

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, April 29, 1991**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 91/04/29

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, we give thanks as legislators for the rich diversity of our history.

We welcome the many challenges of the present.

We dedicate ourselves to both the present and the future as we join in the service of Alberta and Canada.

Amen.

head: **Notices of Motions**

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to give oral notice of motion under Standing Order 40 that at the end of question period today I wish to seek unanimous consent of the Assembly in order to deal with the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta recognize and extend its heartiest congratulations to the Calgary North Stars for winning the national midget hockey championships in Calgary, April 28.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of the Environment.

### Bill 32 Special Waste Management Corporation Amendment Act, 1991

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 32, Special Waste Management Corporation Amendment Act, 1991. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to enable the corporation to carry out its duties relative to the management of special wastes in the province of Alberta, specifically programs that deal with household hazardous wastes and pesticide container recycling. It also transfers certain responsibilities from the Hazardous Chemicals Act to the Special Waste Management Corporation Act dealing with hazardous waste.

[Leave granted; Bill 32 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to table for hon. members a new environmental education program entitled A Traveller's Guide to Spaceship Earth. Now, this is part of a continuing series of poster programs designed to ensure our children learn about and appreciate our precious air, land, and water.

I would also like to file with the Legislature Library the Alberta Lakes and Reservoirs Reference Index, 1990, the 1991 Inventory of Dams, which is an excellent report on evaporation of water systems in Alberta, and the addendum to that report.

Thank you.

MR. FJORBOTTEN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to file with the Assembly the 1989-90 annual report of the Prairie Conservation Co-ordinating Committee.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure, sir, to introduce two groups to the Legislative Assembly today. Let me begin by introducing a group of 10 from the Alberta Bosco Homes school. They are joined by Mr. Dave Dixon and teacher assistants Miss Johane Janelle and Mr. Gord Robinson. They're in the public gallery, and I would ask if they would stand so we could extend to them the very warm welcome of the Legislative Assembly.

I also have another guest in the members' gallery, an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the province of Alberta. I would ask that Mr. Herb Belcourt rise and receive the very warm welcome of this Legislative Assembly.

MR. ZARUSKY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you and to the Assembly a group of 24 senior citizens from the town of Bruderheim, people who helped build this great province. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce Lucille Partington. Lucille is an educator, a councillor in the town of Sexsmith, and also a member of the Grande Prairie hospital board: very active in all activities throughout the Peace River country. Lucille is in the public gallery, and I would ask her to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Banff-Cochrane.

MR. EVANS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly 30 students from the Revelstoke secondary school in Revelstoke, British Columbia, just slightly west of the beautiful constituency of Banff-Cochrane. They are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Kirk Wassmer and Mrs. Colleen Wassmer as well as Mr. Bob Eley and Mrs. Joan Eley. They are seated in the public gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce 34 people visiting us from Ontario today. They are mainly students from Norwood, Ontario, and they're on an exchange program with Eastglen school, located in the riding of Edmonton-Highlands. They're accompanied today by Mr. Robert Simmons, Ms Audrey Gibson, and Mrs. Simmons. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask them to rise and receive the welcome of the Alberta Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**

### Loans to Industry

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Last Friday we pointed out the unjustifiable sort of you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours practice of this government mixing Conservative Party business with government activities. I might add that usually it's done behind closed doors. But we see another example of the government's kickback approach to governing: we see that a large number of companies who received millions of dollars in

government loans and guarantees just happened to contribute bucks to the Conservative Party. My question to the minister is: how does he justify this kickback policy, or was it just a coincidence?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, there is no kickback policy. I also suggested to the individual within the media who did the research that they look at funds that were contributed to the ND Party and to the Liberal Party, because there is no correlation to this whatsoever. I'll repeat for the hon. member, as I have done on many occasions, that as it relates to the export loan guarantee program, firstly the banks have to do with due diligence. Once the banks have done that and have collected their financial data, then we involve ourselves.

Let me indicate to the hon. member that we've gone through a three-phase process as it relates to the diversification of this great province of ours. In the '70s we had a considerable amount of oil revenue, whereby we could involve ourselves in the financing of the diversity of this province. Through the '80s, Mr. Speaker, we went through a totally different period of time, whereby we had to involve ourselves with loan guarantees because we lacked the financial flexibility, plus we wanted to make sure that this province was diversified. Now we're seeing the fruits of our involvement, whereby we have the strongest economy in all of Canada, and we're delighted that we have those fruits. But we're not going to stop there. We're suggesting that we look toward the future. That's why in the Speech from the Throne we indicated that we are going to have a conference on the economy this fall. We're also asking for all Albertans to offer us their input as to the direction they would like to see us go.

2:40

MR. MARTIN: Yes, I guess it was just a coincidence after all, wasn't it? Hand out thousands, then millions, then hundred of millions in corporate welfare: that's what the three-phase program is, Mr. Speaker.

I want to get to the secrecy. The minister keeps talking about commercial confidentiality. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend we had ex Deputy Premier Mr. Horner, and in fact some of the recipients of the program, saying publicly that this is unnecessary; we don't need this secrecy. So my question to the minister is this: isn't it true that the reason the government keeps these loan guarantees secret is simply to protect the government from political embarrassment?

MR. ELZINGA: No, Mr. Speaker. Again the leader of the New Democratic Party is wrong, which he consistently is within this Legislative Assembly. There is a commercial confidentiality. I also indicated last week that I think we have come to a point whereby we have to examine whether there will be public disclosure notwithstanding the fact that there is a commercial confidentiality involved. The Standing Orders themselves indicate that's so. In the event that there is a possibility of a violation whereby it could hurt the competitiveness of an individual company, we have an obligation. I indicated to the hon. member what we saw in Ontario within the New Democratic Party, where a member of that cabinet broke a confidential relationship, and because of that, she lost her job. I say that we have obligations, unlike the hon. member opposite. He has no obligations nor responsibilities that we happen to have on this side.

MR. MARTIN: That minister had at least the decency to resign. If you want to bring that up, what about this minister, who did the same thing in this government?

Mr. Speaker, let's talk about competitiveness. The Alberta business community is contradicting the minister all over the place. Many of the people that are contacting us are angry at the way this government hands out money behind closed doors to their friends and favourites, the very people these same people must compete with. My question simply to the minister is this: how does the minister respond to the legitimate concerns of Alberta's business community that this government harms their companies by secretly handing out money to their competitors?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to address the hon. member's question, but prior to doing so, it should be put on the record that there is no secrecy as it relates to our involvement; there is the commercial confidentiality by which we're bound.

As it relates to the business concerns, that's the reason for our conference on the economy. We want to have input from the business community. I indicated the phases we went through. There have been concerns raised as it relates to our loan guarantees. That's why we're asking the Alberta population in the business community to give us their insights as to what direction they would like to see us go in the future. We welcome their input and we welcome their direction, and that's why we're asking for it.

MR. MARTIN: You've already lost a billion dollars. You should have had the conference before.

#### Senior Citizens Programs

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my second question is to the associate minister of social services responsible for seniors. I want to move once again from the hundreds of millions of dollars this government has lent to failing companies to the clawbacks that this government is forcing on the seniors of our province. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday Alberta seniors are going to face the first round of this government's assault on their pocketbooks. On this day seniors will have benefits cut for eyeglasses, dentures, and over-the-counter prescription medicines. In the document the minister and I have talked about before, which we had to have leaked to us, they talk about even more cuts to Alberta's pensioners, cuts totaling a whopping \$113 million. I want to ask the minister a question about one of them that was talked about in that paper: the elimination of the \$1,000 annual property tax rebate for many pensioners who live in their own homes. My question to the minister is simply this: will the minister tell Alberta seniors why his government is considering the elimination of this program, which will result in many seniors frankly finding it difficult to stay in their own homes? Why are they even considering it?

MR. BRASSARD: Well, Mr. Speaker, I find it strange that someone can talk so verbally about a program and a discussion which he wasn't even at.

We did discuss various programs with seniors, because we're committed in this province to provide the best coverage of seniors' programs anywhere in Canada. We're doing that now, and we'll continue to do that. The document that he keeps referring to was just one of many documents that we used to bring together all pertinent aspects of running a \$1.2 billion operation, and it would be irresponsible if we didn't give

consideration to all aspects of this program. It also says in the document, if you'll read it, that there is no intention of implementing any of that document. That's in there too.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the reality was that this document was in the cabinet, behind closed doors, and all of a sudden parts of it were in the budget last time, with no consultation at all. So don't hand me that.

This particular paper, and it's in black and white here, talks about cutting the seniors' renter grants, health care premium help for 107,000 seniors, and Blue Cross premium help also. They frankly didn't want the seniors to know. My question again to the minister is this: does the minister not understand that cutting these vital programs for seniors – and they were considering it – will hurt them dramatically and, if implemented, will drive many seniors out of their own homes and into more expensive institutional care?

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, I'd remind the member that all of those programs he mentioned were not cut and have not been cut, and there is no intention at this time to do so.

MR. MARTIN: That's pretty scary: "no intention at this time to do so."

Let me move over to the Premier, then, after that answer. Will the Premier give his commitment right now to seniors that his government will not impose any more of these harmful measures either now or in the years to come?

MR. GETTY: The commitment I'm very proud to give, Mr. Speaker, is: we'll constantly assess our seniors' programs to make sure they're the best in Canada, as they are.

### **Aids to Daily Living Program**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that every MLA in this Assembly has received either a telephone call or a letter from some senior complaining about the fact that the government is attempting to balance its budget on their backs. They're not happy; they're angry. The Aids to Daily Living program has had cutbacks. Senior citizens who require oxygen may well have to pay up to \$500 a year. What's even more disturbing is that the Ministry of Health is looking at imposing even harsher tests on these users of oxygen. My questions to the Minister of Health are these: given that the government is imposing more fees on seniors and given that the health care system now requires a doctor and a home care nurse, and they impose an internationally accepted test to determine eligibility for these oxygen users, why is the minister imposing an even harsher test on people who need oxygen to live on?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, first of all, let's make it absolutely clear that the oxygen benefits are essentially still the same under the newly expanded Aids to Daily Living program with the exception of home ventilators being added onto that program, because of course they were only available before for polio patients. The testing with respect to who gets oxygen is medically tested. We are certainly asking all Albertans to share in the cost of home oxygen therapy, which costs the provincial government about \$4,000 up to \$10,000 per client per year. We believe that asking Albertans to pay for \$500 of that if they can afford to, because of course it's income tested, is a reasonable request to make of Albertans.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the imposition of more money on seniors is harsh, but the minister still hasn't answered the question: why impose a harsher test, a test that will require seniors to come probably from rural communities into either Edmonton or Calgary to go into a hospital to get labs to do the testing, a new test that's much harsher and may well force these seniors to not even use oxygen, at their peril? Why do that?

MS BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. leader of the Liberal Party is suggesting that people on home oxygen should not be medically assessed, and regularly medically assessed to ensure they're getting the right mix of oxygen supply, then that is something that I don't support. Those assessments are important to be done so that the people are getting the important levels of oxygen that they should. Remember that many of those home ventilators, which will now be part of the Aids to Daily Living program, were not available before except for polio patients.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, it would appear to me that the hon. minister doesn't know that this test is coming, or she's just evading the issue. The issue here is: you're imposing the harshness of costs on seniors – that's a given; they all know that – but you're now imposing a harsh test, a test that previously required a doctor, a nurse, and an internationally accepted test to determine whether oxygen was needed. You're casting that aside and forcing them to come into hospitals to go through some high-tech, expensive testing. Why do that, Madam Minister? Why? You've got enough already.

2:50

MS BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, why are we trying to update and make contemporary our Aids to Daily Living program? Because regardless of how the member terms it, that's exactly what he's asking. We've enhanced our Aids to Daily Living program not just for oxygen therapies by \$13 million but for things like power wheelchairs, for things like diabetic aids, for things like low vision aids, which were never before covered by the program.

I think the assessment that's done on a medically required basis is an extremely important one. I am not a physician, the leader of the Liberal Party is not a physician, and how we assess those needs are ones that I believe should be medically and health determined.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Foothills.

### **Senior Citizens Programs** (continued)

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've spent this weekend, as I'm sure many other MLAs have, answering questions from senior citizens. In fact, this morning I met with a seniors' group, and I was somewhat dismayed by the disgraceful representation of benefits to seniors that's been made within the media and the opposition parties. [interjections] For clarification . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] I can't hear up here, and it's kind of useful.

MR. TAYLOR: I can, and you're not listening to anything useful.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, Westlock-Sturgeon. You're not so useful.

MRS. BLACK: I guess they don't want to hear the actual benefits, but my constituents would like to hear the benefits. In particular, I'd like to ask the Minister of Health if she could clarify the benefits of drug and ambulance costs that will now be going to the residents of senior citizens' nursing homes?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, although the opposition likes to only focus on some of the changes which they feel are negative, there have been in fact many enhancements to the benefit of seniors in this province, one of which is that nursing home residents will no longer have to pay Blue Cross premiums in order to receive their drugs and will not have to pay ambulance costs. Rather, those have been folded into the global budgets of nursing homes to the benefit of those in long-term care.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Foothills, followed by Edmonton-Mill Woods.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further on the benefits to seniors, there's been a lot of talk about reductions, et cetera, et cetera, which I think are quite dreadful when they play upon the hearts of the people that founded this province. We've heard the opposition saying, "Cut cuts," but I'd like to ask the minister if she could identify in specific detail some of the programs that have been actually added to the Aids to Daily Living budget?

