Cochrane by bringing forth the "applications and supporting materials for funding" from government sources for this project.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, one of the many reasons I entered politics was to beat back the socialist threat, and I believe we're . . . [interjections] I'm pleased to be here with fully three-quarters of the Members of the Legislative Assembly attempting to do just that.

AN HON. MEMBER: Government members.

MR. MAIN: Government; that's right. Here we are, all of us here, and I must say that things are going remarkably well.

Mr. Speaker, I'm more than pleased to provide some information on the western heritage centre at Cochrane, which is a fine, fine project that will be moving ahead with construction, we expect, very shortly. The western heritage centre in Cochrane is another example of a community-based initiative, volunteer driven, finding broad, broad support in the area, that has successfully achieved its goals in terms of private fundraising and, as a result of that, has been granted support from the government of Alberta.

The facts of the matter in this case are that there has been an agreement transmitted to the former president of the western heritage centre, via a letter communicated by the Member for Banff-Cochrane and myself, that should the organizations who are backing this particular endeavour be able to convince people – companies, organizations, supporters, individuals – to support with their own money out of their own pockets this type of an endeavour, the government of Alberta would be there as well to support and undergird and to join arms in making something good happen for the people in the Cochrane area.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that initiative – which came from the people in the Cochrane area, those involved in ranching and in cowboy history who felt it would be a good idea to give some terms of visible expression to this history – in fact has met with overwhelming success. The normal span of time required to raise that amount of money, \$5 million, \$6 million, \$7 million, which many organizations would look on as a fund-raising goal

spanning several years – in fact, that amount of money was raised in a matter of months. The local area responded overwhelmingly.

I can think of just one instance: Hooves of History. Mr. Speaker, this was a re-creation of a cattle drive. This took place in the fall, in the golden stubble fields and in the rolling ranchlands of the foothills. The brown-speckled cows with their large brown eyes, the denim-clad cowboys with their leather chaps, the wide-eyed appreciation of small children seeing this re-creation of history spanning the picturesque foothills of this great, great province of ours: that one effort alone raised nearly 10 percent of the funds. Cash, hard money coming up, and that was one day. There were calls from all over, not only Canada but all over North America, from other people interested in this kind of activity, interested in this aspect of our important history in the west. "How did you guys do it? How were you able to get such a great organization together? We want to do it. We want to do it with you. We want to join hands. Show us how to do it; it was great."

Mr. Speaker, that's just one tiny aspect of the fund-raising efforts, and I use it just to illustrate. I could go on and explain in great detail some of the other aspects that the proponents of the western heritage centre used to raise their funds, but let me wrap up this aspect of the conversation by saying simply this: the corporate sector, the ranching sector, individuals, small children, families, and organizations pledged, donated, and otherwise contributed to the western heritage centre a sum in excess – in excess – of \$5 million.

How do we know that? Well, we checked. They said: "We've done it. We've raised all this money, and you said you'd match us dollar for dollar up to a maximum of \$5 million. We did it, and here's our proof." They gave me a document about so thick, full of all the details and names and places, addresses, amounts, and all the rest of that. I mean, I wouldn't presume upon myself to go through that line by line, and certainly in the position of a minister responsible for a certain aspect of government operations, I wasn't going to take their word for it, Mr. Speaker. So we contracted with a private, independent, third-party auditor, a gentleman well respected in the banking community, who took all of this information and studied it, poured over it.

AN HON. MEMBER: Who was that?

