

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta**Title: **Tuesday, April 30, 1991**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 91/04/30

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

head: **Presenting Petitions**

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present today a petition urging the government of Alberta to support the Changing Ways program. It has been signed by about 350 people.

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MS McCOY: I wish to table the answer to Question 346, which was accepted in the Assembly on April 25, 1991.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Education, followed by the minister of Occupational Health and Safety.

MR. DINNING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly a group of young and dynamic high school students from Edmonton and Fort McMurray. These are a number of presidents or their representatives from our student councils in Edmonton and in Fort McMurray. As part of our Education Week celebrations I've had the opportunity to talk with them over a long lunch to listen to what they have to say about education and to hear what they think of the importance of education to them now and in the future. I can tell all hon. members that I believe that Alberta's future is in good hands indeed. I'd ask them to rise, and I'd ask all members of the Assembly to give them a very warm welcome.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to the Assembly two fine people sitting in your gallery. One of the persons is my good friend and a good friend of all of ours. John Batiuk served this Legislature from 1971 to 1986. He represented his constituency of Vegreville and the people of Alberta very, very well. I would ask Rose and John to stand, and let's give them a rousing Alberta welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly Patricia and David Hebert. Mrs. Hebert was responsible for circulating the petition which I tabled earlier. I would also like to introduce Cathy McLean, program co-ordinator for the Edmonton Family Violence Treatment, Education and Research Centre, and Grace Turner, a board member of the same centre. They offer among other programs the Changing

Ways program. I would ask that they now rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Stony Plain.

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly 50 grades 4, 5, and 6 students from Wabamun school. They are accompanied by their principal Mr. Ben Beil, teachers Mr. Robert Luck, Mr. Gene Thompson, and Mrs. Elizabeth Brassard, along with a parent, Mr. Del Enders. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period****Hospital Funding**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Health. Over the last several months Albertans have seen the carnage that this government has created in our hospitals all across the province: layoffs, closed beds, and more layoffs. Now we see that the Grey Nuns hospital must chop anywhere from 60 to 70 nurses, and the Minister of Health seems to be sticking to her nonsensical response that this will not hurt patient care. I received a dramatic phone call this morning from a tearful Grey Nuns nursing assistant who told me that staffing levels have deteriorated so badly that her daily decisions now are to take – and I'm using her words – the bad option or the worst one. Last week she actually had to walk past a dead patient in a multipatient room because she had to attend to another patient who needed her care. Imagine the indignity of that. My question to the minister is this: what does this example say to this minister about her position that firing health care workers has no bearing on the quality of health care in this province?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, as I've said before and I'll repeat today, the first purpose of our health system is to provide reasonable access to health services for Albertans. We entrust the management capability to hospital boards across this province to ensure that the resources we dedicate to health, which are extensive and this year exceed \$3.4 billion, will be managed in the best way possible. It's not just my words with respect to patient care. Obviously a decision affecting patient care is one that the board has to look at very carefully, and I know they are working to ensure that they're managing their resources in the best way.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that there's not enough staff to look after that, and the funding comes from this government. This particular nursing assistant herself expressed in a very moving way a great worry about the care she and her family will receive when they need it in the future. Although she told me that she has never called an elected official before, she was insistent that someone has to stop this government and its destructive health care cuts now. That's what she said. The question again that I want to ask the minister: what does the minister have to say to this nursing assistant? Does the minister now know more about the frontline effects of her foolish and damaging policies than do health care professionals themselves?

MS BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, the director of nursing of that same facility has made the same comments with respect to patient care. I for one don't think we're going to be having the identical model for health in the next 20 years, nor am I

convinced that doing some treatments in a different way, perhaps on an outpatient as opposed to an inpatient basis, is necessarily a disservice to the health system. We all have to be careful to live within our means. Frankly, if we don't live within our means, then the long-term care is exactly what is going to be compromised. The long-term viability and sustainability of our health system is going to be compromised. This government is working to ensure that 20 years from now we still have a health system and not one that's paying off debt.

MR. MARTIN: Well, if that's what they're working towards, then they're getting an F for failure, Mr. Speaker, because we have a crisis right now.

Another nurse yesterday had a wonderful suggestion for this minister. She suggested that this minister accompany her on her rounds for a full shift to actually see the effects of these cuts. My question to the minister is this: since the minister is so clearly ignorant of the real state of affairs in the province's hospitals, will she take up this suggestion and get a firsthand education on the day-to-day effects of her damaging policies?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, since I was appointed Minister of Health in September of 1988, I have had the privilege of talking to many people right there on the job within the health system as well as many other health professionals who aren't employed in hospitals: part of the volunteer component, part of the nongovernment agencies delivering health services, part of the health units delivering health services. And I will continue to talk to them.

Our acute care funding plan, which we now have in place and are working towards, is one that is based on the severity of the program that a hospital is dealing with and the most effective use of its resources. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition is suggesting today, contrary to what his party suggested last Thursday night in this Legislature when they agreed with the focus of our acute care funding plan – what he's now saying is that we should base our funding on the number of employees that are in that system as opposed to delivering the health services to Albertans which they need. We have moved with the latter, and I believe the latter is right not only for the health system but for this entire province.

2:40

MR. MARTIN: Everybody else is wrong but this minister and this government; nobody understands like them. People are getting sick of that attitude, Mr. Speaker.

### Senior Citizens Programs

MR. MARTIN: My second question is to the Premier. Although we are unfortunately getting used to doublespeak from this government, its shameful refusal to acknowledge its cutbacks and claw-backs to seniors sets a new standard in political dishonesty. Day after day we've seen members of this government stand in this House and desperately try to make the case that they have not cut back on seniors' benefits. But surprise, surprise: we see the Member for Calgary-Millican admit that his government has indeed forced cuts on seniors. He says, and I quote: the government must repeal these cutbacks. There's a growing backlash out there. We should not be pulling back the benefits we've given to seniors over the years. These people have paid their taxes. We have an obligation to them. One honest Tory, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier. Will the Premier now finally admit what everybody in Alberta already knows: that his government has forced cutbacks on most pensioners in

Alberta? Or is his backbencher, the Member for Calgary-Millican, simply wrong in his statement?

MR. GETTY: I'm quite interested in what the hon. member is quoting. I gather he's quoting a local newspaper. Now, does he guarantee that is what was said? I mean, is that really the factual place to get all the information about what a member says? Hardly, Mr. Speaker. I want to say what I've said before in the Legislature, and the Associate Minister of Family and Social Services may want to supplement this: the government has increased the number of dollars going to seniors' programs this year to almost \$1.2 billion from approximately \$1 billion. Those programs are all being assessed every year to make sure that they're the best in Canada, and they are.

MR. MARTIN: That's the type of drivel that's getting this government in trouble. That's precisely it. You're treating seniors like fools. They know what's in the budget. I guess the government is being misquoted again.

Mr. Speaker, even more offensive than this government's policy of denying the facts is this: they're then going to turn around and spend taxpayers' money on advertising to try to convince seniors of the government line. I say to this Premier that seniors know full well what was in the budget; they are not incompetent. You don't have to waste money in advertising. My question is a simple one: how much money is the government wasting on this phony advertising campaign?

MR. BRASSARD: May I answer? I'm responsible for the advertising program that I've had to embark on in order to clarify the amount of misunderstanding that is out there caused by the Leader of the Opposition and that party particularly. I find it extremely offensive. I would feel a whole lot better about it if he would participate in the cost out of their communication allowance in some way, because he's helped to create the problem.

MR. MARTIN: You want to talk about lying. Is it not true that you've cut back on nonprescription drugs? Is it not true that you've cut back in terms of extended benefits? Who's telling the truth, Mr. Minister? Is that not the case?

MR. BRASSARD: Mr. Speaker, we have never, ever said that there weren't changes to the directions of . . . [interjections] In fact, and I'm going to ask the Minister of Health to supplement my answer, we have said right from the start that this was a budget of change and a budget that is trying desperately to address the needs of all of the people in this province, including and particularly the seniors of this province. We're doing that better than any other government in Canada, and we stand on that record. I would like the Minister of Health to supplement my response, if she would, with some of the specifics.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Glengarry, leader of the Liberal Party, please.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the hon. Premier. The seniors in Alberta continue to be angry about the policy that the Getty government has unleashed against seniors. They see themselves as having to ante up moneys to make the books balance, and they see hundreds of millions of dollars being squandered on MagCan and other industrial developments. We now know that a senior who has a taxable income of \$5,500 a year may well have to pay up to \$500 for services

that that senior previously got for nothing. Now, incredibly, the Premier has sought the advice of some millionaire seniors who are pals of his, and it would appear that these pals have set the policy for the government. My question is this: for the record, besides the millionaire pals that the Premier has consulted with, what other groups, what other seniors' groups, what groups period had the Premier consulted with before he unleashed this savage attack against seniors in this province?

MR. GETTY: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenarry has at times in this House really gone off the deep end, but I have never heard a bigger pile of baloney than he has just expressed in the House today. It's just unbelievable.