MS BETKOWSKI: I gave a brief list in response to the Leader of the Opposition, but I guess the most important additions are the high-technology aids that weren't covered before. Opposition members last year were very critical of the Aids to Daily Living program because it did not cover diabetic aids, which it now does; were critical that it did not cover home ventilators, which it now does; were critical that it did not cover power wheelchairs, which it now does. It does so under a program that we believe is fair and reasonable to Albertans.

The other point I think that is important to raise, Mr. Speaker, is that contrary to the comments by the Leader of the Opposition these changes will not take effect until July 1 to give time for all Albertans involved in the programs to see them and to understand how they work before they're put in place.

#### Hospital Funding

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of Health today. The Grey Nuns hospital in Mill Woods, in my constituency, has reached a point after several years of less than adequate funding from this government of laying off some 100 employees or reducing their staff hours. Of course, this will mean a reduction even further now in services that are already strained in a community that is accepting a substantial amount of the city's new growth and development. So I'd like to ask the minister: my constituents and I would like to know how this minister can plead financial poverty to health care and services at hospitals like the Grey Nuns at the same time that her government is wasting and squandering hundreds of million of dollars on corporate welfare?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member must know something about the Grey Nuns hospital that I do not; that is, what response the board is giving to living within their budget.

With respect to the criticism of how we've been able to give an increase of 10 percent to the Health budget, I would simply point out to the hon. member that other departments of government, like economic development, like Tourism, like Transportation and Utilities, like Technology, Research and Telecommunications, have all had to bear significant reductions in order that that increase could occur to Health. That is a very important statement of priority by this government and this minister.

MR. GIBEAULT: It's a strange increase when they're laying off nurses. How about laying off some of these cabinet ministers?

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question, then, to the minister: given that Mill Woods is largely a community that's composed of young families with children, will this minister at least give an assurance today that the Grey Nuns hospital will have the resources it needs to provide a full complement of pediatric services? Will she at least do that?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, the decisions that have been entrusted to hospital boards in this province to manage within their resources are a very important responsibility. While there may be adjustments to service in individual facilities, as the Department of Health we are looking very carefully and consciously at ensuring that on a regional basis we are delivering the health care and access to health care that Albertans need. If the hon. member is arguing contrary to what his party argued last Thursday night in estimates – that we should not base our funding system on the efficiency and the severity of illness within our hospitals, as we are now doing under our acute care funding plan, but that we should be funding based on the number of employees within that hospital – I find some concern with his health model forecasts and so, I would argue, would a lot of Albertans.

#### Oil Refinery Site in Black Diamond

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, over a year ago Gordon and Lynn McDowell were ordered to leave their home in Black Diamond because it sits on top of an abandoned oil refinery site that is literally filled with toxic chemical wastes. We now see the ridiculous spectacle of two ministers, the Minister of the Environment and the minister of public works, fighting over whose responsibility it isn't to settle this problem. The Minister of the Environment is saying that it's public works, and public works, of course, is dropping that hot potato and saying: no, no, no; it's the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment. My first question is to the Premier. Will the Premier please step in and resolve this petty bureaucratic dispute so the McDowell's case can be settled quickly and with some compassion for the nature of their predicament?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the ministers involved are resolving it.

MR. MITCHELL: It's been over a year, Mr. Speaker, and the question is: why hasn't it been resolved to this point?

My next question is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. What protection is there for consumers in this province when people like the McDowells can be permitted to buy a piece of land that is literally filled with toxic wastes three years after the Department of the Environment determined very clearly that that site is a toxic site?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what area of jurisdiction this province would have to answer the question the hon. member indicates. I understand that the ministers of Environment and public works are working on this issue. If we can help in any way, we'd be glad to, but I'm not familiar with any legislation that would give us that authority.

MR. SPEAKER: Redwater-Andrew, followed by Calgary-Forest Lawn.

### Home Care Programs

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Health. Seniors' programs are an issue in this last while. In my constituency many seniors live in their own homes. I know home care is a very important program to them, and I've had concerns expressed to me in the past few days in regards to this program. My question to the minister: are you only adding home care to the under 65, or do all seniors get the expanded benefits of home care?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to provide the clarification that our home care program will be enhanced by \$10 million for seniors who are on the program.

MR. ZARUSKY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister on the \$10 million. Is that \$10 million only to help existing senior clients on home care?

3:00

MS BETKOWSKI: No, it's not just for the existing client load. In fact, it's for an expansion, part of which will be to enhance the single point of entry program, which we've discussed significantly in this House, to ensure that seniors get the most appropriate care that can be provided under home care.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Forest Lawn.

### Westcan Malting Ltd.

MR. PASHAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past few years this government has wasted over \$1.3 billion worth of taxpayers' money on risky financial ventures, and they haven't learned their lesson. Just recently the Minister of Agriculture agreed to provide Westcan Malting with a loan of \$9 million to finance the construction of a malting plant near 'Ailex.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Alix.

MR. PASHAK: Alix. My wife is named Alex, and so I thought . . .

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, there's not enough high quality malting barley nor are there the markets to support this plant and an existing malting plant in Calgary. My question to the Minister of Agriculture is: how does the minister justify risking \$9 million on a project that would otherwise not be economically viable?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the capability of producing malting barley has hardly been tapped yet in this province. We had a good joint venture between a company that is significantly involved in the production of malt and a local Alberta firm. They dealt with the agribusiness arm of the Ag Development Corporation, and I think we have a very positive project going in a community in rural Alberta that is certainly looking forward to it.

MR. PASHAK: Well, there's the potential here to cost 100 jobs at least in the city of Calgary. In addition to this government's support of \$9 million for the project, they're also going to have to provide the town of Alix with a grant to help its water treatment facilities. How much money is the minister prepared to throw at this project?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, my latest information with respect to Canada Malting in Calgary is that it is expanding its operation. I am very pleased that they are. I might point out that assisting communities with developing infrastructure has been an ongoing responsibility accepted by this government, and it is certainly one way that we can enhance the growth in rural Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

### Women's Incarceration

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Attorney General. A recent report by the federal government's Centre for Justice Statistics indicates that Alberta has a much higher rate of incarceration of women than any other province. There's widespread speculation as to why this is the case, including the suggestion that women would rather go to jail than work off their fines, when in fact the reason may be that she cannot find child care for her children. Given the serious questions raised by this report, will the Attorney General commit to reviewing in consultation with organizations such as the Elizabeth Fry Society why the rate of our incarceration of Alberta women is so high?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, it would indeed be agreeable to me to have such consultations. The Attorney General brings forward the evidence of the investigating officer in a particular case, and if there are circumstances, there are fine option programs and that that are available. Unfortunately, my colleague the Solicitor General is responsible for the fine options and may want to supplement that. Also, in these statistics when you compare one jurisdiction to another, it's unfair because the statistic-gathering mechanism is not the same. We've been working with the Canadian justice institute to try and clarify that. In fact, I've been dialoguing with them since I was the Solicitor General in the Assembly, and we haven't made a great deal of progress.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second question is to the minister responsible for women. Research has indicated time and time again that the root causes of women's involvement in crime are the economic and social disadvantages to which they have fallen victim, such as poverty, abusive and dysfunctional families, and a lack of education. Given that the judicial system remedies do little to address the realities that brought these women into conflict with the law, will the minister now commit to determining and establishing creative alternatives to the presently overused and costly jail systems, alternatives which will help women build healthy, productive lives for themselves and their children?

MS McCOY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the number of solutions is much broader than that. For example, our Stepping Stones program encourages both young girls and young boys to

look at a wide array of careers that they may take, all of which are being presented to them by volunteer role models in nontraditional jobs. That's one example. I might point out another action plan initiative, this one brought forward by the Solicitor General this year, and that is his support for native women elders to attend in the jails and to consult with women in the jails who are native and persuading, perhaps, more and more to deal with whatever obstacles they find in their way, using and drawing upon the resources of the native culture. My colleague the Solicitor General may wish to add to my comments.

### Employment Retraining

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-*Buffalo*.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Career Development and Employment. Despite the government's crowing about how well Albertans are doing economically, layoffs and plant closures are costing thousands of jobs in the oil industry, in hospitals, in magnesium and packing plants throughout the province. Albertans such as the 500 employees of Canada Packers who have been laid off in Calgary and Lethbridge recently are not amused when the Premier crows about how well his friends are doing, and they are desperately in need of retraining assistance. I'm wondering whether the Minister of Career Development and Employment is prepared to advise, in light of the fact that skills development spending has been reduced by \$20 million in this year's budget, what he intends to do to meet the desperate need for retraining of the Canada Packers workers and other thousands who have lost their jobs.

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, it certainly is a very important question, and I'm pleased to try and respond to the Member for Calgary-*Buffalo*. Yes, that's why we have a Department of Career Development and Employment: to assist, as a safety net, people in need, such as in this case. There will always be layoffs and mergers, but through our department we work very closely with the employer and the federal government as well in interagency committees. We're providing assistance in long-term development training skills, résumé writing, and other areas that are needed. I might say that there is no reduction whatsoever in the funding and assistance that we're providing to employees such as those in Canada Packers.

MR. CHUMIR: That's great; \$20 million cut and no reduction of assistance. Well, Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that the government has been spending millions of dollars in grants to Cargill and other companies, destabilizing the meat packing industry, I'm wondering whether the minister is prepared to commit that he will beef up – and I really mean beef up – the expenditures of his department to the extent that may be necessary to fully fund the retraining efforts that are necessary for these thousands of jobs that are being lost.

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I find that very interesting, because we have just gone through the department's estimates. Where was the hon. member then when he had an opportunity to make any representation? But I also want to indicate the overall development policy of this government that you've heard many times from hon. members and the Premier as well: that we're able to absorb and integrate the many jobs for the diversification projects that are taking place within this province.

Let's wait and look at the economic position overall and the employment stats as they are: still amongst the best in Canada. Compare.

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-*North*.

### Senior Citizens Programs (continued)

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the opposition continues to mislead and frighten our seniors, we need to continue to press for clarification of our programs. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health: under the former guidelines for the Aids to Daily Living program, individuals up to 64 years of age had to contribute up to \$1,000 a year while individuals 65 and over had to contribute nothing to benefits for that program, and I'd like to know if there have been any changes on those two specifics.

3:10

MS BETKOWSKI: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to put on the record that under the existing program not only would 64 year olds have to pay up to \$1,000 in cost sharing; they would also have to pay a deductible on the program, while the 65 year old would be paying nothing for the same benefits. Under the changes we've made, the deductible has been removed, and all Albertans will be paying, cost sharing the \$500 per family except those Albertans on low income, who will be protected under the plan.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, one of our home care providers in Red Deer recently told me that seniors who come from other provinces in the homes which she goes to talk in very warm, endearing terms about the programs we have here in Alberta as opposed to other provinces. I'd like to ask the minister, in order to help these home care providers, who answer the bulk of the questions that are given to them: are there going to be any groups of seniors who are going to be exempt from paying towards these benefits?

MS BETKOWSKI: Yes, Mr. Speaker, in addition to the income test with respect to how a family can afford the cost sharing up to \$500, there will be an exemption from cost sharing for Albertans receiving the Alberta assured income plan, the widows' pension, supports for independence, or the assured income for the severely handicapped program. So all of those in those categories will not pay any coinsurance.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-*Jasper Place*.

### Landfill Pollution

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of the Environment. Acreage owners in the Okotoks area share groundwater with the Foothills regional landfill. Last summer a convoy of trucks came and dumped the entire contents of the old Inglewood refinery: reeking of oil and gas, toxic metals; some 40,000 tonnes containing as much as 125,000 parts of lead per million. During the appeal board hearing local residents were told that the refinery was moved from Calgary to their local residential landfill because Alberta Environment issued a series of approvals to make it happen. My question for the minister is: what steps is the minister taking to prevent unscrupulous private operators of these residential landfills, such

as Kedon, from underbidding proper industrial disposal sites against the wishes of local residents?

MR. KLEIN: First of all, Mr. Speaker, we did not issue a series of permits to allow this particular incident to occur. We said that according to our evaluation of a report that was submitted to us that was undertaken by the Foothills waste management authority, this site could accept the kind of waste that was identified. Indeed, we presented our findings. Once again we revisited that site, did another investigation, presented our findings to the board of health appeal board hearings held not so long ago that indicate that the material is not hazardous. It's special and has to be treated as special waste, but it's not hazardous. That's our opinion. That might not satisfy a lot of people, but that's our opinion, and it was based on all the proper protocols.

Relative to the misuse of a waste management facility, Mr. Speaker, if any operator is found to violate the rules, then that operator will be charged and prosecuted and if found guilty will pay a fine.