MR. MAIN: Mr. Blake Ashforth looked over this material, pored over it, and looked at it line by line, item by item, number by number. Mr. Speaker, virtually every single one of those entries presented to us as fact was discounted in some large measure. The western heritage centre said: "We raised some \$6 million-odd." In actual fact, when we went through it all and found out the hard dollars that are actually there today or are pledged to be there tomorrow, when we did all that work, we found out that in fact the number was something just a shade over \$5 million; nevertheless, enough to trigger a response from the government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have said that we will provide lottery dollars to a maximum of \$5 million. It wouldn't matter if they raised \$100 million, which they may well be capable of doing, but our maximum is \$5 million, and we're there. We made that commitment. The Premier made that commitment, and he said: "We'd match you." They did, so we did. There's no mystery to this. There's no application form for this kind of local initiative. This is driven by the people. "We want something. This is a

good idea. We want this. What do you say, government? What do you say? Will you help us?" The answer to that question in this case is you bet we will. That's a great idea. People around here want it. You bet.

5:00

Now, there are those who don't want this, but you wouldn't find any program, any idea – even some of those fine, fine ideas put forward by the members in the New Democratic caucus. You wouldn't find a hundred percent of the people agreeing with those, Mr. Speaker, no. And you don't find a hundred percent of the people agreeing with the western heritage centre either, but broadly speaking, the numbers speak for themselves. Just as my colleague the Associate Minister of Family and Social Services pointed out during question period today, the proof is there despite the rantings, despite some of these suggestions made by the members in the opposition. The proof is in the pudding. Do people support the western heritage centre to the tune of 5 million bucks? You bet they do.

In terms of this motion, "a copy of any applications": well, Mr. Speaker, there was no application. It was people talking face to face. "Listen; if we do this, will you guys be there for us?" Well, if you do it this way and you cover off all these conditions, you bet we will. There's no application, but there is a letter. There's a letter from me and the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane to the former president of the western heritage centre outlining those conditions. It's not an application.

"Supporting materials for funding the western heritage centre," the second phrase in this goes. Supporting materials: these are the documents that I referred to earlier, about so thick, with all the numbers and all the accounting and all the projections and all the amount of money that they believe they will raise. Mr. Speaker, those aren't my documents. Those are not my documents to release. Those documents belong to the western heritage centre, and I would not presume to present those to this House because they are not government documents. It's a submission to the government, and they're the numbers, the materials owned by the western heritage centre for our review. Now, if the hon. member feels the western heritage centre may want to let him have a look at them, I would direct him there, but I wouldn't suppose to release that material publicly. It contains names; it contains corporations, foundations, other individuals. Perhaps they're willing to let the western heritage centre know what their inclinations are, but many, many people like to keep those contributions anonymous for a variety of reasons. Perhaps they would just as soon that information not be made public. So I couldn't release that supporting material.

"Copies of any agreements arising therefrom." Mr. Speaker, we are in the process now of organizing a date where all the officials of government who were involved in this most important project are going to be there together to protect the interests of Albertans, because this is not, I can assure you and I can assure this House, a blank cheque for 5 million bucks; go do what you want, boys, and have fun. No, sir. We would never do that. No government would ever do anything of that nature. I know there's some sense, some supposition, that maybe that's what they're doing, that we're over here; we don't know what we're doing. Five million bucks? Sure, here it is; go do what you want.

There have been all along, for years, involved in this officials of the Department of Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism who are making sure at every stage of this process that the interests of the department in terms of its historic resources mandate for protection, interpretation, and promotion are covered. We

wanted to make sure in any design on any building that there was enough space to make a worthwhile contribution, to give expression and interpretation to this material. We're not going to let them put up a giant service station and big fancy restaurant with one tiny display and get government money. No; that would be ridiculous. Mr. Speaker, our consultants have been working with the western heritage centre organization I daresay for several years, since this concept was first presented as a germ of an idea.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services is well known across this province for its ability to manage, cost control, develop, and put buildings up that operate smoothly and function efficiently. There will be a cost-control individual from public works assigned to this project to make sure that what is being built is in fact what was proposed to be built, a structure roughly in the area of \$10 million to \$12 million, not some 30, 40, 50, 60, 80 million dollar thing out of control. Oh boy, what have we done; we need more money. No. We're there every step of the way, every nail, every hammer, every board, every lath of plaster, every trowel full of mud for drywall. We're there to make sure that what is promised, what is proposed, is actually going to be done. All of that is being negotiated.