The minister responsible for our seniors programs, the Associate Minister of Family and Social Services, can deal with the specifics in the hon. member's question.

MR. BRASSARD: Yes, we have consulted with seniors, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we have a council of our own that goes out and quite extensively covers this province. We constantly interact with seniors' organizations over this province, and we do attempt in every instance to keep on top of their needs and their concerns. I feel that this budget addresses those to the nth degree.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file copies of minutes of a meeting that the Premier had with the Calgary Chamber of Commerce in December. These minutes indicate that the Premier sought the advice of the Calgary chamber as to what to do with seniors in Alberta. There's nothing wrong with that. My question to the Premier is this. Why not consult with the organizations that know about seniors: the Council on Aging, the Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired? Why didn't you consult with them to determine the policy, the savage policy that you unleashed against them?

MR. BRASSARD: I totally disagree, and I hardly feel it warrants dignifying the comments with a response. Mr. Speaker, we are embarked right now on trying to correct much of the misconception that has been created in this province by statements such as the leader of the Liberal Party is making. We're doing our best. It is so irresponsible to upset and put on notice the seniors of this province in an unwarranted fashion. I really take exception to the line of questions and the direction that he's taking.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not asking for apologies; all I want to know is why the Premier – there's time to repair the damage. Will the Premier agree to meet with these two organizations, the Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired and the Alberta Council on Aging? Will you meet with those organizations, Mr. Premier, talk to them, find out what it is that you can do that will make them happy and the government happy? Will you agree to do that and stop this harsh treatment of Alberta seniors?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what the hon. Associate Minister of Family and Social Services says that we've been doing. Now, in the course of a year or several years we meet with a whole spectrum of people within this province. We meet with seniors; we meet with chamber of commerce groups; we meet with farm folks: all kinds of people. We get the information, and then we provide to the seniors of this province the best programs available to any seniors anywhere in Canada.

To have the Member for Edmonton-Glenarry try to spread fear amongst seniors by trying to say that they are being savagely attacked is a disgraceful statement from a disgraceful member of this Legislature. [interjections]

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

MR. SPEAKER: I think I don't need the help of the rest of the House; thank you very much.

The first part of the last line was all right, but the adjective "disgraceful" was directed at a member. I'm sure the hon. Premier would be gracious enough to withdraw that.

MR. GETTY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. It was a disgraceful statement. Just in my concern about seniors I described the hon. member as being disgraceful, and I do not want to say that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. Premier.

### **2:50**

### **Ontario Deficit**

MR. PAYNE: Albertans yesterday were given an invaluable insight into how NDP governments still woefully cling to the tragically misguided notion that a government can borrow and borrow and spend and spend its way back to prosperity. I'm therefore wondering, Mr. Speaker: can the Provincial Treasurer advise the Assembly as to what extent the Ontario NDP government's \$9.7 billion deficit budget will impact the Canadian dollar and our various exporting industries whose balance sheets are so obviously tied to the value of the Canadian dollar?

MR. JOHNSTON: The member raises a very important point. I know Albertans and Canadians do not take deficits in the light manner that the socialist party across the way does. There's no doubt. I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that all Canadians and certainly even the people of Ontario were shocked when they saw the size of the deficit yesterday: \$10 billion, the highest deficit on record.

All governments are taking a different position than the government of Ontario right now. We are attempting to curb the size of government spending. We're trying to remove ourselves from the economy, Mr. Speaker. The total debt of all governments in the next forecast year ending March 31, '92, could be close to \$45 billion; \$45 billion that has to be borrowed. What happens, as the member properly points out, is that when we have to borrow the money as governments, we bid up the value of the Canadian dollar. The Canadian dollar has been very high recently, and it makes it very difficult for us to compete in world markets. Certainly Alberta has been conscious of this. The Premier when he spoke at the First Ministers' Conference on the Economy in November of 1989 stressed this very point: you must control the deficits if you want to have a reasonable trading opportunity with the Canadian dollar. This is going to make it extremely difficult for the Ontario manufacturing industry to compete. The world is going to look at those places where the tax regime is going to be attractive to new investment, and that's why Alberta had to come through with a balanced budget: to attract new investment, to provide job opportunities, and to remain competitive.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Fish Creek, please.

MR. PAYNE: Well, Mr. Speaker, economic analysts across the country and here in our own province are also concerned about

the impact of Ontario's horrendous deficit budget on interest rates. In view of the critical role that interest rates will play in our own strong, rebounding economy here in Alberta, can the Provincial Treasurer outline his expectations for interest rates and for our business community?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that through the recession which Alberta experienced in 1986-87, Ontario had one of the hottest economies ever. The government at the time generated such high inflationary pressure across Canada because of the size Ontario has to the total Canadian supply that in fact Alberta had to bear part of the responsibility for the Liberal Party's policies in Ontario, and we are paying it through higher interest rates. Now what has happened, Mr. Speaker? The people of Ontario turned to the ND Party for a solution, and you see exactly what's happened: an extremely difficult Liberal Party policy which generated high interest rates across Canada which Alberta had to pay for, and now you have the profligate spending of the socialists across the way, which they think will turn the economy around. How wrong both of those parties have been. Let's hope we never have that situation in this province of Alberta.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway, followed by Calgary-North West.

#### **Export Loan Guarantee Program**

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ontario is nearly as badly off as Alberta was in 1986. It's not very nice.

My questions, however, are to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. As most Albertans now know, in 1989-90 the government lost \$228 million of \$673 million invested in ad hoc bailouts of various Alberta companies. In addition, the government has been less than honest with Albertans about what goes on with the export loan guarantee program. Will the minister now agree to provide Albertans with an update of the companies receiving export loan guarantees in the kind of detail that we got in his briefing book for 1989 so that Albertans won't have to kick and scream to get the information, as the former Auditor General Kenneth Dye suggested.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I must say that I have great sympathy for the intelligence of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway. All one has to do is look at *Beauchesne* 446(2)(e), whereby it indicates that there is commercial confidentiality. All one has to do is look throughout the country at those provinces and the federal government which do have a freedom of information Act whereby there are provisions as it relates to commercial confidentiality. We cannot violate those conventions and those regulations that have been established. For that we've got an obligation to make sure that there is not an undermining of the competitive nature of those companies that are involved as it relates to the exportation of goods outside the province. We highlight in the public accounts the payouts through the export loan guarantee program. We highlight in the public accounts other involvements that we do have as a provincial government. We disclose everything we possibly can without damaging individual companies within the province of Alberta.

I'm more than happy to leave the hon. member with the commitment, as we have done in the past, that we will continue to make sure that the information is available to him as long as it does not hurt the commercial viability of individual companies.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, that's sheer nonsense. Most businesspeople that use tax dollars are honest enough to know that they should be disclosed. Furthermore, the minister has tried to justify his secrecy surrounding his loan guarantees by this commercial confidentiality nonsense and by unfairly equating it to the idea of releasing the names of social assistance recipients. Now, is the minister by his comparison implying that government contracts are a form of welfare, or is he just trying to protect the government's incompetence at picking winners?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the only implication that I wish to leave with the Legislative Assembly and with the people of the province of Alberta is that we involved ourselves in making sure that we had the strongest economy in all of Canada. We did so through a number of means to make sure that individual Albertans had jobs and not welfare, like the hon. member opposite is advocating.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

#### **Economic Development**

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. A curious element of this government's commitment to prop up failing companies which we now own seems to be to go out of province to hire the executives to take over the management of these companies. For example, the prospectus for Northern Steel showed that Ian Hamilton, a resident of Vancouver, comes in on weekly flights and is paid a \$402,000 salary over the next three years, plus \$300,000 in bonuses, plus other expenses to manage the company. Similarly, over at Gainers Inc., just down the road, Henry Beben comes in from Toronto and has a similar kind of salary and expense package. My question to the minister: by these practices is the minister telling this House and telling Albertans that there aren't any qualified Albertans to run these companies?

3:00

MR. ELZINGA: No, Mr. Speaker, we're not telling Albertans or the hon. member for Calgary-North West, but what we are indicating is that we want to make sure that we have expertise at the head of these companies whereby we can again return a financial stability to them. If the hon. member wishes to have technical answers to his technical questions, I would suggest that he put it on the Order Paper and we'll do our level best to respond to it.

AN HON. MEMBER: What a laugh.

MR. DECORE: You rejected it already. [interjections] Don't act so goofy. You rejected it.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Just hold on, hon. member. When your own caucus settles down you might get to ask it. [interjections] Would the hon. member's caucus now let him proceed?

Calgary-North West.