MR. McINNIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, oil, gas, grease, and lead may be special to the minister, but it's hazardous in the minds of the people who drink that groundwater, and that's the point. The board barely concluded its hearing when the residents learned that another 120 tonnes of gasoline-soaked soil came from a service station nearby. It's not an isolated incident. I don't think it's unique to this particular landfill. What steps is the minister taking to reform a system in which Alberta Environment - I don't care if you call them permits or what - secretly issues approvals and won't share the information with the residents?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, it's absolutely false, misleading. It's typical fearmongering on the part of this hon. member: something that's so typical of this member, by the way.

Mr. Speaker, quite simply, we have done an investigation of that waste. We consider it not to be hazardous as hazardous waste is defined under the Act. There are numerous wastes. He knows. He's read the Hazardous Chemicals Act, and he knows which chemicals are defined as hazardous under the Act. He can read the report. I told him to read the report. The report is not hazardous. All he needs to do is to pick it up and read it. He won't do that, or if he reads it, he obviously can't understand it.

I've said before that there are some people who might not want to accept the findings of the report, but the report was done using the best protocols available, recognized protocols. I can only repeat again: if anyone violates our environmental laws, those people will be punished to the fullest extent of the law and, indeed, new environmental legislation that is proposed would have those laws strengthened even more.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Whitemud.

### **Charter of Rights**

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Solicitor General has recently made public statements which completely ignore the Charter of Rights' freedom of association clause. The minister of multiculturalism has gone on record as stating that he would not vote yes to keep the Charter if the question, yes or no, should we have the Charter, were put to a test. Let me remind the minister that the Charter of Rights is not a policy

giving cabinet ministers the right to charter government aircraft for family and friends but a document that sets out fundamental rights and freedoms. My question to the minister responsible for multiculturalism: can the minister explain how he can achieve a multiculturalism policy that ensures equality for all Albertans when he is not even prepared to uphold the basic Charter of Rights?

MR. MAIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud is, as usual, dead wrong: absolutely, completely, and utterly dead wrong. It's the aim of this government, this minister, and our multicultural policy to do exactly what the member describes: to provide equality of opportunity for all Albertans. That's our goal, that's our objective, and that's what we're doing.

MR. WICKMAN: That's not the statement being made, Mr. Speaker.

My second question to the Deputy Premier: will he make a statement indicating to this Assembly where his government stands on the guarantees contained in the Charter of Rights?

MR. HORSMAN: A very unusual question.

MR. DECORE: The Premier doesn't agree to it, right? Pretty unusual.

MR. HORSMAN: I'll just wait until the leader of the Liberal Party cools down a little and indicate to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud just for his . . .

MR. DECORE: I'm cool. Have you received your marching orders from the Premier on that one?

MR. HORSMAN: The hon. leader of the Liberal Party keeps chattering away. It's interesting that he's not interested in having me answer the question that a member of his own caucus has posed. That's unusual, but perhaps not.

This is a government, Mr. Speaker, which introduced the Alberta Bill of Rights as its first piece of legislation upon coming into office after the election of 1971. This government supported the introduction of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This government obeys the law of the land, and the Charter is part of the supreme law of this land, which is the Constitution of Canada. I hope that's clear.

### **Senior Citizens Programs**

*(continued)*

MS BARRETT: Prior to the Official Opposition New Democrats receiving a copy of the secret document that has been circulating in cabinet for the last few months with respect to the future of programs for seniors, what the government has in fact been doing is implementing the so-called discussion points bit by bit, Mr. Speaker. Now, I noticed earlier today that the Associate Minister of Family and Social Services refused to commit himself to not implementing some of the other "discussion points" in this paper. My question to the minister is this: if he's so sure that his government isn't going to fulfill this hidden agenda, why won't he commit right now to stopping progress on all of these points?

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, I continue to take exception with the words "hidden document" and "hidden agenda." There

is no such thing. I would like to point out to the member that as a result of the kind of discussions that she is referring to, we injected \$75.4 million additional funds into the seniors programs this year.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, what the minister fails to add is that his government has also put its hand in the pockets of senior citizens and is plucking out hundreds of dollars at a time.

I'd like to ask the minister one more time, with respect to the property tax rebate program: why won't the minister commit to continuing this program, which is so vital to keeping senior citizens in their own homes and preventing them from going into institutions? Why won't he commit to that, Mr. Speaker?

3:20

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, I don't think that there has ever been a time when this government has indicated that it would do otherwise, that it would not keep the program going. I don't know where this member is coming from.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

**Westcan Malting Ltd.**  
(continued)

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. It's back again to Westcan. In view of the fact that last June or July, in spite of warnings from me in this Legislature and warnings from the chambers of commerce in Edmonton and Calgary, the minister did go ahead to Westcan Malting and make a \$5 million loan payable only if they make a profit; \$4 million in shares. They've also acquired since then a \$700,000 federal grant, and now they want \$1.4 million as help to put in a water system. Now, with that kind of money at risk, what guarantees, personal or through associated companies, has the minister gone ahead and obtained in order to try to get some backup or guarantee for this fabulous amount of money he's loaned to an untried company, a new group of people?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member obviously has more confidence in some of his infrastructure support figures than I have at this point in time. We're still assessing the infrastructure costs that the village of Alix will be needing and working on ways of dealing with that problem with the village of Alix. The situation with respect to Westcan has not changed in any way, shape, or form from the last time it was discussed in this House.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, that's what we're trying to get at. He's loaned to a group that got into trouble in Saskatchewan. Is he aware that members of this same group cost the Saskatchewan government millions of dollars in a failed malting plant there? Is he asleep at the switch again?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, the one thing I can share with the hon. member is that the Ag Development Corporation has a pretty healthy track record. They've applied all of the normal practices of business and banking to their involvement in this company, and I think their money is quite, quite safe.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to seek unanimous consent of this Assembly in order to deal with the following motion: that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta recognize and extend its heartiest congratulations to the Calgary North Stars for winning the national midget hockey championships in Calgary, April 28.

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the fine tradition of this Assembly to acknowledge and recognize individuals or groups that have attained outstanding achievements in their field, I would ask that members support this motion.

The Calgary North Stars, which represent northeast Calgary, on Sunday won the Air Canada Cup, which is symbolic of the national championship for midget triple A hockey. Mr. Speaker, they beat teams from across Canada. I had the honour of officiating at the opening ceremonies, and I can confirm to the Assembly that the Calgary North Stars are a group of fine young Albertans who set an excellent example of hard work, dedication, and teamwork and showed that it all leads to excellence.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask that all members support this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Under Standing Order 40 a request for unanimous consent. Those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

**National Midget Hockey Championship**

Moved by Mr. Orman:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta recognize and extend its heartiest congratulations to the Calgary North Stars for winning the national midget hockey championships in Calgary, April 28.

MR. SPEAKER: Speaking to the main motion again, any additional comments?

MR. ORMAN: No. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PASHAK: I'd like to speak on behalf of the New Democratic caucus, Mr. Speaker. We support this motion, and we're really pleased with the achievement of this team.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Additional comments?  
The Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Well, on behalf of the Liberal caucus I might simply state that it's about time we got a championship, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Before I put the question, as a director of the Calgary Canucks I'm pleased to announce that the coach of this team is now going to be the coach of the Calgary Canucks in the Alberta Junior Hockey League next year.

All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries, let it be shown, unanimously.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Government Bills and Orders**  
head: **Second Reading**

**Bill 11**  
**Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act**

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to move second reading of Bill 11, the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act.

This legislation will govern and expand the existing apprenticeship training system in Alberta. It represents this government's continued commitment to advancing the skill level of Alberta's work force through progressive and flexible training legislation. As we have heard so often, the composition of Alberta's work force continues to change with the growth and diversification of Alberta's economy. The intent of this legislation, then, is to position Alberta's industry-oriented training system so that it can respond effectively to the changing dynamics of our work force.

In developing this legislation, we have also been sensitive to the fact that we're dealing with people's livelihoods. People working as carpenters, plumbers, beauticians, and cooks are but a few examples. These people have worked hard to obtain their trade certificates through challenging, technical, on-the-job training programs. We are also sensitive to the business realities of small businesses and employers in rural locations, to the needs of large industries and the kinds of innovations that they're introducing in the workplace to retain their global competitiveness, and to the needs of organized labour to act in the best interests of their membership. Mr. Speaker, I believe we work very hard to strike a successful balance – and I use the word "balance" – between the very different and sometimes conflicting interests of large employers, small employers, organized labour, individuals, and the broader public interest, which must also be considered.

In recognition of the fine system of apprenticeship training which exists in this province, this legislation, I firmly maintain, maintains the status quo in relation to existing trades which make up the current apprenticeship training system. It makes that system more widely available to new occupations and industries. It also strengthens the very effective partnership between employers, workers, and government upon which this system is based and founded.

Alberta's apprenticeship training system is highly regarded throughout Canada and the world, and as I've said before and has been confirmed by hon. members of the opposition as well, it will remain so. It is well known that historically Alberta has trained approximately 25 percent of all apprenticeships and apprentices in Canada. In addition, Alberta provides training to out-of-province apprentices through agreements with many other jurisdictions across Canada. An Alberta trade certificate is recognized and accepted throughout the world, and I emphasize that because it is a strong point of our system and our training. Alberta tradespeople are well-respected for their high skill levels in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere. We have recently established a pilot project in which the Alberta apprenticeship program is offered in the Persian Gulf state of Dubai with technical training offered through our postsecondary institutions. As well, we have an excellent apprenticeship training system.

But what is the basis for this high quality of training? As much as I'd like to say it was because of the existing legislation, that of course being the Manpower Development Act, I can't. The Act has served well over the past 15 years, but it truly no longer reflects the current industrial practice that we see today. That fact aside, the high quality of our training systems comes from other more important factors. The success of the system results from the partnership that exists between employers, employees, and government, and the commitment by all stakeholders to making the system work "on the job every day." Apprenticeship truly then is and will remain industry driven.

Mr. Speaker, a few points about the training infrastructure. Alberta has some of the best technical training facilities in Canada.

Technical training in 48 trades is provided through 16 public and private postsecondary institutions throughout Alberta. They offer almost 800 scheduled technical training classes each year in every corner of the province. An additional some 200 trades-updating short courses are also available to keep people working in the trades up to date with technological advances in their fields.

**3:30**

Now, Mr. Speaker, with regards to the continuity that we're going to be offering and providing, apprenticeship has thrived as a training system in Alberta since World War II and before that in some specific trades, producing successive generations of tradespeople. People who were once apprentices now employ apprentices, carrying on the tradition. We see that so often, in particular in rural Alberta.

[Mr. Moore in the Chair]

Last but not least, the commitment of government. Mr. Speaker, apprenticeship training remains the priority industrial training program of this department and will continue to be so. Despite the pressures of fiscal restraint this government has continued to find resources for initiatives to support apprenticeship, ongoing programs such as a promotional campaign directed to employers and young people entering the trades and, with the co-operation of the Minister of Advanced Education, initiating training for the new trade of crane and hoisting. This type of legislation represents the continued commitment of this government to the maintenance and expansion of this fine training system.

Our purpose in revising the legislation is to make it consistent with current industrial and administrative practices. From the outset we have consistently applied three principles in drafting the legislation. I'd like to review those with the members of the Assembly. First, it must be enabling rather than restrictive. We want to preserve the existing system of apprenticeship and trade designations while providing a legislative basis which allows for future innovative training initiatives. Second, the legislation must be flexible to accommodate the training demands of all industry now and in the future as well. We have to encourage expansion of this training system into areas of employment growth. In many such cases the organization of the workplace and training needs in those industries or occupations differ a great deal from those of the traditional trades that we're more familiar with. Finally, Mr. Speaker, the third: the legislation must be clear to reduce the confusion and frustration which I admit is there and which currently exists amongst stakeholders in the system. I hope that the hon. members of the opposition and others who may wish to speak in support of this Bill will remember that, because I've said before that we're trying to improve and enhance the system.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

There are also some other objectives which we have accomplished in this legislation. The Bill we are considering today is clearly focused on training and enhancing the skill level of the Alberta work force. They are no ulterior motives. Those are the key, main driving factors. We are committed – and I make that commitment as well in this Assembly – to continue to enhance our support for the high standard of skill training now offered, and we also want to encourage more people in industry to recognize the importance of training, to encourage more

individuals to become trained, and to encourage more employers to provide training: a very important facet of this legislation. This legislation provides a basis for these initiatives as well.

We're also providing for an expanded role for industry. I include in that term "industry" the representatives of both employers and employees, Mr. Speaker, because it is going to be important that we have everybody on side, working together collectively. Industry will have a greater influence over the design and operation of the apprenticeship training system. We want to also encourage the expansion of the apprenticeship training model to other occupations and industries.

The development of our existing system of apprenticeship and trade certification took place during a period of rapid economic growth in which the construction industry dominated our approach to training. Mr. Speaker, the construction industry currently accounts for less than one-third of persons enrolled in apprenticeship training. I wonder how many members of the Assembly would realize that. I repeat: the construction industry currently accounts for less than one-third of the persons enrolled in apprenticeship training. What does that suggest? It suggests that we need to change and to adapt and to be more flexible, as I've said. The remainder of those persons are employed in the manufacturing and fast-growing service sector, which have very different approaches to organization in the workplace and training needs and, more importantly to all of us, to safety, which is and always will remain at the top of the legislation.