As this moves along, I am pleased to say that the western heritage centre is going to provide a strong voice, the ability to interpret cowboy and ranching history on this most important historic site, the first big leasehold ranch developed in this province. Parenthetically, it wasn't very successful. It didn't last very long; nevertheless, it was the first. On that ranch you see a statue, men of vision looking out across the foothills that I referred to earlier. I was complimented on my poetry, by the way, by one member opposite. Mr. Speaker, you see that statue, and soon you will see the western heritage centre displaying, for kids . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Rising.

MR. MAIN: You betcha. Rising right there, with the golden sun setting in the foothills, casting its long, rose shaft of light through its most appropriately fenestrated windows, Mr. Speaker.

It will be there, and the most important and valuable story of the history of this province and this whole half of the country will be told for generations to come, thanks not to the initiative of government – the government didn't go out looking for this – but the initiative, the verve, the vitality, the drive, and the desire of the people of Cochrane and area. That's why it's going to be there, and this government will be there with them.

To turn to the motion and what's being requested in this motion. Applications, Mr. Speaker: as I suggested, there is no application that details local initiative. It's a face-to-face meeting. Will you do this? Yes. Supporting materials are not ours; they belong to the western heritage centre. Any agreements? Those agreements are being worked on and negotiated, and they will be a binding agreement, a contract, between the government – Public Works, Supply and Services, my colleague and his designate; the Alberta Department of Culture and Multiculturalism, myself and my designate – and the western heritage centre, a private organization full of people of vitality and achievement. Those negotiations are ongoing. They're ongoing.

Mr. Speaker, the motion as presented, 235, here on this date at this time in this Legislature: I would recommend to my colleagues that we say no.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am excited to follow the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism, following such a terrific diatribe. I was really interested to hear about his broad support. He obviously did not notice the petition that I tabled in the Legislature last year with 1,200 signatures saying no to the western heritage centre, saying, "We don't want it." Those 1,200 signatures were from the residents of the town of Cochrane. Now, 1,200 signatures from the town of Cochrane represent 25 percent of the population of the town of Cochrane, so the broad support isn't there. There was no petition that came in later saying that the 2,500 were strongly in support of it. There was a terrific petition saying, "We don't want it." In fact, there were people putting signs up on the back fence saying, "We don't want the WHC." These are people right in the town of Cochrane, so the broad support isn't there.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

There are some that do support it; there's no doubt. The minister's correct; there are some that do support it. But there's also a broad base of opposition against the WHC, against the deal-making that's been going on between the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism and the WHC and the expenditure of \$5 million of public funds.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't think anyone is saying that the concept behind the WHC is wrong. I think the historical perspective that is attempted to be presented by the WHC is a worthwhile perspective: the early pioneers, the settlers that came across this great and vast country of ours with a vision of mountains to the west. Seeing the beautiful hills rising in the foreground inspired them to come to this country and drive those cattle before them and bring economic development and diversification to our province. It's really not on the backs of the government over there, but in fact on the backs of the pioneers that came to this great land that we've got. I think those people do deserve some recommendation.

But, you know, there are other places; there are other things that are going on. The federal government has just invested in some land down Bragg Creek way that the minister may know about, and they're going to be developing virtually the same kind of thing, from my understanding. They're just beginning the process down there. I think this government in particular should be absolutely ashamed and feel sick about what is happening right in the city of Calgary in a provincial park, Fish Creek provincial park. We have a member right here representing the constituency of Calgary-Fish Creek. We have in that provincial park in the city of Calgary a historical resource, not some copy, not some clone, but the original thing, that is literally falling to pieces under this government's lack of action, lack of direction, and more importantly, lack of commitment.