#### **Economic Development (continued)**

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, certainly we in the Liberal caucus agree with what the minister is saying,

but I guess my question, then, supplementary to that is: were the qualifications that he was looking for in hiring Ian Hamilton, who is the president of Northern Steel, and John Clayton, the vice-president of Northern Steel, the fact that they drove, respectively, Surrey Iron Works into bankruptcy and Brittain Steel Fabricators into bankruptcy before you hired them for Northern Steel? Why would you hire those guys?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has seen the prospectus, and the prospectus looks very hopeful as it relates to Northern Steel. I must say, though, that I am concerned as it relates to his responsiveness to a government position whereby we're doing our level best to make sure that no further losses are incurred as it relates to the backstopping on behalf of the Alberta government and consequently on behalf of Alberta taxpayers. With his very irrational and irresponsible statements he's making it much more inevitable that we could conceivably lose dollars, whereby we're trying to recoup taxpayers' dollars. I would just ask him to exercise greater responsibility so that we can do our level best in fulfilling our responsibility in ensuring that the taxpayers' positions are protected.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River.

#### **School Partnerships with Business**

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is Education Week, and seeing that it is Education Week, the theme is Education is Everyone's Business. I find it interesting that the minister is focusing on partnerships between schools and businesses, because it involves a partnership that's developed in our constituency in the communities of Valleyview and Sexsmith, where the school is actually marrying with a business to help to develop the skills of the various students. Can the minister inform the Assembly what steps he is taking so that this concept is indeed developed throughout the entire province?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, there are about 75 businesses in the province who have partnered up with schools in a number of school districts, including Crescent Heights in Calgary and Nova Corporation, in the case of Syncrude in Fort McMurray teaming up with Westwood high, and Victoria composite in this city teaming up with AGT. There are a number of other similar partnerships around the province. What we're doing is working with those successful partnerships to share with all other school boards in the province their successful results and encouraging all school boards across the province to search out businesses like the ones I mentioned and other agencies like SAIT or like the Misericordia hospital, who have established partnerships, and encourage them to bring their expertise, bring their people, bring their knowledge into schools so that we inject that healthy dose of reality and application of what children are learning, what students are learning in school to real world situations, real world problems, so that the transition from school to work is in fact a seamless one. The more we can do of that, the more successful we will be in giving students the skills and the attitudes and the values they need to find success beyond high school.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: To the Minister of Education: given the minister's important focus that business needs to make them more successful and more competitive, what other steps is the minister taking to ensure that the students are acquiring the

required skills that make it necessary to be more competitive within the business community?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting, because a number of the students that I had lunch with talked of their experience in a program like Junior Achievement. I think about what Junior Achievement does throughout school: business basics in grade 6, a project business in grade 9, and the new applied economics program for grades 11 and 12. That's a perfectly good example of students getting hands-on experience. As well, a number of the students were involved in work experience programs. One student from Fort McMurray has started his own business with the assistance of his teachers and is going to be taking next year off before he goes on to university to acquire, hopefully, further entrepreneurial skills.

Mr. Speaker, we're also piloting a new program, enterprise and innovation, in grades 11 and 12, and we've had the assistance of people like Junior Achievement and chambers of commerce across the province. I look at our integrated occupational program for those students who are not going to go on to university. They're going to be able to acquire in our junior and senior high schools the skills that they need to go out and learn a trade, take on a trade and find success beyond school in things more than just university, more than just postsecondary facilities. They're going out into the real world of work with the skills and the knowledge that they need to be successful.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

#### **Family Violence**

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. Not a day goes by that we don't hear of another family violence tragedy in Alberta, tragedy which could have been prevented. In spite of the fact that five years ago an interdepartmental committee produced a long-term plan, this government has floundered around trying to figure out who should be responsible for what, and in the meantime thousands of Alberta women, children, and men continue suffering the horrible consequences of violence in the family. My question to the minister: will the minister now make public the report by the interdepartmental committee on violence in the family and act to implement the plan proposed to address this problem and end the confusion of who is responsible for preventing and treating this major social problem?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, we are all only too familiar with the consequences of family violence, and I think it's fair to say that all Albertans share that concern and are committed towards looking for meaningful solutions. As a government we realize that we have a very significant role to play. We've been working very closely in consultation with Albertans. We've been working very closely as departments and ministries that all have a role to play. I can assure the member that we're very close to finalizing our long-term proposal for meaningful solutions, that we hope to be able to announce as the result of a collective effort by many of my colleagues on this side of the House a long-term commitment.

I would want to point out one word of caution, and that is that I'm very interested in noting the final recommendations of the task forces of both the city of Calgary and the city of Edmonton. Now, we've seen the recommendations out of Calgary, and they are dealing with them down there presently.

We haven't seen the final recommendations out of the city of Edmonton. I'm looking forward to seeing what Albertans have to say on this issue. I'm looking forward to seeing those recommendations tied in with our own game plan so that we can find some long-term, meaningful solutions.

MS M. LAING: Well, Mr. Speaker, one thing is for sure: Albertans have had enough studies and task forces. They need action, and they need it now.

Mr. Speaker, my second question is to the Minister of Health. This government has repeatedly said no to ongoing funding for treatment programs for men who batter, including Edmonton's Changing Ways. Despite the fact that many who would benefit from this effective low-cost program have asked and today petitioned for support for programs like this, they are dependent on short-term government and private funding and are in constant jeopardy of closing due to lack of ongoing funding. To the minister: will the minister in co-operation with her cabinet colleagues, including the Solicitor General, agree to consider ongoing funding for the Changing Ways program and other similar programs in Alberta so that abusive men can benefit from treatment and prevention programs in the same way that impaired drivers do?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I for one was concerned, and I know other members were, when the United Way dropped its funding for the Changing Ways program, and certainly the program contacted myself and other ministers of government to make up the shortfall. In this fiscal time we were unable to do so. However, while I can't commit to this program specifically, I can inform the hon. member that the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence is expected to report to the ministers that she has named in order that we can ensure a co-ordinated and effective response to this issues.

MR. SPEAKER: Stony Plain.

### 3:10 Teachers' Strike in Leduc

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the Leduc Catholic separate school board appears to be bargaining in bad faith, since it has rejected the mediators' terms of settlement, which the teachers accepted. The mediators' position was based on input from all parties concerned. The counteroffer by the board was to restate the position which created the impasse in the first place. Teachers were ready to go back to work on Monday, but given the unreasonableness of the board, it appears that some corrective actions are required. To the Minister of Labour: will the minister agree to review all the positions taken since last June and to take action if either party is in fact found to be bargaining in bad faith?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, let me make several points. Number one, in any labour relations bargaining the onus is on the two parties to come to an agreement. It is their deal, and it is best if they come to it in an amiable and amicable fashion at the table. Point number two, we do provide mediation services, someone who is neutral to speak to the two sides and to assist them in making their own arrangement, their own agreement. That person is completely neutral, and he performs in that function. Number three, there is no obligation on either one of those parties to accept a suggestion from the other party – that is to say, an offer – nor is there an obligation on them to accept a suggestion from a mediator. There is, however, in this

particular case, as there is with any case in the education area, an obligation on both parties to come to an agreement as soon as possible, because their and our concern must always be the children who are in the classrooms.

MR. WOLOSHYN: That's just the point I was trying to make. We on this side of the House are concerned about the classroom and where the children are not.

Since the Leduc teachers went on strike on April 11, the board has acquired replacement workers who are attempting to teach at the high school level, a move which gives parents a false sense of security that an education program is being delivered and which is likely contrary to the School Act, which requires that only certified teachers be entrusted with the education of our children. To the Minister of Education: why is the minister permitting the board to offer alternate programs and alternate staff, actions which may not only violate the School Act but actually fail to provide a level of instruction that is required by the standards in this province?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, as the hon. member knows, this is a labour matter between a locally elected school board and a local of the Alberta Teachers' Association. Does the hon. member suggest and is his party now saying that the long arm of the law, that this Legislature should come down hard on a local dispute? [interjections] Well, it's interesting to finally hear the hon. member suggest that this Legislature knows better than the people of Leduc. Well, we don't follow that kind of approach, and we will not. As the hon. minister has just said, we will ensure that we provide all the assistance that's required for those two sides to come to an agreement soon that's in the best interests of those children.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

### Canola Plant in Sexsmith

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Agriculture, who appears not to be wanting to be outdone by the minister of economic development in his list of impressive boondoggles and economic boo-boos, starting with Gainers and Lakeside feeders and now especially the Sexsmith canola oil plant, which has cost the Alberta taxpayers over \$30 million in the last five to six years. [interjections] The question, then: in view of the fact that the federal task force on canola marketing yesterday recommended as their number two recommendation that "the Alberta Government divest itself of ownership of ATCC" – that's the entire plant – will the minister immediately put the plant up for sale to go to the highest bidder in the next 30 days?

MR. ISLEY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: There are none so deaf as those who will not listen, Mr. Speaker.

The next question, then, is to the Premier. In view of this government's cutting back on seniors' services, cutting back on hospital beds, cutting back on rural schools, what in the name of all that is holy would prompt this government to continue to pour \$6 million a year into the canola oil plant business?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, he started out with three allegations in the lead-in to his supplementary which were incorrect. Therefore, it's hardly possible to answer his question.