The apprenticeship training model is one of the most effective methods of providing quality industrial training. We cannot hide it away. This model must be made more widely available to new industries and occupations to encourage greater levels of industrial training throughout Alberta industry. In terms of the impact of this legislation on the actual operation of the apprenticeship system most people will see very little change, and that will surprise an awful lot of members in this Assembly. The essential elements of the existing system have been maintained. I hope all hon. members of the Assembly are listening, Mr. Speaker, because contrary to what they have spread out in malicious rumours and contrary to what has been said and exposed to the media, all existing designated trades will continue. I emphasize that. Participation in apprenticeship will continue to be compulsory in all trades, once again contrary to the belief and the assumption by media and other members.

The extensive industry advisory network composed of the board and apprenticeship committees also will continue. There will be continued government support of the training infrastructure. There are areas where improvements have been made, as I referred to earlier. In particular, Mr. Speaker, there is an increased emphasis on training; for example, a trade certificate will only be granted on the basis of the completion of an apprenticeship program, I think very vital and important to the apprenticeship system.

We have introduced as well a new category of occupations called designated occupations, which will provide for the recognition of industry training and of occupations in industries beyond the designated trades such as I've referred to earlier in my remarks and as well, maybe more directly related, Mr. Speaker, such as in the hospitality and tourism sectors. There will also be a broader mandate for the board which will include designated occupations. An expanded membership on the board will reflect this broader mandate as well.

The provisions for exemptions in the existing legislation have been expanded. It always was the case. It was in the current Manpower Development Act, but we have clarified and taken out the ambiguity. There is authority to give special authoriza-

tion to an individual or a group of persons or employers to accommodate specialized work force or workplace requirements. The partnership between government and industry has been clarified, as I've said, Mr. Speaker, providing greater opportunities for the involvement of employer and employee representatives. There is provision for an independent appeal process, which I feel is a very much valued and important part of the legislation as well.

In concluding my opening remarks, Mr. Speaker, and before we enter what I expect and trust to be a useful and informed debate on this Bill, I think it is important that I emphasize some of the more salient areas in regards to the legislation. I'd like to summarize very briefly. First, the development of this legislation, spanning the careers of five ministers in this portfolio, has not lacked public input. Anyone who has followed its development will tell you that we have consulted extensively with representatives of industry including employers, industry associations, organized labour, and individuals and groups. I would like to say that we have listened to what they have told us and as well to my learned colleagues in the opposition, from both sides of the House.

I've also held personal extensive consultations and have accommodated the key concerns of the Alberta-North West Territories building trades council and other representatives of organized labour. Mr. Speaker, this legislation will support high-quality skill development in Alberta's increasingly diversified economy. We believe it will have the flexibility to support the changing training needs of industry as I have outlined. We are enhancing the partnership between government and industry, which has led to the development of the most effective apprenticeship training program in Canada and will remain so. We're enhancing Alberta's competitiveness by assisting Albertans to be better trained, more highly skilled, and more adaptable so they, too, then can take full advantage of the exciting opportunities available in the healthy and growing Alberta economy, despite the objections of some of the hon. members.

### 3:40

In closing my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I have to comment that a Bill such as this involves the time and effort of many participants. I'd like to thank all of those who provided support to bring the Bill to this stage, both constructive and critical criticism, because that, too, is informing and made up a very important part of the input to the overall legislation. I'd particularly like to thank the Deputy Minister of Career Development and Employment, Mr. Al Craig; the executive director of the apprenticeship and trade certification division, Mr. Don Bell; the chairman, along with the board, of the Alberta Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Board, Mr. John Ritter; and all the others who have spent countless hours bringing it to this stage.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the debate and sincere input by all hon. members. At this time I would withhold any further remarks until hearing from the hon. members.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to today only make a few brief comments. I believe that I'll be making more extensive comments at committee stage, when the New Democrat Official Opposition will have a number of amendments to bring forward for the government's consideration. Perhaps, though, we may be surprised. We may find that the government may have a few amendments of its own following

today's second reading stage, before we go into committee. I would certainly hope that tomorrow I find on my desk sheets of paper from the minister that offer government amendments to certain areas of the Act where I think there are still a couple of problems.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister in his opening comments talked about the concerns he had with respect to some of the rumours that had gone around the province: perhaps they were broadcast by opposition members, perhaps they were broadcast by the media, perhaps they were broadcast by industry, and perhaps they were broadcast by the trade union movement. They didn't come about because we thought that we'd all get together, all of these groups, this unholy coalition, and say, "Well, let's go out and have some fun at the minister's expense; let's go out and have some fun at the expense of the Department of Career Development and Employment." They came about because the minister put out a discussion paper in June 1990 called *The Training and Certification of Alberta's Skilled Work Force*.

MR. WEISS: Discussion.

MR. SIGURDSON: Discussion paper, absolutely. I said that it was, indeed, a discussion paper.

Contained in that discussion paper was a great deal of concern, and quite frankly if you look at it, I'm sure that even the Minister of Career Development and Employment would now admit that contained in here is enough information and evidence to cause all of the alarm that was caused.

Can you imagine if, following the discussion paper, there hadn't been the concerns raised by industry, by the trade union movement, and by the Official Opposition? What would have happened? Perhaps we would have had the kind of proposed legislation that was contained in the back. Perhaps we would have had the problems that we feared. Perhaps those would today be before us in Bill 11 instead of this amended, much improved version that we have before us. I want to point out that in this discussion paper there really was reason for all kinds of Albertans to have concern, because it talked of change in the entire way that we would look at the development of the apprenticeship program.

Instead of having LACs and PACs, we were going to have a board whose primary concern was going to be the economy of the province, not necessarily the trade, the development of the trade, the need to still have to generate ideas that would benefit the trade and the people working therein, not the kind of concern over safety or the environment. That was only one of the areas. There were all kinds of proposals in here about cross-crafting: again, some real concern about that. The harmonization of the economy was also contained in there. You know, when we have the kind of development that we see going on between the two countries that have entered into this free trade agreement and the kind of economic, global harmonization of our economy, there was real reason for that concern, and there still is some concern in Bill 11 to a lesser degree about the training requirements and perhaps still that globalization. Perhaps that harmonization of the economy may still come about, because this could very well be a thin edge of the wedge being driven into the training program.

Mr. Speaker, it's not often that a member of the opposition stands up to give a minister of the government credit, but in this case I want to stand here and pass to this minister congratulations and compliments for having gone out, following the distribution of this paper, and listening to some of the stake-

holders. Now, I know that there would probably be a number of ministers in the front bench, I would suggest, that having put out a paper like this wouldn't have ventured outside of these sacred grounds. They wouldn't have gone out, but this minister, to his credit, went out. Having seen some of the reports that appeared in the papers of screaming apprentices at NAIT, I know that the minister had a tough time. I know that he got an earful from people in the Building Trades Council. I know that he got an earful from a number of people who have a great deal of pride in the certificates that they carry in their wallet. Again, to the minister's credit he went out and listened, brought back Bill 11, and this is to now replace the Manpower Development Act. I've had discussions with a number of people in the industry, in the building trades. Again, some areas are better; some areas are pretty much the same; some areas in here actually cause us some concern.

The minister talked about industry becoming more involved in the training program. Well, we hope that the training is going to continue. We hope that it's going to continue at accredited institutions and that it's going to continue through the apprenticeship program, where people are truly going to learn the trade that they've undertaken to learn.

Then there's the section that deals with the optional certification trades. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, this is an area we've got some concern with, the area that allows one to be employed in an industry that says, "I may not necessarily have the certificate, but if my employer believes that I can do the job, then I'm entitled to do the job." You know, there could be a number of employers out there that go out and hire five or six individuals and say: "Well, we're going to pay these individuals less, because we can call them whatever we want. We can give them the designation that says that they're able to do the job even though they're not properly qualified to do it." They can get away with that. If you're a self-employed individual, you can say: "Well, I'm capable of doing this job. I have no obligation to show you that I hold a certificate that says that I can do the job, but as long as I can tell you that I can lay brick or that I can cook or be a tile setter, if I can do that, then I have the ability to go out and earn my living that way."

There is an area in there where you may compromise your own safety. You may compromise the safety of the public. That's going to be very difficult to enforce. I looked at the section of the Act that deals with offences, and I don't see any sufficient area of protection that prohibits an individual from saying, "I can do something that I'm not qualified to do." So I've got a great deal of concern about that.

3:50

Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a couple of questions to the minister, hoping that he'll be able to answer them today when he concludes debate on second reading. On April 4 in question period I asked the minister if, following the introduction of this piece of legislation, he would go out and hold more meetings with people in the building trades. I hope he would extend that to other stakeholders. I would like to again put to the minister that question and ask when we can expect to have some kind of public forum in and around the province so that those people that have a stake, those people that have an investment in this piece of legislation can come forward and again make their comments to the minister. I think it's important to again have that public forum.

The final question I want to leave with the minister in concluding my remarks is that I'm very interested in seeing the regulations. I think it's vitally important that we see the

regulations for this Act. That may answer an awful lot of the questions that we have, and I hope that the minister is able to provide us with a copy of the regulations very soon, hopefully before we go into committee.

With that I conclude my comments.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to join in the discussion of Bill 11 today. The minister in his opening comments made reference to opposition members' responses to the discussion paper being perhaps inappropriate at the time. I would just like to respectfully remind the minister that that's exactly what the job of the opposition is: to look at proposed legislation and offer suggestions and criticisms and critiques, which we did, which I did in fact back in November. He did listen to those criticisms put forward not only by this member but by other members and by industry, and in fact the proposed Bill we see before us now, Bill 11, to the minister's and to his department's credit I think is a substantial improvement over the draft legislation we saw circulating in the province last year. So my compliments to the minister in that regard.

I think a number of improvements have been made. The minister made comments that Alberta although having somewhat in the neighbourhood of 10 percent of the population of the country educates 25 percent of the apprentices and tradesmen of the country, which I think is a very significant statistic and a very important fact of which this province can be very proud. My comment along that line to the minister is that I would certainly like to see us maintain that kind of a position. I think we are very fortunate right now in regard to producing high numbers of high-quality tradesmen, and I certainly hope that Bill 11 will continue with that tradition that we have created in this province.

There are three general areas that I would like to just deal with in general with this particular Bill. The first one deals with the section on administration. In there the minister may appoint a board comprising a total of some 12 members. I have a concern with that particular section. We only have, as I said, a total of 12 members, four persons representing employers and four persons representing employees of designated trades, but it seems to me that there is a great potential for a number of designated trades to be therefore left off of the overseeing board. The title of this will be the Alberta apprenticeship and industry training board. The question I have to ask is: which designated trades will become members of this board? You can't cover them all; some are going to be left off. I think that's a bit of a concern.

With all due respect to the minister, I would be much happier if in the section that talks about the construction of the board, the board were created from the grass roots up rather than from the department down. The current situation we have, as I understand it, with apprenticeship boards is that the trades themselves designate who shall be their representatives on local boards and local committees, whereas this is kind of turning it around and is coming from the top down. With all due respect, as I said, to the minister, I know that it's not possible for the minister to be fully knowledgeable about all of the trades which will need to be represented on this board, so I am a little concerned with respect to that. However, having expressed that concern, I do want to say that throughout Bill 11 where it talks about the board and about local and provincial apprenticeship committees, one of the key points - I think it's a good point, and again I want to commend the minister on this - is that there

is provision for equal representation on behalf of both employers and employees. In fact, in a number of places it makes particular reference to the fact that there shall be equal numbers. I think that's an appropriate thing to see in legislation such as this, because hopefully in training, in terms of safety, we have to deal with both areas of concern.

When I look at the makeup of that apprenticeship board, there is reference in the legislation to an executive director. I must admit that I'm a little unclear as to the exact structure of the board, because I'm not clear from this whether the executive director will or will not be a member of the board and will or will not have voting rights on that board. The executive director further on has quite a broad scope of authority. I guess it's not quite clear exactly how the executive director is going to tie together with the apprenticeship board, so I hope the minister can make some comments kind of clarifying that area because I think it may be a problem not only for this member but for the public at large.

Again, a strong point in this particular legislation that I think is quite good is that the local and provincial apprenticeship committees are actually given a fair bit of autonomy in terms of creating their own working framework, establishing their own procedures, and so on, and I think that is the appropriate thing to do. We need people who have real knowledge of a trade, whether that's a designated trade or a nondesignated trade, to be able to establish their own procedures.

Another interesting point is that the board must now file annual reports. I think that that goes along with what we in the Liberal opposition have been saying quite consistently: we need to have a clear analysis, a clear documentation, and a clear recording and reporting of where and how dollars are spent. So I think that's an appropriate step to be taking as well.

I have for the minister a question that deals with section 20. It says that, in particular, the health occupations are excluded. I wonder if the minister could explain to me why that is the case. I'm not sure what the rationale for that would be, but in section 20 it says that health occupations shall not be included. I'm a bit puzzled by that particular designation.