5:10

What am I referring to? It's the William Roper Hull house. William Roper Hull built it at the turn of the century. The Burns family bought that home later on and lived in that home for 50 or 60 years. I have been through that home, Mr. Speaker, and it is shameful that in a provincial park the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism has said that the group, the Fish Creek Park Society, cannot develop that. Here we have on one hand a group who wants to develop the western heritage centre,

something brand-new, a new building that is going to sort of tie some things together, and on the other hand we've got a facility, albeit an old one that needs work, sitting in a provincial park, that is being ignored by this government. I think that's absolutely ridiculous. Shameful; absolutely shameful.

The motion for a return talks about "supporting materials for funding the western heritage centre at Cochrane." Now, the minister says that those documents belong to the western heritage centre, but of course they were a key element in this government's making a decision to fund or not fund, and in this case they did choose to fund the western heritage centre. Now, it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that he says he can't table them. I have had a chance to look at some documents. I'm not sure if they're all the documents pertaining to that. Some of the things that are involved: first of all, he said matching dollars, \$5 million matching from this government provided that the western heritage centre group comes up with another \$5 million, a minimum of \$5 million. Now, the maximum contribution, apparently, committed during the 1989 provincial general election was \$5 million by this government.

When you look at the documents, apparently a good part of the \$5 million in matching is in fact not dollars in the bank. They are in some cases pledged, but also a good chunk of money is supposedly in kind; in other words, moneys that have been assessed in lieu of payment for volunteer work. Different members of the western heritage centre have been identified and have been allocated a certain number of hours of volunteer time at, for example, \$10 an hour for Steve Gundry. He calculates a certain number of hours which he has worked and says, well, there we go. It's almost like the deemed assets in the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. We say, well, here's something that's worth so much, and he's put so much time in it. Not that his time is not worth money, but it doesn't, in fact, put dollars in the bank. So the \$5 million are not there. There aren't \$5 million sitting there waiting to be accessed by the western heritage centre. They're saying we've got commitments for that; nonetheless, the project is going ahead.

I know the Western Heritage Centre Society, the friends of the western heritage ranch, have in fact asked the Minister of the Environment for an environmental impact assessment, and to date that has not yet happened. Yet, Mr. Speaker, already we see that the development is beginning. We see trees starting to go down, we see the roads starting to be constructed, and we still haven't had an environmental impact assessment. We don't know what's going to come out of that department. We don't know what the agreement is in terms of where the department of culture is going to go in terms of the development of the western heritage centre. I think we need some information out in the open.

One of the things that is really curious – curious is perhaps a generous term – with respect to the western heritage centre is that the operating expenses anticipated for this centre will be well in excess of \$1 million per year, in order to operate in terms of funding and heating and so on. Yet in order to do that, they need to get 250,000 people per year through the western heritage centre. The Member for Banff-Cochrane will know full well, for example, that the town of Banff is arguably a substantially better known tourism site than the town of Cochrane.

MR. EVANS: Four million a year.

MR. BRUSEKER: Four million per year. Yet the Luxton Museum in the town of Banff is closing. They got 66,000 people

through the Luxton Museum in Banff last year. Here we have a world-famous resort – I think everyone in this House will agree that Banff is world famous – and 66,000 people go through a museum located in the town of Banff. How on earth can we believe that this government is just going to fund a centre that's going to have \$1 million in expenses without having some projection as to the tourism development that's going to happen down there? Can the minister tell me that we're going to have 250,000 tourists per year going out to the town of Cochrane to see the western heritage centre? I think not, not when the town of Banff can't get a similar number through a museum located in the town of Banff. I think there are some major concerns here, and I think we need to see some documentation of what's going on behind the scenes, because I think it's atrocious to see something like that happening.