MR. SPEAKER: Banff-Cochrane.

### **Cochrane Ranche**

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Master co-operating agreements are very important to the efficient and effective operation of Alberta's historic sites because they give community members an opportunity to participate in the planning and decision-making processes. The master co-operating agreement for the Cochrane Ranche in Cochrane, within my constituency, expired at the end of March of this year. As I understand it, the Friends of Cochrane Ranche Historical Society, the current agreement holders, as well as another group called the Cochrane Ranche Hands Society have both expressed interest in entering into a new agreement. My question is to the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism. Has the minister made a decision as to which group will be offered an opportunity to enter into a master co-operating agreement?

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Banff-Cochrane is quite correct. The opportunity to enter into a master co-operating agreement involving a local community group and the department we view as a critical arrangement that allows community support and input into the operations of our historic sites, and they've been very successful right across the province. An unusual situation occurred in the Cochrane area, where the Cochrane Ranche historical site was the beneficiary of two interest groups who are anxious to get involved with the department in activities on the ranch. The existing agreement with the Friends of Cochrane Ranche Historical Society expired, and a new group that was very anxious to get involved and do some new, exciting things offered its application. Those applications were reviewed, and I can say today that the Cochrane Ranche Hands Society is going to be operating a new agreement with the government and will be involved over the next period of time in supporting the activities on the ranch.

MR. SPEAKER: Banff-Cochrane.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that this important decision was not taken lightly, and I would ask the minister if he would explain the criteria that were used in coming to his decision.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, the criteria for selecting this are very important, because we want to make sure that whoever is involved in a co-operating agreement wants to do the things that need to be done. So we had an exhaustive review, a 14-point review, of things such as compatibility with the department's mandate, compatibility with the mandate on the historic site, an intention to co-operate with the department, successfully completed projects, projects planned for the area over the next period of time, the administrative ability to carry it on, and so forth. After an exhaustive 14-point review of both applications done by departmental staff, it was obvious that the Cochrane Ranche Hands Society had a more complete and more acceptable application, and the recommendation from the department was that that be the one accepted.

However, Mr. Speaker, this being an important thing for the local community, we wanted to make sure that the advisory committee which provides information to the minister and the department on the activities on the ranch had an opportunity to look at this. This advisory committee, which is made up of local residents, members of the chamber of commerce, representatives

from city council, even the mayor, reviewed the recommendations of the department and agreed unanimously with them. They, too, recommended to me that we approve the Cochrane Ranche Hands, so we did.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Belmont.

3:20

### **Employment Retraining**

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Government bungling and government cuts have frightened Alberta workers to the point that they're afraid to turn on the nightly news. You know, what we've got right now is more than 1,700 Albertans having lost their jobs at places such as NovAtel and MagCan, the Calgary General hospital, the Grey Nuns hospital, Petro-Canada, Canada Packers. That doesn't even include the 800 positions that are going to be abolished by the provincial government according to their budget announcements. To make matters worse, workers know that because of the cuts to Career Development and Employment, retraining may very well end up being only a pipe dream because this department has been cut by over \$100 million in the last five years. So to the minister: just what retraining can the minister offer when his budget has been cut by half over such a short period of time?

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, I assume the hon. member is referring to me in his question, so I would try and respond. First of all, it's very interesting that he would note the statistics over a number of years and the difference in the dollar level. Most certainly when the unemployment stats were in the double digits, there were different programs being offered. As I've indicated to the hon. member and to hon. members of the Assembly before as well, we are not in wage subsidy programs; we're in training programs. In particular the Department of Career Development and Employment is there to assist in training and meeting with these companies and working with employers. I want to assure him that in most cases the majority of these workers integrate back into society in the labour force in particular, because it reflects back into our overall statistics. As well, I might add that if he is looking at television, let him be reminded that there are 235,600 less jobs in Ontario, where today we have 22,000-plus in the province of Alberta, with the most enviable labour rate in the country.

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, that could very well be because of the free trade deal that this government and their federal cousins supported. They should be ashamed of that, and I'm glad to see that the minister of career development is ashamed of that.

Let's talk about Alberta. Let's get back to Alberta and talk about the . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

Final supplementary of the day.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's get back to Alberta and talk about the 116,000 workers in this province who are unemployed and hope to get retrained but can't because of the cuts that have taken place in this government department. Now, what does the minister have to say to those workers who hope to have retraining but can't get any because of the cuts that you've imposed?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, once again I have to say: training. That's the key, and that's what we will be applying to these people who want to avail themselves of our services. We have many programs in effect. I'd be pleased to meet with the hon. member and go over them one by one if that's what it takes.

I also want to come back to his earlier question, as he talks about getting back to Alberta. Yes, let's come back to Alberta. In particular he made reference to some of these layoffs, but within those layoffs, Mr. Speaker, it must be remembered that many of these employers are very sincere, dedicated employers. They've offered severance packages that, bar none, are so acceptable to those employees who accept them that they're very, very pleased, I might add.

I also want to point out that once again we do have the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Written Questions**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that the written questions appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places, except for the following: 228, 270, and 347.

[Motion carried]

#### **Forest Management Report**

228. Mr. McInnis asked the government the following question: What is the response of the government to the recommendations of the Dancik report on forest management in Alberta?

MR. GOGO: The government accepts Written Question 228, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Government Decentralization**

270. Mr. Wickman asked the government the following question:

- (1) What is the government's best estimate, by department, of the cost of decentralizing government departments, and
- (2) how many employees will be affected by decentralization?

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

#### **Agricultural Development Corporation Annual Report**

347. Mr. Taylor asked the government the following question: How many copies of the annual report of the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation were printed for 1989-1990, and what was the cost of designing, printing, and distributing the report?

MR. GOGO: The government accepts Written Question 347, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, in the whole House. Perhaps conversation should be held outside. Thank you.

head: **Motions for Returns**

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

the following: 201, 219, 235, 265, 266, 267, 286, 287, 288, and 297.

[Motion carried]

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

201. On behalf of Mrs. Gagnon, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing all studies or papers completed by or submitted to the government that examine the impact of the federal goods and services tax on the operating and capital costs incurred by Alberta's postsecondary institutions.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I would argue against agreeing to Motion 201. If the hon. member were to consult *Beauchesne*, I think the hon. member would know that correspondence and studies and communications between levels of government – in this case obviously there had been discussions between the government of Alberta and the government of Canada regarding the impact of the GST. *Beauchesne* 446(2)(d) I think clearly points out that matters dealing between governments – in this case the province and the federal government – are clearly documents that certainly shouldn't be disclosed lightly for a variety of reasons. I think the primary reason is that there are within those documents discussions back and forth that are unique to a policy matter that I think indicates different policies of the governments and discussions that are given in the spirit of privacy. Certainly under no condition would they ever be disclosed without the written consent of the other party.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask hon. members to reject Motion for a Return 201.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to stand up and suggest to the government that they reconsider their rejection and agree to do this study and to put the information forward. The minister said a lot of words there which were rather hard to hear. I guess our speaker system isn't all that good in here or something, or maybe he just didn't like to come right out and say that he was going to reject the motion, so he waffled around a lot about it.

I would like to point out that this government knew that the goods and services tax was coming as far back as 1986. When Brian Mulroney decided to go for a free trade deal with the United States, he made it very clear that part of that free trade deal would be a change to the tax system of this country, and he said that there would be either a national sales tax or a VAT or a goods and services tax of some sort: a tax on consumers to replace the manufacturers' sales tax, which would have to go.

Now, this government, Mr. Speaker, acquiesced to the idea of having the free trade deal, and then knowing full well that along with it came the GST, they had the gall shortly after the federal free trade election, in which this government spent taxpayers' dollars telling Albertans to vote in favour of a free trade deal, to then decide that they were against the goods and services tax and are now wasting taxpayers' dollars trying to sue the federal government about the goods and services tax when what they should have been doing is producing studies that showed that the free trade deal was good for Alberta or not good for it, which is what they would have found out if they had done any studies, but they didn't. They should have been doing studies on the change from a manufacturers' sales tax to a goods and



services tax to find out not only what impact there would be on postsecondary education but also all other kinds of impacts in this province. They did none of those things. They did no studies. They didn't know what they were doing. They walked blindly into the free trade deal and then turned hypocritically around and said, "But we don't want the goods and services tax," which was part of the free trade deal.

The government should have done its homework, should have done the studies, should have had that information available before we ever got into the goods and services tax. So it's scandalous for them to sit there now and say: oh, we don't know what's going on; it's not our jurisdiction; it's federal; no, we're going to reject it because we don't know what the hell is going on. That's really what they're saying. They don't know what's going on.

3:30

MR. SPEAKER: Order. I don't know if you were really listening to what the member said, but that's all right.

Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While I'm disappointed – it's clear this government didn't support the GST. Surely as a prudent government there must have been studies done quite exclusive of any arrangements with the federal government on the GST. The studies must have been done about the impact of the GST on postsecondary institutions and on other institutions of the province. I would think those are there. I don't see how the studies that were done here impact on documents or arrangements between governments. It seems to me that it is only prudent that the government would be on top of that information about the impact. One of the problems that seniors are experiencing right now is that the cutbacks of the government come on top of the increased costs that seniors are incurring because of the GST and the compounded effect that has happened.

Mr. Speaker, I don't comprehend the minister. I respect that if there are documents or confidential arrangements with the other government related to this, that's one thing, but that's not what we're talking about. Once again, as in the free trade discussions, we believe, we understand, and we've been told that the government has done these studies, as they should have done. Now all we're asking for is to see them. I don't see how else the government could have developed its budgets on operating and capital in education in postsecondary institutions without the documents. Therefore, I see no reason whatsoever, except the usual ones of the mystery and the secrecy of the government, for keeping this information from us.

[Motion lost]

#### Alberta Terminals Canola Crushers Ltd.

219. Mr. Taylor moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing for the chairman and members of the board of directors of Alberta Terminals Canola Crushers Ltd.

- (1) the employment contracts,
- (2) any other documents showing the terms of employment, and
- (3) any termination agreement.

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to reject Motion 219 on the Order Paper. The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon should know very well that we do not share employ-

ment contracts and documents related to terms of employment on boards and agencies. It would probably expedite matters if the hon. member would get a clear understanding of what is acceptable and what isn't and save us all a lot of time.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, I'm disappointed to hear that, because I think I worded the question to be as businesslike as possible and without any hooks or barbs in it. It is all the more important, as I just tabled in the House today after question period, to go with *Hansard*, the report of the federal government on marketing of canola. They made 12 recommendations. Number two was very clear: the Alberta government – it named it – divest, which is a good old Latin word meaning get the hell out of, the canola oil business. It was that simple. Yet we have here the Minister of Agriculture . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We are now on 219.

MR. TAYLOR: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Alberta Terminal Canola Crushers is a government-owned organization in competition with the free enterprise, competitive sector. As government employees the cabinet ministers' salaries and the MLAs' salaries are known; surely in the same way the employment contracts of a publicly-owned corporation in the economic business of the community should be known.

There's no real reason that an employment contract, which I've asked for, cannot be in here, also other documents showing the terms of employment and any termination agreement. In other words, what are we on the hook for? Have we got a manager and a number there, for instance, that have a 10-year severance contract or a million-dollar severance contract? Are we only going to learn it after this government is defeated or after something goes down and one of the employees leaves? Mr. Speaker, it boggles the mind that a government-owned organization cannot release the employment contract and the terms of employment of their key officials. It's very peculiar indeed. If they were going to file a prospectus or were going to issue any more shares, they would have to. The basic rudiment of their own Consumer and Corporate Affairs is that these contracts have to be filed if somebody goes to the public to raise money. This organization already has the public money. Surely they should have to meet the same regulations that a publicly-owned corporation that wants to take money from the public would have to. No, we've got something here that even the most secret lodge wouldn't have the courage to get away with.

Well, Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that I just hope that this, like the answer the minister gave a short while earlier, is something that I can have photocopied and circulated around the province, because I think it will ensure that the government won't get a chance to make this boo-boo again in the next couple of years.

[Motion lost]

#### Western Heritage Centre

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

[Adjourned debate April 23: Mr. McInnis]

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I had adjourned debate on 235 on the day on which the government chose to bring the matter forward. It was the day following the CBC exposé into the

western heritage centre project; the day when, I guess, they felt it was safe to finally pull the motion from the Table. The minister of culture regaled the Assembly with tales of how he got into politics to beat back the socialist threat, and somehow all of this secrecy around the western heritage centre is part of a master plan to beat back the socialist threat. I personally feel that if this project is even half as good as he and the Member for Banff-Cochrane say it is, then there would be no need for the secrecy that's involved in this situation. There would be no need for them to try to hide very basic material which I think anyone would want to see in order to evaluate whether this project is a sensible one or not.

The history of it is that the Premier of Alberta made an off-the-cuff election commitment when he was out that way during the provincial election campaign that he would bring forth five million taxpayers' dollars from taxpayer-controlled and -owned funds to finance this operation provided some of the backers were able to raise a like amount of money from private sources. The minister told us flat out last week that that money had been raised by the project proponents. He quoted them as saying, "We raised some \$6 million-odd." Then he said that he hired Mr. Blake Ashforth to look through and see whether, in fact, the money had been raised. As near as I can tell from the minister's further elaboration, none of the money's been raised at all. What they've got is a fistful of pledges and somebody named Blake Ashforth who is apparently going to ascertain or warranty that the pledges are good ones.

Now, I doubt very much that Mr. Blake Ashforth is going to make good on the pledges if they don't come forward from the people involved. I think that's a very important question, because I'm advised that some of the people who are touted publicly as being primary backers, financial supporters, and contributors to this project are very much surprised to see them cast in that light. In fact, that's a game you can play rather loosely if there is no list of names to check against. Some of the names have been dropped publicly. The Royal Bank, for example, has been put forward as a major supporter and contributor to this operation. People who have checked with the Royal Bank say that the western heritage centre was told that they would carry their pamphlets in retail banking institutions for a period of three months, which somehow is interpreted by western heritage centre backers as being a major contribution to the project. Mark's Work Wearhouse, which gave, apparently, a thousand dollars two years ago, is down as a major financial contributor even though that company is not in a position to give money to anybody at this point in time because of their own financial circumstances. I think that the checks that may have been made against future pledges and how close those are to cash may be exaggerated by both the minister and the Member for Banff-Cochrane, and it's one of the elements of this project that I think needs to be looked into very carefully.

### 3:40

If this project is going to do some of the things that the proponents claim it is, then I think it's reasonable that some basic items like a capital budget, like some site drawings and some engineering, architectural work be made available, some detailed information about marketing plans. I mean, you'd think by now this government would realize that when you go out and build things and you cut ribbons and you have photo opportunities, somebody has to operate these projects. All over the province of Alberta you have facilities which have been built by this Conservative government with great fanfare at the time – ribbon cutting, media opportunity, and all the rest of it – that

have a very difficult time remaining in operation. That's not something that's very much thought about at the time. At this juncture the eloquent waxings of the minister a week ago were all about the sun streaming through the pines and the great beauty of the site but not a great deal of talk about who's going to pay the operating costs of this facility as it goes.

I have obtained a copy of a community tourism action program grant application from the Western Heritage Centre Society which outlines some of their financial projections, and some of these are a little bit difficult for anybody to swallow. For example, they're forecasting paid visits in the hundreds of thousands annually. You know, they're going to start right off the bat with something in the neighbourhood of 200,000 paid visits at an admission charge which is well above anything that the minister of culture feels that he should levy on provincial cultural heritage facilities. I have concerns about that, but these people think that in excess of 200,000 people will immediately beat down their door and pay \$10 for a family, \$4.50 for an adult, \$3.75 for a child: admission fees averaging \$3.60.

Well, how does the figure of 200,000 or 220,000 visits compare with some of the other world-class cultural heritage sites that we have in the province of Alberta? Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, one of the best displays you'll find anywhere in the world – I've had the privilege of being through there – hosted 130,000 visitors on an annual basis without an admission fee at all: zero admission fee. That's what they logged at Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump. The Ukrainian cultural village east of the city of Edmonton managed 69,000 visitors. The Glenbow Museum, world class, world renowned, ran 160,000 on an annual basis. What's the basis for assuming that this new museum, the western heritage centre, is going to log in excess of 200,000 paid visits? Well, we don't know that, because the minister is not prepared to share information upon which he bases his decision to fund this project.

I have what appears to be an excerpt from a marketing study prepared for the western heritage centre which doesn't really explain the matter at all except to say that

marketing will take place through normal distribution channels (eg. local tour wholesalers, packaging with accommodation outlets, provision of advertising and information pieces at appropriate locations, etc.).

Okay. Well, maybe that sounds like they have a marketing plan in place. Let's look at the budget and see what kind of resources go behind that. Salary for marketing assistance: zero. Whoops. Well, maybe they're going to find a volunteer person. Maybe they're not going to have such a person. They're going to have a single full-time marketing co-ordinator and a total marketing budget of \$160,000 in a year. Now, I don't claim to be a marketing expert, but I know that \$160,000 a year in terms of a marketing venture doesn't get you very much. This committee of the Legislative Assembly that we have which is holding a week's worth of hearings around the province at the end of May, early June is going to spend dramatically more than that trying to notify Albertans about one set of meetings over a one-week period of time. We're not trying to get 220,000 people to physically relocate themselves from wherever they are to the western heritage centre in Cochrane. I think it's ridiculous to assume that you can create that kind of a demand. In the face of the real experience of our other cultural heritage facilities, these projections seem to be a little self-serving. In fact, the more I look at the operating budget and the way they claim they're going to finance it – absolutely huge profits to be made from concessions, food service revenues – the numbers sort of

add up to a break-even situation, but if you compare it to any other realistic source of information, it's kind of lacking.