Further on we get into the section on trades and occupations. This is part 2. We have division 1, which is trades, and division 2, which is occupations. All through this section, part 2 that is, where it talks about trades and occupations, there is quite a bit of authority given to the Lieutenant Governor in Council. As you read through a variety of sections, the Act states that it shall be the Lieutenant Governor in Council who will designate the occupation, who will provide the programs, and a great number of things will fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of, in essence, the cabinet, the Lieutenant Governor in Council. I'm curious throughout here that at least in the legislation there doesn't seem to be much provision for input either from the board or from the executive director, yet those are the first two entities that are created early on in the legislation. In here, as you read through part 2, that talks about trades and occupations, it seems like the cabinet will be operating much more autonomously and almost without direction from those two bodies. It seems to me that an amendment that could be included would be a phrase in the appropriate place that says: on advice of the board. Now, if we talked about the Lieutenant Governor in Council "on advice of the board shall" and then listed all of the other things, that would make an amendment that would make a lot of sense. I'm throwing this out as a suggestion to the minister right now because what I've heard the minister say is that he wants the best possible Act and that he wants industry and trades and employers and employees all to work together. I think that if

we get that open line of communication occurring, it might be in the best interests of all affected parties. So I'm making that as a suggestion to the minister.

4:00

With respect to optional certification trades and designated trades I notice that there's quite a substantial change in here with respect to exemptions, and this was one of the concerns that I had with the draft legislation circulated in the province last year. Quite an improvement here this year in that it's the optional trades only that can be exempted; there doesn't seem to be an exemption provision for the designated trades. Just a tiny concern, I guess, that I still have is that what would be nice – and it's not listed in here that I can see – is an exhaustive listing of what are the designated trades and what are the optional trades. Is that going to come out in the regulations at some point in the future? I guess, then, my question also is: when would the regulations be coming out? I think it's an important thing. All through the Act there is quite a number of clauses, quite a number of places that refer to the regulations. Really we've got one side of the total control or concerns expressed here in this piece of legislation, but we need the other side as well, and I think it would be appropriate to see that.

So those are basically my concerns with respect to trades and occupations.

The final section that I just briefly would like to make a comment on in this particular piece of legislation deals with the compliance section. I know that in the past there have been quite a number of inspectors that have gone around to ensure that examinations are taking place, that appropriate people are working in appropriate trades, that apprenticeships are following the tradesmen, and so on. But the direction of the government in a number of areas, including this particular one, seems to be that the number of inspections and certifications doesn't seem to be keeping pace with what is actually happening in the workplace. If we're going to create a new piece of legislation, if we're going to create new regulations to complement that legislation, then we also have to be, of course, able to ensure that compliance is being enforced with the legislation. So I guess my concern is simply: how is the inspections process going to be enforced or ensured in the future so that we can make sure that we do have and do maintain and in fact enhance the quality of our tradespeople and the quality of our apprenticeship program?

So I think that there I will cease and again just compliment the minister on making some improvements. I think there is still some room for further improvement, but this is definitely a step in the right direction.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister, in summation.

MR. WEISS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. May I first of all thank the hon. members for their participation and, if I may say, indirect support with caution. I appreciate the remarks, the suggestions that they've made, and I look at them as suggestions. Constructive criticism certainly has never hurt anybody.

I'd specifically, if I may, refer, then, to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont with regards to the comments he mentioned about amendments, Mr. Speaker. I would say and inform all hon. members of the Assembly that it is not my intent at this time to be proposing amendments. I certainly would be looking at possible changes, if there were to be changes, after I've had

some consultation and dialogue with various groups, as indicated by the hon. member.

I want to emphasize, though, too – and I referred to the dictionary, Mr. Speaker – the two particular words that I used throughout and that were emphasized again by both members, the Member for Edmonton-Belmont and the Member for Calgary-North West: the word "discussion" and the word "balance." The word "discussion," a derivative from "discuss," in the dictionary – and that's *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* – refers to an "examination by argument [or] a debate." I think that's exactly what the intent was, but it certainly was never the intent of this minister or our caucus to have at any time suggested that that was the policy or direction of the discussion paper. The word "balance": in referencing once again the dictionary, it says "weigh (a question, two arguments . . . against each other)" but then goes on to say, ". . . have two sides equal." I think that what we've endeavoured to do once again is maintain that balance.

The training requirements: the Member for Edmonton-Belmont refers to the "thin edge of the wedge." There's certainly no intent of any thin edge of the wedge or anything that is not clearly defined within my remarks as well as from all hon. members in relation to this Bill.

All ministers, I might point out – and I'm sure and quite confident of this. I thank the hon. member for his remarks as he refers to my department and responsibilities directly, and I would emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that all hon. members and in particular ministers use an open, public consultative approach. There are many public meetings and hearings that take place. Maybe the hon. member hasn't had the opportunity to attend some of these. I know that in my own constituency on many occasions I've been asked to go out and hear and listen. Of course, we're just going to have the new constitutional committee as well, headed by the hon. House leader. Those are the types of meetings that we know are going on in communities at all times.

AN HON. MEMBER: How about Roy's paper?

MR. WEISS: I am not here to comment on other specifics, Mr. Speaker, but just want to emphasize that I do know that that process takes place.

The optional trades area was mentioned. It's very interesting to hear the remarks. Training, specifically as it is referred to in the Act and as is the intent, would be to provide extra ancillary or add-on training to those areas where it's required, and those specifically relate to some companies that have requested that, both from the employer and the employee side. I emphasize that it's not just coming as a request from the employers but in more cases comes directly from employees saying that while they have a designated trade, they would like to have an opportunity to have the add-on, as it's referred to in industry, to compete in the overall globalization in the marketplace. So it's my intent, Mr. Speaker, to make it more clear and, as I've said before, to clarify the demands put upon it. Those requests for a full in-house training program would go back to the executive director, be reviewed by the apprenticeship board to then proceed under the approval of the minister.

I want to clearly indicate that the two examples used by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Belmont with regards to laying bricks or setting tiles would in this case be poor examples because those are designated trades and certainly would not be add-ons. Those are trade areas themselves, where the persons

would hold their trade certificates. It's only those add-on areas that we refer to and certainly would not take away.

I want to once again, as well, Mr. Speaker, let all members of the House know that from the industry side that I've spoken to and others, they too are committed to safety at all times, and that's generally the main purpose and why the program is being driven: to ensure that safety is taking place within that specific company. So it's a very important one.

The offence section is one that the hon. member perhaps will have an opportunity to go through more thoroughly as we get on to Committee of the Whole stage, and others.

I want to talk about the stakeholders that he refers to, and he used the words "public forums." Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it should go on the record that I will not commit to holding public forums at this stage. I believe that this has gone through the most widely comprehensive public forum debate for a number of years, so I don't want the member misled. I want to be clear about it. I believe that representations can be made best through their MLAs, through members of the opposition who are very clearly knowledgeable about it and who, I'm sure, will work very closely with their groups as well to bring back the information to the House at the time of discussion in committee stage. But I did make a previous commitment to the hon. member, and I will honour that commitment, and that is to meet with such groups as the Building Trades Council and others that I believe have a direct stakeholder's interest with regards to this legislation. We will be working with them. I don't honestly believe that it would be in the best interest of this government, of anybody to commit to public hearings at this stage, because of the cost factor, first of all, and the time factor and because I believe the word "balance" that I talked about earlier is already there. I think that if anything it would weigh on the one side a little heavier than the other, and I'll let the hon. member be the judge of that.

#### 4:10

So I would encourage all MLAs to attend meetings at the request of industry groups or labour/management groups within their constituency, to come back with that information, as we do in all cases throughout this House. I'm sure we have that in many cases. We've heard it in the electoral boundaries process and others where we come back and say, "Well, this is what we've heard within our constituency." I don't want to argue the point with the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, but I think it's only fair that he know the position so that he doesn't leave the Assembly and say, "Well, gee, I thought you were going to go out and do this."

I also want to say with regards to regulations, Mr. Speaker, that I will endeavour to have them as soon as possible. They must realize, of course, as well that with the Act having just been in the final print form, they could not have come out prior to it. We're working to have that in a final stage, and as soon as it's available, we'll be providing that.

I appreciate the hon. Member for Calgary-North West's remarks and suggestions, not just in support of myself. I can't stand here and take the credit, Mr. Speaker. I would like very much to say that these are all my suggestions and my doing, but as I look around this room on all sides of the House, in particular within my own caucus, I must say: thank you, hon. members; thank you very much indeed. It's this caucus support that has provided me the direction in the many, many meetings and hours of discussion that took place within caucus. Members have come back and said, "No, that's not what I hear," or, "No, you're not right," or, "No, we don't believe that this should be

that way." With that advice and that criticism, I think the compliments should be given to the caucus as a whole. I am only following their direction as one of its members.

I certainly will endeavour, as the Act lays out, to almost encompass the words that the Member for Calgary-North West has laid into this Assembly: the high quality and the high numbers. To you, sir, may I compliment you on your goals, because your goals are no different than my goals. I believe that, I accept that, and I believe the hon. member has certainly put it in perspective.

The areas of concern that he relates, in particular the administration side and the board and the makeup of the 12 members: I want to assure all hon. members of the Assembly, in particular the Member for Calgary-North West, that there is an awful lot of meat on that board, because they are going to truly be the seeing eye dogs of this government as it relates to apprenticeship and industry training. I want to emphasize, though, that it would be most difficult if we were to follow the suggestion of the hon. member that we have members from the various trades. Think of it; we have 50-some designated trades to date. Could we have, then, a membership of 50-some? It would be impossible to administer, to control, and to have that number of players present. I think that what we've done is once again – and I hate to be repetitive – have that balance. We specifically and clearly, Mr. Speaker, have it designated and put into the legislation so it can't be changed by regulation. We say clearly that there will be the four, the four, and the four. That provides the protection that the hon. member refers to.

In particular they will be receiving nominations from industry, so it won't be comprised of any makeup just at will but will be industry supported. Once again, the hon. member will think about the overall structure below that as well with the LACs and PACs, where they, too, will have their makeup of members from all sides. So it will be at that level that it'll start to be initiated and work from the bottom up.

The makeup of the board is very important. The executive director will act as the secretariat to the board but will have no voting status, and I want to clarify that. That member is currently and will be a member of my staff from within the department, and it is my intent to leave it at that level. Voting privileges, of course, will not be extended to that member, but the executive director will play a very important part. I want the hon. member to know that the filing of annual reports, I think, is essential. It has to be accountable, and it will be accountable to the board, as he refers.

I really specifically don't know what the hon. member referred to when he talked about the health occupations because, of course, there is a minister responsible and those designated areas are under his jurisdiction, and they would remain so. As I've said earlier, Mr. Speaker, at all times that safety will always remain an overall and a key part of the legislation. We'll continue to work with all members responsible.

I also wanted to talk, Mr. Speaker, about the importance of the advisory board, and I say and use the words "advisory board" because that is what the board is. The board is an advisory board to the minister and to this government, and that's why it's placed in the precedence, in the order that is established with regard to the reporting and the mechanisms that relate to the approvals with the Lieutenant Governor. So it's intended that the board will continue to report to and through the minister, and the minister is directly responsible, through this Assembly, to the Lieutenant Governor. Those processes are put in place in part of the Act because I believe in it. I believe in it, and all hon. members of this caucus on the government side have

supported it and want to ensure that that policy's in place because of the overall importance we place on it.

With regard to the exemption areas that the Member for Calgary-North West referred to, I would just briefly point out, Mr. Speaker, that with regard to the optional trades they remain the same, and I would ask him to bear with me. The regulations will clarify that overall position.

As it relates to the inspections, it's a very difficult area at this time. I used the word and very strongly indicated about the partnership, the overall collective responsibilities that we'll share with industry. As well, I don't believe that through the clarification of the Act we'll see the abuse that was there before because it was so widely misunderstood. I am not going to be in a position to commit to this Assembly or the hon. member that we will have more than the some 50-odd persons we have in that area as far as the inspections branch and that policy now, but it's certainly an area that we're going to continue to look at, to monitor, and to evaluate. I do want to say as well, Mr. Speaker, that it's very important that the system is not abused. It's important for the success of it and to reach the goals that we would have that ongoing commitment, and we'll be, as I say, monitoring it as well. I don't anticipate the abuse that has occurred, as I've said before, because of the changes in the legislation.

I've tried to address some of the various concerns, and perhaps I haven't been as much in detail as hon. members would like. I would close as well by saying that once again I thank them for their input. With that, Mr. Speaker, I look to the deliberations and discussions in committee stage, and at this time I would move second reading of Bill 11, Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act.

[Motion carried; Bill 11 read a second time]

### Bill 28

#### Hail and Crop Insurance Amendment Act, 1991

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on the introduction of Bill 28, the Hail and Crop Insurance Amendment Act, 1991. The amendment to the Hail and Crop Insurance Act will provide for the delivery of the revenue insurance option being offered as a safety net to our grains and oilseeds producers this year. The option offers the stability to that sector on price that they have not had to this point.