Now, the minister talks about how this is going to be like a ranch. It's going to be like a working ranch. I've seen at least some working proposals. I'm not sure whether they have been amended and so on, but I know that one of the things, for example, is that they want it to be like a ranch. They're building something low, into the hillside. It's going to be relatively low, although a very broad, spread-out building. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the proposal to build the road just to get from Highway 22, to get in half a kilometre at most, is going to cost half a million dollars. They've got to flatten out a bunch of trees; they've got to flatten out the hills. I would like to meet a farmer that had half a million dollars to build a road to get to his farmstead, because I don't think there are that many farmers in the province of Alberta that have half a million bucks to build a road, let alone worry about the buildings and the equipment and so forth. Yet here we have a proposal to build the western heritage centre, which we're not going to get any information about, including road construction for half a million dollars, and this minister says that it's private correspondence and so on.

Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with what the minister is talking about. Finally, talking about economic diversification here with respect to the western heritage centre at Cochrane, they say that this is going to be such a terrific development, yet in this budget the Provincial Treasurer said we're going to introduce user fees at the Tyrrell museum. We're going to introduce user fees at the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump. Yet we have money, the \$5 million that the minister just talked about, for the western heritage centre. On one hand, he says sorry, guys, we haven't got any more, yet on the other hand he's got 5 million bucks to go to this. Now, the 5 million bucks is probably going to come out of lottery funding, that slush fund which we don't get much accounting for here in the Legislature. But that's not acceptable.

I know that one of the concerns that has been raised by the city of Drumheller is that with the Tyrrell museum, although it's a terrific facility, a wonderful facility – I've toured it myself – the unfortunate side effect is that there really haven't been many spin-offs for the local area. Many people will go to Drumheller from Calgary, for example, gas up their car in Calgary, drive to Drumheller, have maybe a bite to eat at the Tyrrell museum, and drive back again: no real spin-offs for the local area. Yet the western heritage centre, in which we're going to pour \$5 million on the basis, presumably, of some matching \$5 million elsewhere, is not really going to have much spin-off for that local town. So we have a commitment by this government to fund \$5 million of the western heritage centre at Cochrane and no commitment to tell us why or how that decision was made or what contingency plans they've got in case that thing really



doesn't raise the money it needs to raise in order to make a go of it.

My prediction is that down the road we're going to see the government on the hook again to keep operating this facility. I think they're making a mistake. I think they should stop now and reconsider before they go too far.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MR. GIBEAULT: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I want to get in a few comments in support of Motion for a Return 235 by my colleague for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, I can hardly believe that the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism could stand here and give us that diatribe if he had actually been on the site there. I mean, I was there just recently, had a tour through the valley myself. I was on the site. The historic Cochrane Ranche is a very important and very special jewel in the province of Alberta that the people of the Cochrane region value very highly, and for this minister to go on in such a bald rah-rah cheerleader style for this project without considering many of the relevant considerations I think is really quite shameful.

Mr. Speaker, we have to point out that the Cochrane ratepayers association, the Friends of Cochrane Ranche, environmental groups, and so on are all expressing serious reservations about this project, either the project itself or in particular the location of the project. They've indicated very serious concerns about alternative sitings for the placement, and they have been frustrated that the western heritage centre proponents have not been prepared to consider in any way alternative sitings for this particular facility so that they don't have to have this in a place where it's going to be taking up a significant chunk of this historic site in the form of a parking lot, a road right through a very nice ravine, and otherwise basically destroy a very special environmental space here in the province of Alberta.

5:20

Mr. Speaker, the minister went on at some length about how he could not release the documents related to this project. He said that they're not his to release, but he's got \$5 million of our money that he's prepared to release to the western heritage centre. Now, I would suggest that it works both ways. If people want public money, taxpayers' money – and let's be clear; that's what we're talking about here – we as representatives of the people of Alberta have a right to see exactly what is being proposed and how it's going to be spent. I totally reject the minister's stalling and stonewalling here, refusing to give us any information about this. I would suggest that if the minister was to come clean with the representatives in the Assembly here and give us some information about this project that he is so keen about, we could make some assessment of it. We might see some merits to it and we might not, but without this information on the project, its future financial viability, who knows? How can we possibly be giving our consent to it?