I wonder; how closely does the government question somebody who comes and asks for a \$5 million grant? Well, you get a \$10 million building built. How are you going to pay for it? Who's going to pay the salaries of the 50 or 60 staff who are supposed to run it? Where is that money going to come from? We don't have any answers to those questions at all.

We do know that the people involved in this heritage centre attempted to take over the organization known as the friends of the Cochrane Ranche, which has run the Cochrane Ranche as an historic site for a great many years. Today the minister announces by way of a question from the Member for Banff-Cochrane that he's suddenly fired the friends of the Cochrane Ranche and substituted another group, the Ranche Hands, which is apparently a front organization for the western heritage centre, and put them in its place. They tried to take over the organization and failed because the people came out and voted for the existing executive. What does the government do? They turn around and fire the whole organization and substitute another one. So it does appear that there aren't too many things that they're not prepared to do when it comes to making sure this project goes ahead.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

So along comes a Member of the Legislative Assembly and says: "Well, just a minute. Can we find out exactly what information they gave to the government to entice them to lay forward a \$5 million grant and what type of support and information there is to back it up?" All of a sudden the government is going to crawl into its shell and say, "We're not prepared to share that information." From what I've seen it's no wonder, because the information doesn't stack up; it doesn't add up. There is no realistic basis for assuming that this facility – whatever it may be, because we don't really have very much of a handle on that, courtesy of your provincial government – is going to outdraw all of the other attractions that have built up their reputation over very many decades and that have some obvious and substantial historic artifacts to draw on.

What type of artifact will you be able to see at this western heritage centre? I know from promotional material that they're going to have rodeo exhibits on a daily basis. Well, there isn't a small town in Alberta that you can't go to some weekend and find a rodeo, if you're into rodeo. What is it they're going to have at that facility? The Cochrane Ranche itself, as the minister mentioned, was the first commercial ranching operation in the province of Alberta. He mentioned that it wasn't successful; I certainly hope that wouldn't be a precursor to any commercial operation that's here. We know that people in Cochrane have developed their own very personal relationship with that facility. We know that at least sort of an elementary calculation of the number of visits, the amount of parking lot space, and the amount of traffic that the western heritage centre people feel they're going to draw will result in a big chunk of that area having to be flattened and made into a parking lot and another chunk made into access roadway. In terms of the beauty of the site, there is a very real prospect that some part of that will be marred by all of that activity. Some of the people in Cochrane just happen to have a concern about that.

Well, do they deserve to have information withheld from them by the government? I recall one of the vice-presidents of the Friends of Cochrane Ranche Historical Society tried to obtain another very basic piece of information in terms of the lease

agreement entered into between the western heritage society and the provincial government. They attempted to obtain that from the western heritage society who said, "Thank you but no thank you; we're not in the business of sharing information with folks like you." So they wrote the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism, since the provincial government owns the site and he's a party to the lease agreement, and asked if the minister would make available that information to the Friends of Cochrane Ranche Historical Society, which at that point is in a legal arrangement with the minister. He says, and I quote from the minister's letter:

I do not feel it is the prerogative of this office to release details of the lease agreement. I . . . strongly recommend that you contact members of the Western Heritage Centre Society for the specific details in which you have an interest.

Well, why should it be the prerogative of a private society to decide whether public information about the public's business should be made public? It isn't, and it should not be. In this day and age and in this Legislative Assembly it should be the responsibility of a minister to provide information about commercial arrangements entered into on behalf of the taxpayers involving taxpayers' funds, be they general revenue funds or lottery funds. In fact, the way budgeting is done these days, there really isn't a whole lot of difference between the two of them. Lottery revenue is a big part of the operating revenues of the province of Alberta at this point in time.

3:50

So we have from the western heritage centre all sorts of self-serving assumptions about how they're going to not only raise the \$5 million, which seemed to be the only thing that interested the hon. minister the other day, but how they're going to raise operating costs, which are in excess of a million and a half dollars a year to run that facility. I didn't hear the minister of culture talk about that at all, because I don't really think that the government has any kind of handle on where that million and a half dollars is going to come from. Well, suppose we go ahead and pay out the \$5 million, and let's suppose, to be absolutely generous, that all of the pledges that they have turn out to be real and they get the project paid for a hundred percent at the very start. There's still a million-and-a-half-dollar operating account that has to be balanced, and the suppositions and assumptions that are here are in no way sufficiently assuring to make certain that there isn't going to be an unfunded liability like so many other facilities that have been opened to great fanfare.

So I think the government really does need to justify the way it throws around money at some point in time, and this is probably the best point in time to do that, because we have a motion which calls simply for the government to table a copy of applications and supporting materials for the western heritage centre as well as any agreements arising therefrom.

I urge that the Assembly approve this motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair understood that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place's remarks were to close debate.

All those in favour of Motion 235 moved by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion fails.

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

[Eight minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

**4:00**

For the motion:

Barrett	Hawkesworth	Mjolsness
Bruseker	Hewes	Pashak
Chivers	Laing, M.	Roberts
Doyle	Martin	Sigurdson
Fox	McEachern	Taylor
Gibeault	McInnis	Woloshyn

Against the motion:

Anderson	Fjordbotten	Moore
Betkowski	Fowler	Nelson
Black	Gesell	Paszkowski
Bogle	Gogo	Payne
Bradley	Hyland	Severtson
Calahasen	Isley	Shrake
Cardinal	Johnston	Sparrow
Cherry	Kowalski	Stewart
Clegg	Lund	Thurber
Drobot	Main	Trynchy
Elliott	McClellan	Weiss
Elzinga	Mirosh	West
Evans		

Totals:	For - 18	Against - 37
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[Motion lost]

#### **Northern Steel Inc.**

265. Mr. Bruseker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing the prospectus prepared by the government for potential buyers of Northern Steel Inc.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, since Motion for a Return 265 appeared on the Order Paper the document requested has in fact become a public document. Given that that is the case, there's really no need for this House to waste any time on this particular motion for a return. Therefore, I would request under Standing Order 45 that the House grant me permission to withdraw this motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member to have Motion 265 withdrawn?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

#### **Northern Steel Inc.**

266. Mr. Bruseker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing the annual financial statements of Northern Steel Inc. for the years 1988, 1989, and 1990.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if it might be possible to amend Motion for a Return 266 simply by deleting the request for the 1988 and 1989 financial statements.

Those are already present in the financial document that was tabled in the House. Really all I'm looking for is the 1990 financial statement, as we already have the other two documents.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Chair understand that the hon. member wishes to withdraw the years 1988 and 1989, leaving 1990 only?

Is there agreement to that amendment?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I'm just asking if it's agreeable to the Chair.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, the Chair looks on this as sort of an editorial amendment.

[Motion on amendment carried]

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, I move Motion for a Return 266 as amended.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to have an opportunity to respond to this. In speaking to Motion 266, let me indicate to the hon. member that had he had a true concern for the viability of the company and a true concern for taxpayers' dollars - I had indicated to him that we would make this information available to him on a commercial confidential basis, recognizing the importance of it being so, for us to attempt to recoup the taxpayers' dollars, plus to make sure that we do our level best to protect those jobs that are there presently at Northern Steel.

I recognize that the hon. member has no concern for the 150-odd employees there, otherwise he would not deliberately undermine the viability of this company, such as he has done with the release of commercial confidential information. I recognize that hon. members think it's smart alecky to do this, to attempt to embarrass the government. Well, I have no concern with it as it relates to the embarrassment of the government, but I do have a concern for it as it relates to employment availability for the individuals who work at Northern Steel. I would only pray that the hon. member would exercise some responsibility for these individuals who are presently employed at Northern Steel, plus I would ask him to exercise some responsibility as it relates to the taxpayers' dollars within this company.

Again, he's doing his level best to undermine. I recognize they play their political games, but they also, if they are to be Members of this Legislative Assembly, have a legislative responsibility to attempt to do their level best for the province of Alberta. I shake my head with disgust, because the hon. member has done anything but that in that they have no sense of responsibility as it relates to the taxpayers' dollars; they have no sense of responsibility as it relates to the employment opportunities of the individuals who are employed at Northern Steel. I share with the hon. member my disgust as it relates to the way he has conducted himself in dealing with this matter, because we have an obligation to those individuals who are working there. We have letters on record from the union indicating their concern as it relates to the employment of those people within Northern Steel.

If the hon. member would only take a moment to read *Beauchesne* and the orders of this House, he would see where those orders indicate that we on this side of the House have an obligation as it relates to commercial confidentiality. I'm more than happy on a commercial confidential basis to share the information with the hon. member, but I would ask him to exercise greater responsibility than he has in the past, because we have an obligation not only to him but to all Albertans.

For that reason we find that we cannot support his motion as presented.

MR. McEACHERN: Just a couple of points. I want to make it very clear that anything we have said in this House on any of these companies was not geared to bring down any companies. We were very careful in all instances. What the minister has to realize is that when the information is there in the public accounts and a company is in trouble, then we would not be doing our job on this side of the House if we did not point out those difficulties, and that we have done regularly.