The program was designed over a period of the last year by a committee of about 33 persons, 19 of whom were producers, so the producer input to the committee was substantial. I believe that the commitment to offering the stability to that sector on the price side furthers our commitment to safety nets in the grains and oilseeds sector because working together in complement with the crop insurance, which offers yield protection, our grains and oilseeds sector will now from year to year know the value that they will have per commodity per acre.

4:20

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I think that the amendment is quite simple in offering, of course, the opportunity to have revenue insurance included. The majority of the Bill is taken up here with the process of how that is carried out, and it very carefully parallels the process that we have through the crop insurance sector. So I would invite questions or comments from the hon. members at this time.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Vegreville.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 28 is a fairly straightforward piece of legislation. As the minister said, it's intent is to put in place the procedures and the structure for the GRIP portion, the gross revenue insurance plan portion, of the long-term safety net proposal, and it would provide the kind of mandate, I guess, that the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation needs to provide the necessary administration and funding for that program. In that sense it's fairly simple, and we can get into talking about specifics of the Bill at a later stage of debate. I would like to let the minister know, out of courtesy, that I plan on proposing some amendments for part 4 of the Bill, and it would be my intention to let her see them prior to debate so that she can really give some serious consideration to a couple of the amendments.

In second reading we're to discuss the principle, as you so often remind us, Mr. Speaker, and the principle of this is that we get involved with and provide support for the GRIP program, for the gross revenue insurance plan. I think we really have to take a close look at that program and the kind of reaction that I'm sure all rural MLAs have been getting from their constituents about the program and the wisdom of the program. It calls into question, I think, the haste with which the government is moving towards this, and certainly Bill 28 is an example of that.

I don't think anyone would argue with the principle of long-term safety nets. That is something that New Democrats have fought long and hard for in the provincial elections that I've been involved with. In '82 and '86 we had a number of proposals that we campaigned on that were directed at providing some revenue protection for farmers to try and ensure that some sort of structure existed that enabled them to be paid fairly for what they produced, and indeed the concept was elaborated on in more detail in the 1988 campaign platform that we ran on federally. So we're no strangers to the long-term safety net proposal. We've been arguing for it for a long time.

Indeed there's a great deal of cynicism that's developed in the rural community over the years about the way that ad hoc assistance has been developed and delivered. I guess, Mr. Speaker, we'd have to look back to the 1986 announcement of the special Canadian grains program, the first billion dollar deficiency payment that was made to grain producers that fall. Now, there isn't anyone save Mr. Mazankowski and Mr. Devine who doesn't recognize that the sole purpose of that announcement was to help the Conservatives win the election in Saskatchewan in 1986. The program had not been developed. There had been no thought put into who would get money, how much they'd get, when they'd get it, why they'd get it. It was just a billion dollars of aid injected into the farm economy to help Grant Devine win the election. And it did; it helped him win the election. Farmers were dismayed to learn that it took several months for the program to be developed and for money to be delivered, and I think they realized that they were first in a sort of new generation of election time victims whose needs would be fair game in the political realm for politicians vying for votes.

This ad hoc approach has continued, where governments seem to develop programs in response to a particular political need to garner votes at election time: go out to describe your love for rural Alberta, go out and beef up a few programs, harvest some votes, and come back to the Legislature and announce cuts to those programs the year after. Certainly the farm fuel distribution allowance is a good example of a program that has been

monkeyed around with over a period of years by this government. So the need for long-term safety nets is something that I think we all recognize and share.

I do have some concern that there is some political motivation behind the GRIP program. The minister knows full well that the program is not ready, that it's not fully developed, that it's not understood as well as it should be by farmers. There are changes that are being made and hopefully more that will be made. It's not quite ready, yet it's being foisted on the farming community. I suspect it's because of Grant Devine's election needs. It's almost five years since the last time they sought a mandate from the people in Saskatchewan. They're going to have to do it again sooner or later. They've got about a six- or seven-month window of opportunity. You know, Mr. Devine wants to be able to campaign on their new commitment to farming people in Saskatchewan, and I think that's driving the haste with which we see this program being developed.

Mr. Speaker, the minister referred to the widespread consultation that went on prior to the development of this program. Indeed, the minister in this Legislature and her counterparts, ministers in Saskatchewan and Ottawa, have answered questions criticizing or raising concerns about the GRIP program by saying: "There was producer involvement. Producers helped design the program, so how can you possibly criticize it." Well, even these producers who sat on the committee have acknowledged that their input has been minimal since the end of last summer, that they felt a lot of changes were made, a lot of the meat put on the bones of the program after the consultation period was finished. I'm sure the minister saw the articles in the *Western Producer* where some of the people who sat on that committee said that they felt betrayed to some degree, that some of the things they had fought for in the program didn't materialize in the actual details, and that changes were being made. Now that the program is being announced to farmers, they're expressing concern that the government is falling back on the 19 producer representatives and saying: "Well, they did it. Don't talk to us; talk to them."

I should point out that there was a minority report released at the time by one of the farm representatives. The representative from the National Farmers Union did not endorse the final interim proposal, because he realized that a program that did not deal in a fairly direct way with the actual cost of production would in the long term and perhaps even in the short term be subject to failure, that it would be inadequate in terms of addressing this very serious need for a long-term safety net in Canadian agriculture.

The consultation process is something that the ministers allude to, but I don't think it has been extensive enough. I think we need to recognize that whenever these meetings were held around the province – and surely some of the Conservative MLAs who represent rural areas are aware that there were meetings held in communities in their constituencies where government representatives came out and attempted to explain the program, and the reaction, quite frankly, was not very good. Producers were upset. They didn't like what they were hearing about the program. They didn't understand some of the calculations that were being used or the justification for those calculations.

I can refer the minister to one meeting in the hall at New Buchach, north of Innisfree. I gather that there were close to 300 producers concerned about their futures that crammed into that hall to hear the meeting, and when a straw vote was taken at the end of the meeting, only six indicated that they'd be

taking the program. So the concern, confusion, and discontent has got to be something that the government acknowledges.

Now, there has been some effort to make changes, and I'm certainly prepared to acknowledge that. The minister would know full well about the work that's been done in the province of Alberta with respect to trying to garner some additional protection for high production farmers, for people who've made a real effort to increase their production and may not have participated in the traditional all-risk crop insurance program. There are some additional portions of the program that they can now access, and I think some of those are positive. So changes are being made, and it's everyone's hope that more changes will in fact be made to the program before it takes its final form.

#### 4:30

So we have this scenario with a program that isn't fully developed, isn't embraced, isn't understood by producers on the one hand, and on the other hand, we've got governments desperate to implement it, so desperate, in fact, that they've gone ahead and cut many programs of support for agriculture. They didn't renew in the province of Alberta the farm credit stability program, even though there were 800 to a thousand young farmers that were on the waiting list who could have benefited by that assistance, who would have made an attempt to build their futures in rural Alberta, to move their families back or raise a family there. That program is no longer available to them because the minister said that it's served its useful purpose; it's not needed anymore. In spite of the fact that the average age of farmers is continuing to increase in the province and that an alarming number of young people are being forced to abandon their futures, he said it's not needed. So that's one program that was not renewed, I believe, because the government was trying to herd people into the GRIP corral.

We had announcements in the budget, Mr. Speaker, where the government was announcing some additional, dramatic cuts to the farm fuel distribution allowance program and the complete elimination of the fertilizer price protection plan because they're not going to be needed in the future, according to the government, because we will have GRIP. Well, I'd like to suggest to the minister that those cuts were ill-timed and very callous because they were made in anticipation of farmers' involvement in a program that they weren't involved in. The minister knows full well that the sign-up at the time of the budget was very low, that in spite of the threatening demeanour of the Conservative government in the province of Alberta, who is saying, "We're going to cut these programs, and if you don't get involved in GRIP, you ain't got nothing," in spite of those threatening overtures, farmers were still reluctant to get involved in the program, and with good reason. They recognized that what they would be committing themselves to, if they signed up for the GRIP, is a guaranteed four years of paying premiums that they recognize are too high on every acre that they farm.

What would they get in exchange? Well, a program that may be subject to change, a program that may guarantee that the price protection that you get on crops will continue to decline as the low prices of the 1990s get factored into the indexed moving average price formula and the better prices of the '70s get dropped off. Farmers are being asked to, in a sense, buy a pig in a poke here, Mr. Speaker, where we're going to cut off traditional programs of support and try and get you to accept this GRIP program even though you're not confident in it, you don't really believe that it's going to address all of the concerns that you have.

I don't like that approach. I would have much preferred the government to say: "Okay, we're going to maintain these other programs, but we're going to encourage people to get involved with GRIP. We're going to carry on with the consultation process. We're going to try and develop a really first-class program that's understood, embraced, and responsive so that farmers will get involved by choice rather than coercion." But it wasn't working. So what do we have? The farmers aren't responding to being pushed into the GRIP corral, Mr. Speaker, so we have the federal Minister of Agriculture, now the Don of Finance, coming along and making a splashy announcement: \$400 million to farmers. Now, that makes quite a headline, I guess, if you're an urban Canadian. You flip open the paper, "\$400 million to farmers," and you think: "Oy oy oy; more money for those farmers. Four hundred million dollars; when's it going to end?"

Well, Mr. Speaker, I was offended by that announcement, as were many of the people I represent, because they recognize that not one penny of that \$400 million went into their pockets to help them pay for traditional inputs this spring. Not one penny addressed the desperate income situation, the cash flow situation that farmers are confronted with because of the international trade wars and low commodity prices.

MR. SPEAKER: This is hail and crop insurance?

MR. FOX: Yes, it is, Mr. Speaker. This is specific reference to the GRIP program. Thank you for your input.

It's of great concern to producers, who felt that that \$400 million which was being offered by the federal government to bribe farmers to participate in the GRIP program did not put any money into their pockets. All it did, in fact, was lower a cost that you never had before, and somehow farmers are supposed to feel thankful. We didn't have these premiums before for the GRIP program. We didn't need to sign up to something that compelled us to participate for four years even though we haven't seen the contracts, even though the program is subject to change. We're being asked to commit ourselves for four years, and now the government's going to come along and bribe us to get into it. Well, lowering a cost that you never had before, quite frankly, isn't the kind of assistance that farmers were looking for this spring. They were looking for something more from the third-line-of-defence committee, as the ministers wanted to refer to it, that would actually help address the desperate income situation, and the ministers failed to do that with their \$400 million announcement. So here we've got the scenario where the provincial government's trying to push farmers into the GRIP corral. The minister federally comes along and tries to pull them in by a little bit of bribery or enticement. "We'll lower your costs. Come on in; come on in." I think both highlight for me the fact that the program is not developed enough to be fully implemented, that more work needs to be done.

I'd be very interested to hear the minister's response, because I know she's got letters of concern from producers all across the province, that she's got some representations, I hope, from other MLAs who represent rural areas about the kind of feedback they're getting from farmers in the coffee shops, the grain elevators, and the implement dealers and through the network that the Department of Agriculture maintains through their DA offices and the crop insurance offices. The concern is very real, and it's something that we as legislators have to be prepared to respond to and address.

I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that I suppose I would be willing to accept the government's movement in a very hasty way towards cutting out traditional programs of support for agriculture, both federally and provincially, and I could even endorse this sort of Reform/Conservative coalition that seeks to end programs of support for agriculture if governments at the same time weren't working so hard to undermine all of the things that farmers have developed over the years that help them secure a fair price in the marketplace. Conservative government strategy both provincially and federally has been very deliberate, Mr. Speaker, to undermine the programs and structures that farmers have developed, that your father and grandfather helped develop to help secure a fair price in the marketplace for farmers.

The hon. Member for Wainwright doesn't seem to acknowledge that, but I'd like his constituents maybe to describe to him what they think about the diminished powers of the Canadian Wheat Board. I'd like them to talk about what they think about the impact of free trade on the grain economy, where we've lost our two-price system for wheat.

MR. SPEAKER: Let's just stay on this.

MR. FOX: It's all part, Mr. Speaker, I submit, of . . .

MR. SPEAKER: You may think so. You may think so.

MR. FOX: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, we're here to debate income protection, gross revenue income protection for farmers. The alternative to that is that we try and develop something that secures a fair price for farmers in the marketplace. That is the principle of this Bill, and I'm taking exception to part of it, if I may.

I think it's very important that elected members across this country recognize that what farmers want, what farmers need more than anything else is some sort of mechanism and structure to help them compete in the marketplace and secure fair prices in the marketplace. To the government that – the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs shrugs his head and groans because he can't understand why farmers would want to be paid fairly.

MR. HORSMAN: Socialism. I can't understand socialism. I agree with you on that.

MR. FOX: Now, this is an interesting comment. The minister says he can't stand socialism. He describes anything . . .

MR. HORSMAN: I can't understand it.

MR. FOX: He can't understand farmers wanting to work together to secure a fair price in the marketplace. Now, it's a simple concept.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, both sides of the House. Perhaps through the Chair.

MR. FOX: Through the Chair, Mr. Speaker; yes. I'm sorry. I shouldn't respond to his taunts.