So on behalf of the taxpayers of this province, on behalf of the future generations of the citizens of the Cochrane region and the whole province who are going to have to live with the consequences of this, with big parking lots and roads all over through this particular historic site, I really would encourage members

to vote in support of this Motion for a Return 235 so that we can get this kind of information so that there can be a proper assessment of the alternatives. Maybe this centre for ranching memorabilia could be located in a place so that it doesn't have such a negative impact. You know, Mr. Speaker, there have been several alternative suggestions, and it's unfortunate that the proponents have not shown any interest, nor the minister apparently – he's stonewalling us here today – to look at these alternatives.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all members to support Motion for a Return 235.

MR. MUSGROVE: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Calgary-North West kind of inspired me to get up and say a few words about this.

I was on the Hooves of History cattle drive last fall, and we went from Sibbald Flat to Cochrane, chasing approximately 700 to 800 head of cattle. The support was overwhelming. There were approximately 1,400 people riding in support of that. They all paid their money. Each individual either gave a steer that was worth \$750 or \$750 cash. I paid the \$750 cash, so I'm one of the statistics that the hon. minister is talking about. He mentioned the protesters. I was in the parade through Cochrane at the end of the cattle drive, and there was a certain area set out for protesters. Mr. Speaker, there were not more than six adults in that protest line and approximately 12 children. That was in the press that night as the protest against the cattle drive. It didn't show the overwhelming amount of people that lined the entire streets of Cochrane in support of the heritage centre.

MR. JOHNSTON: Did you see the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods?

MR. MUSGROVE: No, I didn't.

The members that are now speaking against the western historical site in Cochrane should have been there that day. The thing was overwhelming. The people that put their money in to support the \$5 million shouldn't be identified, don't need to be identified, because the money is there. Then they had a cattle auction the next day, and those cattle sold for more than market value because people were there to purchase them to support the heritage centre.

MR. KLEIN: The western spirit.

MR. MUSGROVE: Yeah, that's right. That's the true western spirit.

The following day they put on a rodeo, and all the contestants donated their winnings back to the heritage centre. Mr. Speaker, I don't think we need to identify those people. The money is there. I don't think we should support their motion for a return.

Thank you.

MR. McINNIS: What we have, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: You haven't been recognized, hon. member. That isn't the way it works.

Now that the House is quiet, Edmonton-Jasper Place, please.

MR. McINNIS: What we have here is a deal that's conceived in secrecy and dedicated to the proposition that might is right. It's not. It's not right. I really think that this minister, who

comes here from something he calls a Reform tradition expecting us to believe that he's going to reform the government, now has to admit that they've deformed him a hundred percent. He's prepared to stand up and say: I've got the right to hand over \$6 million without letting the rest of the people who own that money know the basis upon which it's set forward. That's the principle he's elucidated.

I know there's a lot of emotion involved. I know the minister gets eloquent when he visualizes in his mind the sun streaming through the boughs of the trees and the setting sun and all the rest of it, and I realize when I hear him that the leader of the Liberal Party didn't have to hire an out-of-work actress in order to become the bad actor he is today. He could just listen to the minister and save the taxpayers a bunch of money right there.

We have to come to the issue. There are two very important issues that people are asking about this application and two very important reasons why it needs to be made public. The first of these is the claim made by the minister here in this Legislative Assembly that this outfit, the western heritage centre, has raised something in excess of \$5 million. He then admitted later on that actually it was in pledges. It wasn't in funds raised at all, but he has a list of the names of pledges. The issue here is whether or not that list of pledges is to be made public. Would it surprise him that some of the people who are on that list are

very surprised that they've pledged to give money to the western heritage centre? Would it surprise him to know that?

I believe that in view of the hour I should move adjournment of the debate so that we can pursue this very important issue at a later sitting.

MR. SPEAKER: Those in favour of the motion to adjourn, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.  
Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that when members reassemble at 8 p.m., they do so as the Committee of Supply.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

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