Now, to offer one of us some confidential information is mostly kind of a trap, because you're actually basically saying, "Here's the information, but don't tell anybody." We're not about to walk into those kinds of traps, or at least I'm not, unless it's something very extraordinary. So it is up to us to look at the information that's available and draw what conclusions we can and press the minister to release more information telling Albertans exactly where their tax dollars stand.

I do not buy the commercial confidentiality basis he is using to reject this motion. I think it's a perfectly good motion. I think the government should have to stand by what it's done with this company and where it's going. If you talk to the steel fabricators, they're not exactly happy with the government's support of Northern Steel. The Alberta Steel Fabricators' Association believes that there are other companies in this province that have the capacity to do the job and that Northern Steel is not the only company that should be singled out for government largess. Of course, you can't get into subsidizing the whole industry unless you find some kind of a universal program, so therefore the ad hoc funding, which is what we have been complaining about mainly in the Assembly, is the procedure that is causing the problem. I don't buy that once there's economic trouble for a company and the government is putting dollars into it that we on this side of the House shouldn't talk about that. I think that's fair game. That's what we're elected to do: to point out the mistakes the government makes.

4:10

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West, to close debate.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister refers to responsibility, the responsibility of the government, and he refers to *Beauchesne*. I would like to draw to the attention of the minister that members of the opposition also have a responsibility. The responsibility of members of the opposition is to keep government on their toes: to ask questions, to pursue information, to keep them honest, and to make sure that they keep information available to people. That is exactly what I have done in the past, and that's what I intend to continue to do. So I shall continue to pursue what I have done.

The minister has suggested that I am not concerned about the jobs of the individuals at Northern Steel. Nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. I am concerned about the jobs that are currently held by the people at Northern Steel, the

number of which varies between 100 and 200 depending upon the level of contracts and so forth. In speaking with members of the steel fabricators – steel fabricators other than Northern Steel, admittedly – the assurances that I have received from those other steel fabricators are that if in fact Northern Steel were to close their doors today, for example, the work that has been performed by Northern Steel would have to be taken up by other fabricators. Therefore, those other fabricators in turn would have to hire more staff, and presumably the staff they would be looking to hire would be the staff that has had some training in the steel fabricating business at Northern Steel that would now be available. If the work performed by Northern Steel currently were taken up by other steel fabricators, those workers would probably also, in complete total in number, be taken up by the other steel fabricators. So, in fact, the net loss of jobs would probably be zero. That's not to say the jobs would be in the same place doing the same thing at the same time, but I think the members of the government have said in the past, "We're not here to guarantee that somebody can start work at age 20 and work till age 45 in the same job." I think when we reflect upon society, that's the case.

The reason for Motion for a Return 266, Mr. Speaker, requesting financial statements for 1990, is that in the prospectus that has been tabled there is some suggestion, in fact it is clearly stated, that there are a number of projects, market prospects as they're listed on page 15 of the financial statement, that talk about future business proposals that could be going ahead. In fact, when you look at the prospectus, there are a variety of things in there which really cause one to wonder about the future viability of Northern Steel. The Auditor General's report has said quite clearly that the future viability of Northern Steel is dependent only upon the government infusing more capital.

When we look at the prospectus – the title is Exhibit B: Projects Proceeding or Likely to Proceed in Western Canada – we see a \$15 million project at MagCan, which you know is not going ahead. We see Hudson Bay Mining, an upgrade of the Flin Flon mine, which is speculative at best that a company from Alberta would be providing steel to Flin Flon mine when in fact Dominion Bridge is right in Winnipeg, substantially closer to probably deal with it much more expeditiously. So it's unlikely that that project is going to go ahead. OSLO, we know, is on hold, and it says right here: a \$140 million project of OSLO. They're counting on OSLO to place a great order with Northern Steel. This was all supposed to happen in 1990 and to happen this year in 1991 and in future years, Mr. Speaker. So when we start looking at some of these things – the Al-Pac Athabasca pulp mill: now, I don't know whether this pulp mill is, in fact, going ahead or not. I have spoken to a number of steel fabricators, and there are a great number of people who have expected contracts to be let that have not occurred. It has on here that Al-Pac needs \$40 million worth of steel content from a variety of different things, yet none of the contracts have been let. Is Al-Pac going to be going to Northern Steel? If it even goes ahead, how much of that proposal is Northern Steel going to end up with?

So what we have here is a highly, highly speculative proposal suggesting that a variety of things that are on here are going to go ahead: an extension of the mine at Suncor, an expansion of the Syncrude plant. The next phase of the Joffe ethylene plant at Novacor, phase 3, is proposed to go ahead: a \$15 million proposal. When you look at the grand total, \$550 million, it looks really good, but if those projects don't go ahead, the steel fabricators in total across this province, Mr. Speaker, are going to have fewer projects to look at.

Now, the obvious fact of the matter is, therefore, that if the business isn't there, there's going to have to be a terrific rationalization in the steel industry, not just Northern Steel. The implication, unfortunately, is that not only will Northern Steel go down and perhaps those 140 or 150 jobs lost at Northern Steel but that there could be a spin-off effect: that other steel fabricators in Edmonton, other steel fabricators in Calgary, also go into receivership. So it's important to have this information, because if we don't know what is really happening as current as possible – public dollars invested in this company: \$15.9 million of loans and loan guarantees – then how can we make a decision and how can this government make a decision as to what's really going on?

Now, I'm sure the minister has the documentation, because the annual report for 1989 is included in the prospectus. They show the year-end as being December 31, 1989. Here we are: April 30 of 1991, four months past what appears to be the year-end of this company, Northern Steel. Clearly the principals, who are the people of the province of Alberta who own 83 percent of this company, have the right to know. How good is the people's steel company doing? Is it making money for us? As I raised the question earlier today: what kind of expenses are we incurring under the management contract that is being paid wherein 5 percent of the after-tax profits are being paid to Hamilton Engineering? How much are we spending there? That's part of the 1990 annual return. We should have that information. We're not being allowed access to it, and I think it's important for us to have it.

Therefore, I would urge all members to support Motion for a Return 266 as amended.

[Motion as amended lost]

#### Medical Services on Demand

267. Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all documents confirming the Minister of Health's remarks that some Americans have found that getting an operation on demand can result in inappropriate treatment.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, just speaking briefly to the need for this motion, I have on a number of occasions in the House deplored the level of support for acute care institutions in the province that has forced the closing of beds and layoffs of health care professionals in great numbers and caused tremendous anxiety among people who are waiting for elective surgery and for emergency surgery. We all know the story of people waiting for hip and knee repairs, for cataract surgery: the waiting lists are legendary in their length. In fact, some hospitals are even running out of prosthetic appliances to replace hips and knees.

Mr. Speaker, the other critical circumstances surround heart surgery, where we find Albertans having to go out of province or move around the province in order to be accommodated for very necessary surgery and for pediatric heart surgery. A critical situation: children finding themselves in dire need and being anyplace between 60th and 80th on the list, and parents who are organizing themselves and using up their much-needed energy which they need for their children to try to convince governments and institutions that something needs to be done about it.

It's my understanding that the minister in justifying these waiting lists suggests that there's some documentation that getting an operation on demand can, in fact, result in inappropriate treatment. Were I a member of the medical profession

or a health care professional, I'd be very concerned about that kind of statement. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we see whatever documentation the minister has, that it can be circulated so that people will understand where those remarks are coming from.

4:20

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I would like to propose an amendment as has been distributed to all members of the House with respect to this Motion 267 and suggest that the word "public" be inserted so that it would read in part: "copies of all public documents confirming the Minister of Health's remarks." I would propose that amendment therefor.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there any debate on that?

[Motion as amended carried]

#### Advanced Education Enrollment

286. On behalf of Mrs. Gagnon, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all documents from postsecondary institutions to the government concerning full-time equivalent enrollment statistics for the 1989-90 and 1990-91 academic years.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Calgary-McKnight has asked for copies of all proposals submitted from the postsecondary institutions. I hesitate in a way to draw attention to the hon. member, but under *Beauchesne* 446(2)(p), "papers requested, submitted or received in confidence by the Government from sources outside Government."

I have some trouble with this, Mr. Speaker, because the institutions are self-governing. They have a board of governors which determine in the best interests, subject to perhaps government grants, how they'll function, and for them to write me as minister of the Crown advising me of certain positions, certain information: that becomes then a matter between the institution and myself. I'm somewhat disappointed that the Member for Calgary-McKnight has not asked the institutions. We have 28 public institutions. It would simply take one letter to those institutions, one letter and copies to the others, requesting that information. In my view, that's clearly information that's available from the postsecondary institutions, and I do not think it's appropriate for the Crown to be disclosing any correspondence between the postsecondary institutions and the Crown, certainly not without the permission of the party who supplied the correspondence.