Mr. Speaker, the principle of free people in a society working together to improve their economic and social situation is one that I would hope all members would understand and support. That's what we advocate for farmers, that people be allowed to exert collective influence in the marketplace so they can compete with other groups that exercise collective influence, like the grain

cartel, like the oil cartel, like all of the other business cartels that fund the Conservative Party. All we're asking for is some balance of power on the other side. In terms of gross revenue income protection, the best thing we could be working for . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: It's not even in the Act.

MR. FOX: I might make amendments to the Act.

The best thing we could be working for is a program that helps farmers secure fair prices in the marketplace. Because the government is working so hard to undermine those traditional programs, on the one hand, and to take away all of the programs of support for cost of inputs on the other, all in exchange for GRIP, Mr. Speaker, I have some very serious concerns about this program.

If the Member for Wainwright is so concerned and knowledgeable about this, maybe he'll stand up and tell me how producers in Wainwright have responded to the GRIP program, because I can send him copies of letters from producers in Irma, for example, who expressed page upon page upon page of concern about the GRIP program. I invite his comments.

4:40

MR. FISCHER: I'd like to speak in support of Bill 28. I think it's an excellent beginning of a good insurance program. I think, Mr. Speaker, that we have to look at this Bill 28 and our GRIP program, the revenue insurance program, as strictly insurance. I realize what farmers have had to put up with in the past few years, and we, especially on the eastern side of the province, have been very unfortunate regarding moisture conditions in the past five years. That has added to an awful lot of the problems that we've had in that country, and then when we take the price of the grain besides the lack of production, it has made for some pretty big hardships on some of our farm people there.

We have had more and more people understand this program and sign up with this program. A lot of our contract holders now have signed up and realize that it is a lot better than the first announcements and what they were led to believe at the beginning. When the Member for Vegreville said that these people didn't understand it, I couldn't help but think that they had an opportunity as soon as the literature was out to get it and get a good understanding of it. There are not many farmers there that haven't gone over that with a fine-tooth comb now, and they can pick apart some of the things that aren't quite right yet, but that is the very reason why we put in there that there would be some changes coming up.

Yes, it has come in in a fair hurry, you might say, by government standards, but we do have to have something this spring. People's expectations, I think, for money in the pocket, as I hear this phrase, are really - I guess maybe they were led to believe that there was going to be money in the pocket, but they want to stand on their own two feet, and they know perfectly well that if you're going to keep pushing money into people's pockets, you're going to run their lives and their farms as well. We don't really want to see us get into a supply managed industry in this country for our grain as of yet.

If we have average crops in this province, the marketplace is going to be where the money comes from yet. I hope that that is the case. This revenue insurance program is certainly a nice backstop if we don't get the bushels and we don't an increase in grain, but I have a little more optimistic view of grain prices and so on than what our Member for Vegreville has. It's not going to remain way low and negative forever. I think he's been around enough years to know that the prices do go up and

down, and they will always go up and down regardless of the things that governments do, unless they take over entirely, and then our production goes down.

I do have a concern or two with this program. I guess that in a lot of cases the premiums are fairly good compared to what you would pay for hail insurance. I know in some areas where we would pay \$15, \$17, or even \$20 an acre for hail insurance, we can get our GRIP insurance cheaper than that. What is that going to do to our index in the following years, and just how is it going to affect our index so that we don't run out of coverage in the years to come because of a hailstorm?

Of course, the other thing that many are worried about is the fact that it's going to be quite a while before we get paid the final payment. It would be nice if we could say that we're going to put an interim payment out there of, say, three-quarters or two-thirds or four-fifths or something of the income that is owed. I know it would be a little bit difficult, but if we go out and measure up the bins, we know what production he's got, and maybe we could say that we could pay them two-thirds of that money that is owed. Of course, the less the production, the more the program would put in, and if the farmer has to wait for a bigger percentage of that, interest could hurt quite badly while he's waiting.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Another problem that seems to be coming up - and I haven't really had a chance to get some answers for that - is that some of the individual coverage indexing has been fairly inconsistent. Some fairly high producers got pulled down fairly quickly on their indexing and are concerned about the unfairness with that. I'd like the minister to enlighten us just a little bit on that part of it.

I just would like to close by saying that this program, in my view, is a nice program. We're having problems right now, and it's going to be a good program for the farmers in the short term. I do not want to see us get the program too rich so that farmers get too dependent on it. We've gone through that whole crop insurance abuse system in the past years, where they learn how to use it and depend on it and have a hard time getting along without it. I'm very concerned about that, and of course it comes with the richness of the program and the controls that we have on that part of the program.

With that, I'd like to say that I support your Bill, and I hope that other members will as well. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In speaking to this Bill, may I join with the Member for Wainwright in congratulating the minister, no matter how reluctantly she may have been dragged into the last half of the 20th century. Nevertheless, she is here and presenting this Bill. It's something that I feel that the federal government has pushed this government into, which is all right. The reasons why the provincial government has converted are not really important so much as the fact that they have converted and are now looking at a form of insurance that is at least partly divorced from commodity pricing. Certainly it's a step in the right direction.

However, I've read the Bill quite thoroughly, and I had some of my farm advisers look through it. I try to make these suggestions, Mr. Speaker, without any political animosity, because as you know, for some years I used to get a bad time

throughout the rural hustings talking about negative income tax, which was the same type of idea. It was insurance of income, a contributing form of insurance for the farmers. Labour had been able to get it many years ago in their unemployment insurance, RRSPs for small businessmen and labourers, so I think it is about time that farmers got something very similar.

4:50

It also has the positive side, Mr. Speaker, of maybe moving in the direction of income guarantees that are divorced from the commodity, which in turn give us trouble with GATT. The ad hoc solutions often got us into trouble with GATT in the grains industry. The minister, I'm sure, will tell anyone if they ask her that about 70 percent of our income comes from exports, so we have to be very aware of any system that goes with GATT. To that extent I salute the government for working along this direction. I don't feel that they have gone far enough.

NISA, for instance, the net income stabilization account, is not included in the Bill, and I really don't see why not because just in the last couple of weeks the federal government has come out and said that they will pay the province's share. NISA should be in the Bill; it's an essential part of the program. In fact, I get the largest input from rural members, and it seems to me that they want to have NISA, and I can't understand – well, I can understand. The provincial government I think has been just a bit niggardly or chiselling when they don't put the NISA program in. Admittedly, the federal government is going to pick up their share but not all of their share. The fact is that the average grain farmer will suffer about \$3,000 to \$3,500 in loss in his NISA account under the system, which, by the way, I have not heard either minister or the government say whether they're going to participate in or not, but I'm almost sure they wouldn't be foolish enough not to. If they don't participate and take the federal government's offer of paying for 100 percent of the province's share in NISA in the first year, half in the second, and none in the third, it is partly at a cost to the farmers themselves. The farmers themselves will lose about \$3,000 or \$3,500 a year in savings that would have been deposited to their net income stabilization account.

So I feel that the net income, that part should be attached to this Bill, and I think we need an all-comprehensive Bill.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Why?

MR. TAYLOR: Because NISA and GRIP work hand in glove. Saskatchewan has put it in together, even old Saskatchewan. Manitoba said they would if they had the money, so the Minister of Agriculture has gone ahead, Mr. Speaker, and will pay the money for NISA.

I feel that I want to see this government putting in NISA, not sitting back and riding on the back of the federal government, because it is costing the provincial farmers, the average grain farmer, \$3,500 a year. Now, if the minister, when she gets up, can give the promise to this House that NISA will be put in in a different Bill, okay. But I'm just saying that unless it's with this Bill, I'm not prepared to support it because I do not trust this government to go ahead and bring another Bill in with NISA. I think this Bill should be withdrawn and amended so that NISA should be put in.

Let's go on a step further. It has already been mentioned by the Member for Vegreville, as he cruised and flew over the whole of Alberta back and forth and covered everything in sight, that input costs have been already increased to farmers under the guise that the GRIP program is supposed to help.

Well, personally, I think this is a dirty trick, to say you're going to get the pot of money for financing GRIP by putting the fuel tax back and the fertilizer costs up. Input costs should always be kept down in any manufacturing enterprise or any industry enterprise, whether it is in farming or elsewhere.

Let's move on a bit. In the GRIP program itself – and I don't expect it would be covered in this legislation because it's a broader thing – I would like to have seen some statement from the government on how they're going to use the funds that have recently been allotted to try to take marginal farmland out of production. If there has been an effort to try to wed that grant, in the desire that nearly everybody in this House has in agricultural affairs to see marginal land taken out of production, couldn't that have been put into this system also? In other words, what I'm trying to get at is that I think it's a poorly drafted, hastily drafted Bill. Nevertheless, maybe we could go on.

We also have, Mr. Speaker, a very interesting thing, I think, from the point of view of what you might call civil rights or freedoms. They are expecting the farmer to sign up for three years or four years – whatever way you want to look at it – but the province and the federal government have the right to change the terms of the agreement. Now, surely any proper agreement, if the farmers are going to sign a three-year commitment to stay in GRIP, should be that the farmers themselves can back out if the federal and provincial governments were to change it.

Now, I don't argue that the federal and provincial governments shouldn't have the right to change it, because I think this is probably the initial step, and I hope, as one that's often really supported the former Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Mazankowski, on this issue – I think he's really on the right track. But I do think that what we should be looking at is some system – there again I suggest to the minister in all honesty – some sort of an appeal or an independent review committee so that if the conditions of GRIP change enough in the term of the farmer's contract over the next three years, the farmer could opt out. It seems wrong for anybody to unilaterally say to a second party: "Look; I want your recognition in blood, your signature. You can't back out. You can't pull out. If you do, you have to stay out another couple of years before you apply, but I can change the contract as time goes on."

Now, that's just eminently unfair, and I think particularly to a Conservative government, which takes some pride – and I don't blame you. I think one of the earlier speakers on that side of the House got up and mentioned about the human rights introduced back in the early '70s by the Lougheed government, one of the first things to come in. So you must be worried and concerned about rights, and it doesn't seem right that a farmer could be hooked in that area. So I would suggest there again redrafting the Act or doing something. If you don't do it, I will be proposing an amendment, but you have many more people than I have, maybe not as smart, working as assistants. Nevertheless, you have lots of them on the government payroll, and they could draft that amendment. I think it's something that you would get all the accolades for as you went around through the areas, because I'm sure if you check farmers, they are very concerned about the fact that this is a one-way contract, not a two-way contract. Now, it may well be that you can explain it all away, but if you can, there's a bunch of people that I know that will be very surprised.

Next we can come to the part about interest payments. A farmer will be required to pay his premiums before there is a payout. However, I realize the Act says that come November 1

– I called Ottawa on this, by the way, Madam Minister. I may stand corrected, but I have found on these things I'm usually about a week ahead of your department. November 1 the clock starts, but there's no intention of paying out the money on GRIP until February or March, which is fine; governments are slow. But it seems eminently unfair again that somebody that's going to have to call on GRIP because of crop failure will suddenly be charged interest from November to March, about four months' interest. Now, you may argue, "Well, we're not going to repossess the farm because they owe interest; we'll just take it out of the payments when they come." But even then it's unfair to take interest payments from a farmer or anybody that holds insurance because the insurance payment was late, Mr. Speaker, and that's what they'd be doing. I can see charging interest to somebody that doesn't get a payout from the GRIP plan. That makes logic, but if they're going to get a payout – maybe we even want to run the books from November through to when the payout comes out – the interest should be forgiven if there is a payout, and that's something that is not in the Bill.

Now, I could go on into a number of other areas, Mr. Speaker, but I wanted to just talk about the basic principle of the Bill. I feel it could be recrafted or sent back to be done and brought up to date. This Bill is a lovely Bill if everything had stopped 60 days ago, but send it back to your department and say, "In view of what has been announced, in view of the fact that we can now be part of NISA, in view of the fact that it is eminently unjust to tell the farmers that we can change their contract but they can't change ours . . ." Just redraft it a little bit.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

5:00

MRS. McCLELLAN: In summation. Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know where to start. I'd like to start, I think, with the last speaker. I sit here so impatiently because I really cannot understand how so many meetings can be held, so much information can be out, and such a simple Bill before the Legislature can have gone past my hon. colleague from Westlock-Sturgeon. I am really at a loss.

MR. FOX: Because he's still in the last half of the century.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, I'd like to take the opportunity to bring him up to date a little bit anyway.

Certainly the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon raised a very important point when he discussed GATT, and that's sort of where it ended. Why is NISA not in the Bill? Well, my question is: why would it be in the Bill? Anybody that has looked at the NISA program would understand that it is an account that a producer will set up on an individual basis as if it were an RRSP. It would not be operated by the hail and crop corporation, whom this Bill is attached to. In fact, the Alberta government doesn't have any part, if it were in the program, in the administration of the Bill. It is between the producer; it is voluntary on the producer's side. The producer would have an account, and he would work through that. That's why it's not there, nor would it be there, nor, I doubt, is it in Saskatchewan's Bill or Manitoba's or any province's. That's why it isn't there.

The question on input costs . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Do you agree with that?

MR. FOX: I agree with her.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Yes, I would think so.

Input costs are factored into the program. I'd like to go to some of the comments from the Member for Vegreville, and I'll come back to the sign-up part for the program. I know that the hon. member made some comments about the haste of the program being introduced, but I also know that the hon. member has a concern for the grains and oilseeds sector, and I know that he is not suggesting to this House that we should have delayed implementation of an insurance program for that sector, which frankly could not, I don't think, in my opinion and certainly in this government's opinion, have gone through another year of low prices as they had last year.

The reason the program was fast-tracked – and we admit that it was – was that in December of 1989 there was a national agricultural meeting called Growing Together, and a safety net committee was struck to examine all safety nets in all sectors. There was a decision made at that time in response to the grains and oilseeds sector to put the grains and oilseeds safety net on a fast track. That request came from the sector, saying: ministers of agriculture across Canada, this sector cannot wait until a complete review is done of all safety nets. Hence, the committee was struck with producer involvement, and the producers came back with some recommendations to the various levels of government. The hon. member may be correct that the producers did not get everything they wanted in it, but then we don't always. We have to try and produce something that's manageable. The main thing that they asked for was a program that offered stability for a long term to the sector. They asked for the design to be on a long-term indexed moving average price. There were two choices, 10-year or 15-year, and obviously all members know that if we had taken 10, the price would have been much lower this year on the support, particularly on wheat, so the decision was made to go 15.

The other thing they asked and said was that the producers could pay one-third of the premium costs. Indeed, that is what they do pay under it. The other thing they asked was that input costs be recognized in the factoring of the formula, and indeed that is. The farm input cost index is factored in on a western Canada price rather than a national price, recognizing that we do have different costs such as transportation and other costs that can affect our input costs. That is factored into the long-term moving average that will be set there.

The producers have options, and if you read the Bill, I don't think – and I could be wrong; I've read it – that it says GRIP anywhere in it. This Bill allows for the revenue insurance option to be added to the responsibilities of the crop insurance corporation. In fact, what occurs this year is that farmers have options; they can purchase crop insurance, which is yield protection. I would remind hon. members that we did considerably enhance the crop insurance program last year, and I think it was accepted that we did move a long ways to enhance that program last year. They can choose crop insurance, which will protect yield. They may choose revenue insurance, which is what this Bill offers, which protects price. They may choose both, or indeed their fourth option is that they may choose none of the above. I think it's very important that we offer our producers choices. If they require the protection, it is there for them to purchase. It is an insurance program; it is not a subsidy program. I don't think farmers want it any way other than a voluntary program.

I also don't believe it would be in our best interests or anybody's best interests to introduce a program that guaranteed you an income for producing something that there isn't a market for. Hence, obviously, if prices were to decline, so would the

support price. But it is believed that this will offer producers an opportunity for transition, to change perhaps into other commodities or diversification for their farming operation. I don't believe any member in the House on either side would want to see us introduce a program that would encourage our producers to produce a product that we cannot sell or that there is not a market for.

I share the concern of the member on the understanding of producers of the program, but I think that has been answered to a large extent in the past few weeks. Obviously, it is new. I think it's fair to say that producers who have been involved in crop insurance did not have the difficulty in understanding this program. We did have to make some adjustments to our program to take into account the high yield producers that had not previously taken out crop insurance. I think we've done that as responsibly as we could.

The sign-up for the program and the producers' necessity to stay in and our ability to opt out is . . . I can't think of a very good word for how foolish that is. Indeed, if a person took the time to read the agreement or the contract, it states very clearly that any significant change to the contract would relieve the producers of their commitment to that contract.

MR. TAYLOR: Why doesn't it say so?

MRS. McCLELLAN: It does in the contract. This is a Bill that is enabling legislation to enable the hail and crop corporation to deliver revenue insurance. Of necessity, there are regulations that go with this Bill. Otherwise, every time we wanted to make a change or introduce an improvement or enhancement, we would be back here rather than being able to do it through the regulatory process. That is not uncommon in any legislation. This is enabling legislation. The member can whip down to any crop insurance office – there are a lot of them in Alberta – and get a copy and make himself familiar with it.

5:10

MR. FOX: It's Westlock-Sturgeon you're talking about.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Yes, I am. I'm back to that.

I should also say that the reason this program is an interim program is because it is recognized, as the hon. Member for Vegreville mentioned, that it was introduced – I wouldn't say without a lot of thought and deliberation, but it was introduced recognizing that there may have to be changes made to the program. Some of those changes could be forced upon us by GATT or indeed, in fact, by issues that are identified, such as the high-yielding producer that came to the forefront. But the producer does have the opportunity through his contract if there is a significant change.

However, I am sure that the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon is not suggesting that we should have a program that is intended as a long-term insurance program that a person can hop in and out of. If you wanted to guarantee failure of this working, do exactly that, because the integrity of the program would immediately be in jeopardy.

MR. TAYLOR: I said an independent review committee.

MRS. McCLELLAN: Hon. member, you get a lot of information from the *Western Producer*, you should read some more of it. There is a national committee that has been struck that has membership from each province. Remember, this is a national safety net program. That committee will monitor and will work

with the producers, the producer groups, for input into program refinements, and they will report later on in the year as to any recommendations they might have that would improve this program.

This government is committed to developing a safety net program for its grains and oilseeds sector. We have a significant commitment to the agricultural producers in this province, and I think even the reductions that were made were made in a very responsible way. The reduction to farm fuel: first reduction April 1, second reduction November 1, which is after harvest. The farm fertilizer program, which terminated naturally, terminates July 31 after producers have their purchases for this spring. I would remind hon. members of the significant contribution we have given to producers in credit, and we continue to under ADC; the Crow offset program; the tripartite program for red meats, honey, now feeder lambs; the significant contribution we have given in reacting to the droughts; the continued exemption of our farming community from the provincial fuel tax; the commitment of over \$100 million to a safety net program in crop insurance and revenue insurance; and the development of a diversified economy in agriculture in this province.

I said a few days ago in the House and I say again that our commitment to agriculture in this government is unprecedented in any province in Canada. I think hon. members that represent farming communities, Westlock-Sturgeon, should really become much more familiar with the programs so they can discuss them on a basis of some understanding, because if that's the story going on in your area from you, it's no wonder they're confused.

The concerns in the program that the hon. Member for Wainwright identified. Payments in the fall have been discussed, and definitely . . . [interjections] I wish hon. members would listen. There is a commitment from the federal and provincial participants in this program that they will assess the commodity sales in the fall, and if it is realistic, they will look at an interim payment. I believe the interim payment schedule is very flexible as to the size of it.

Premiums. Although they are due the day you sign up, we do not charge interest on their premiums until November 1. I don't know of any insurance that I can buy on my house or my car that I don't have to pay the premium before it burns down or I wreck it, so I think we're being more than fair and more than responsive to the community.

The indexing we knew would cause some consternation. If we'd had two or three more years of indexing before a revenue option came in, it would probably have been a little bit easier. But, hon. member, you have to remember that if people want to index up, if they want to accelerate up, so also must we index down. We are doing that, working with the various risk areas as carefully as we can so that we don't affect somebody unfairly.

Mr. Speaker, I think I've covered most of them. In any case, I've taken fairly extensive notes, and as always I would commit to passing on any further information for members. I just want to say again that although there may be some concern that this program was developed in haste, it took a year, and I would say that the members on that committee worked diligently to put it on the fast track. The concern that I heard from farmers in the past was that this program might not be ready for spring. I think the fact that it is, although the farm community has taken some time to become familiar with it, is certainly of great comfort to them, at least in a year when we know that wheat prices, although they increased somewhat, are decreasing again. They're pleased that it's in place. It is not a subsidy program; it is an insurance program.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to discussion of the program at the committee level.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill 28 read a second time]

**Bill 30**  
**Securities Amendment Act, 1991**

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce for second reading Bill 30, the Securities Amendment Act, 1991.

When I was before this Legislature in 1989 with amendments to the Securities Act, I indicated to the House at that time that because of this dynamic, changing market, because of the fast-moving securities field, where we have 24-hour-a-day trading now possible throughout the world and where there are constant changes taking place, I would likely be back. True to my word, I'm here with further amendments to the legislation which is before the House this afternoon.

As you know, we have gone through a series of changes to make sure that our securities markets are there in the fairest and most honest of circumstances. In 1988 the Securities Commission was changed, reorganized, split in two so that we clearly defined the semijudicial functions of the board versus the investigative branch of the agency. They were given more resources. In fact, the Securities Commission has had an increase of 71 percent in its resources between 1987 and this year's budget. Then in 1989 with the legislation, we introduced strong penalties for insider trading and new rules for takeover bids. We moved further in a policy sense with A Blueprint for Fairness and established a conflict of interest policy. We signed an intergovernmental agreement to ensure that information flowed between the various jurisdictions in order to catch those individuals who might misuse the system.

**5:20**

Last year in this House we passed the Financial Consumers Act, the first Bill of its kind in the British Commonwealth to require basic information to be disclosed for the purchaser of many financial products and for that information to be given in plain, understandable language and form. The Bill also dealt with a series of other issues related to the financial consumer.

The Bill we have before us today, Mr. Speaker, is also a very major step towards ensuring the fairness and the honesty of the securities markets in the province of Alberta. It looks forward to those future years when we will be more active yet in the area and where Albertans will be investing and taking those investment decisions on our stock exchange and in our securities market.

To briefly speak to the principles inherent in Bill 30. First of all, futures contracts will now be regulated. In past years we have not regulated that area in this province. It has been not a large market area and one where we have in the past felt individuals should determine whether or not they were willing to take the risk on their own. Clearly, today if we look at the phone books in Calgary and Edmonton, we will see dramatic increases in the number of futures commodity dealers in the province. In talking to the chairman of the Alberta Stock Exchange, they have had concerns that while we regulate, determine educational qualifications, disclosure requirements, information dispersement for other areas, we have not done that with futures commodities trading. This Bill in many of its sections adds exchange contracts, and that is a broad way of defining futures commodities contracts so we can catch all of

those areas that are required for the proper information and for proper scrutiny. That is a major change.

Mr. Speaker, the other general area of change in this piece of legislation is giving the Securities Commission more teeth. At the current time the Securities Commission has only two, albeit powerful, mechanisms for dealing with abuses in the marketplace. They can order cease trade orders for companies that are not operating in accordance with the law. They can as well deny exemption orders, but they haven't other sanctions through which they can deal with individuals abusing circumstances and with respect to companies who might improperly deal with market circumstances.

Today we are suggesting to this House that we add to that arsenal the ability for the semijudicial Securities Commission to stop somebody from being an officer or a director of a company or to insist that an individual cannot hold that office until they fulfill certain obligations or if they have in fact contravened significant parts of the legislation. We also are proposing to give the Securities Commission the ability to recover costs of investigations and hearings, another major deterrent for companies who would want to abuse the system or not adhere to the specific provisions of the Act. Those particular aspects would be dealt with in regulation. A schedule would be developed through which the commission could charge individuals or companies amounts that it cost the public of Alberta to in fact deal with the abuses that had been determined by the commission.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, there is also in the new legislation an area which makes the appearance of misleading trading against the law. It is very difficult in our marketplace to catch and convict those individuals who try to manipulate the marketplace. This will allow those members of the Securities Commission involved in the area of investigations to have this one more tool to deal with the appearance of misleading advertising. By way of example, if a company's stock is moving up rapidly on the Alberta exchange, but the trading is taking place perhaps between an individual and a couple of companies that that individual owns, and there is no real increase in value but only an attempt to manipulate the price level so that other, unwary investors might put their dollars into it, then that could be construed as misleading trading activity. People found guilty of that offence under this Act would be subject to the same sanctions as they would be for insider trading. That's up to a \$1 million fine or up to five years in jail or both.

Additionally in this particular Act, we are suggesting to the House that we increase our ability to work with other jurisdictions so that we can carry out investigations on their behalf and they on ours to have companies throughout the country and in fact throughout the world searched down if they have been contravening Acts and crossing boundaries in doing that. I've spoken to that previously in the House, and we've made changes to allow for a degree of that. This would move that one step further.

Another section of the Act, another principle in this Bill, would be for our enforcement orders of the Securities Commission to be filed in Court of Queen's Bench, so that they would have the power and the authority of our courts when trying to obtain recompense as a result of judgments that are made.

Mr. Speaker, those are the major elements of the Bill, the major principles. It's a large Bill in terms of volume, as are most changes to the Securities Act. Most of the specifics deal

with implementing the principles that I have just spoken to. I look forward, when we return on another day, to the input from members and to the debate that will follow in the rest of second reading and in Committee of the Whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Edmonton-Strathcona is recognized.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to express support in principle of this Bill. I want, however, to make some comments and observations. The general directions are positive, and I'm pleased with the direction that the hon. minister is taking with the legislation. It's good to see for the first time that futures trading is going to be brought under the umbrella of the Act. It's good to see that the powers of the Securities Commission are going to be strengthened.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the hour I wonder if it would be appropriate to move to adjourn at this point.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's proposed this evening to deal in the Committee of Supply with the estimates relating to Occupational Health and Safety and the Workers' Compensation Board, under Executive Council. I would move that the Assembly stand adjourned until such time as the Committee of Supply rises and reports.

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 5:29 p.m.]