I think clearly, Mr. Speaker, when I look at the estimates that go through this House, soon to be dealt with in terms of funds made available for members of the opposition, they could just as easily obtain that information without going through the problem and the expense of having the Crown provide the information.

Mr. Speaker, I reject Motion for a Return 286 and would recommend the Assembly do as well.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I find that most ridiculous. The fact is that the annual statements of most of the colleges contain some of these statistics anyway. It would be very convenient for the Minister of the Department of Advanced Education to compile these kinds of statistics in one place. Surely he does it for himself. He knows how many postsecondary education students we have in this province and where they are and that sort of thing, so he is in an ideal position to release

this information. There's nothing secretive about it. It's just a matter of convenience and compiling it in one place and then making it available to all Albertans who are paying the bills so that our kids can go to school and so the young adults can go to these postsecondary educational institutions.

What's this nonsense about it would be upsetting some kind of confidentiality? We see these kinds of statistics on a hit-and-miss basis all the time, for heaven's sake. If the minister had any sense whatsoever, he would agree that his department is the logical place to compile the statistics and then to make it public from there.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, to close debate.

MRS. HEWES: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm disappointed that the hon. minister doesn't want to give us this information. I question, therefore, if the department in fact has the information. If they do, I see no reason whatsoever from the explanation given that it would not be easy for him to answer this return. One can only assume that perhaps the department doesn't have the information and that it is not significant to the department, which I think puts another light entirely on the question.

[Motion lost]

#### Advanced Education Programs

287. On behalf of Mrs. Gagnon, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all proposals submitted from postsecondary institutions requesting ministerial approval to reduce, delete, or transfer programs of study.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, this is in some ways similar to the previous motion for a return. Two factors. One is the word "all." I don't like to differ lightly with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, but why, oh why, should the government be disclosing any documents received perhaps in confidence from another party? Here the hon. member is quite free, it seems to me, to say, "Forget that; forget any confidence at all." Who knows what information is contained in that? For the member to say and argue that governments should disclose all that information . . . Now we come to "all proposals submitted from postsecondary institutions requesting ministerial approval to reduce, delete," et cetera: the very thing the opposition – Bill 27 – so strongly opposed. Now, if that's not confidential information, I don't know what is.

It seems to me that if an institution writes to me as minister with a proposal to "reduce, delete, or transfer" a program, that's in the interest of the institution. If the hon. members want to know that, they should simply contact the institutions. We're not talking about the K to 12 system; we're talking, I presume, about 28 publicly funded institutions. Surely they're not asking for the information, I would hope – although who knows, by the motion for a return? – from King's College or Camrose Lutheran University College. Are they asking for that information?

Mr. Speaker, I simply draw members' attention to the motion for a return. It's clearly not acceptable. There's no way this government is going to disclose what I view to be confidential information. If the member is not satisfied with that, surely the member is satisfied with *Beauchesne*. It's been here longer than either of us. I simply quote *Beauchesne* 446(2)(p), which makes

it very clear that people should not be disclosing that information.

Mr. Speaker, I would certainly reject Motion for a Return 287 and encourage hon. members to do likewise.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, as usual the minister quotes *Beauchesne* to hide behind when in fact the information that's being asked for is exactly the kind of information you need to make public policy, and public policy should be done in public. The first question about particularly the statistics on what students are in what programs: I mean, for him to suggest that that's confidential information from various institutions which the taxpayers are funding almost exclusively – he says himself that the tuition fees are pretty small – is totally ridiculous.

#### Point of Order Relevance

MR. MAIN: A point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism is rising on a point of order.

MR. MAIN: A point of order, Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 23: relevance. We've already dealt with that motion. It's been defeated, and he's back on it.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, he's the one that tied it to the debate on this one, not me. I was finished with what I wanted to say about that motion, but he got up and responded to it after he was finished speaking on that motion. So I have a right to rebut if I wish.

#### Debate Continued

MR. McEACHERN: The same reasoning applies in Motion 287. If an institution which is receiving public dollars – and these postsecondary educational institutions are receiving a lot of public dollars – is thinking that it might ask the minister to approve the reduction of some particular program or to delete a program or to transfer a program of studies to some other institution or some other department or make some changes to its programs, then it seems to me that should be public knowledge. I can't believe that the institutions want to keep it secret. What in heaven's name is the minister doing saying this is a big, confidential secret that he shouldn't divulge? Are we going to make public policy on using public dollars in public, or are we going to hide behind this kind of nonsense?

The minister is just being foolish, and there's no reason in the world why both of these motions for returns shouldn't be accepted by this House.

4:30

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

MRS. HEWES: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway has really said it all. It seems to me there's no reason at all that this shouldn't be public information. Capital and operating budgets are developed around this kind of information. The public needs to know what is being planned, what is being suggested for our educational institutions. There's tremendous concern being expressed to every one of us about the lack of resources in postsecondary and the kinds of compressions that we are seeing.

I fully expect that the same answer is going to happen to Motion 288. These are public institutions. The minister himself said, "publicly funded." So I'm assuming that if they are publicly funded, there is no reason whatsoever that this information shouldn't be made public so that we can know and understand what is being proposed.

[Motion lost]

### Advanced Education Programs

288. On behalf of Mrs. Gagnon, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all requests from postsecondary institutions for the establishment of programs of study which are currently awaiting ministerial approval.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I reject Motion 288 as well, for many similar reasons. Surely government should be judged by the decisions it makes and not for the internal discussions that go on within the system. [interjection] The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway seems to be of the view that it's quite all right for a minister of the Crown to disclose contents of correspondence received from other people even if it's a postsecondary institution. Well, I take exception to that, Mr. Speaker.

I communicate at great lengths with the postsecondary system. I get all kinds of responses back for consideration, to consider this, to consider that. If the hon. member wants to be privy to that, then I suggest one of two ways: one, become a member of the board of governors of those institutions, or on the other hand, simply write them a letter and ask. Mr. Speaker, it's no secret – it's no secret – the half a million dollars granted, as I understand, by Members' Services to come before this House to the Liberal caucus. Surely they can afford the postage, without mentioning the New Democratic caucus' million dollars. If they want to know, surely they can pick up a phone or mail a stamp as well. A motion for a return where the institutions have made a request for new programs of study that they want my approval on is simply not acceptable to me.

Now, if the hon. members write the postsecondary institutions and are refused, that's a different matter. Perhaps we would look at it then in that context. But, Mr. Speaker, I don't feel at all comfortable, and I certainly don't support the principle of, disclosing correspondence that's written to me as minister without the consent of the other person.

So, Mr. Speaker, I reject Motion for a Return 288 and would encourage members to do likewise.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, to close debate.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I'd just repeat my earlier wheelbarrow complaint.

[Motion lost]

### Northern Steel Inc.

297. Mr. Bruseker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the agreement regarding Northern Steel Inc. between the government and the major shareholder of Northern Steel Inc. until June 12, 1989.

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

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason for this motion for a return is that it was in June of 1989 that the government took over the directorship and operation of Northern Steel with the appointment of directors to that particular company; in fact, three directors that were government appointees. Prior to that time there were a number of loan guarantees given to the company: on April 28 of 1988 and, further, in May of 1989; I believe May 21 is the date that springs to my mind. Those two loan guarantees that were extended were for a total of, respectively, \$6.8 million and \$5.1 million, so with those two together we're dealing with in the neighbourhood of \$12 million in total. I would like to have a copy of that agreement because I think we're dealing with something now that is in fact two years old. I don't imagine the minister will have any great difficulty with supplying that information, so I look forward to a favourable reply.

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we on this side will not be supporting this motion for reasons that I outlined earlier to the hon. member.

Since he had an opportunity to speak after I spoke last time, let me indicate to him that I hold no malice for bringing forward these issues, and I wouldn't want him to think so, because I recognize, as he indicated, that every party and every Member of this Legislative Assembly has their role to perform. The opposition parties have an obligation to bring these issues forward. Even if they do so in an irresponsible manner, we still respect them.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West, to close debate.

MR. BRUSEKER: No, that's just fine with me, Mr. Speaker. I don't think that's at all irresponsible, and I'm sure that all other members will support my request.

[Motion lost]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I would move that we call Motion for a Return 298.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Having heard the motion of the hon. Deputy Government House Leader, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

### National Contaminated Sites Remediation Program

298. Mr. Mitchell:

That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a list of the sites that have already been designated for cleanup under the national contaminated sites remediation program.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. House leader: this was not on the list?

MR. GOGO: No, it was not.



MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, may I request that it be left on the Table, since the member who put this motion on the Order Paper is not available?

MR. GOGO: It's going to be a good response.

MRS. HEWES: I beg your pardon, sir?

MR. GOGO: It'd be a good response.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker?

#### **Speaker's Ruling Reversing a Decision of the Assembly**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

The Assembly passed a motion unanimously. Nobody opposed the motion to call Motion for a Return 298. Therefore, the Chair is of the opinion that the Assembly wanted to deal with Motion 298. Now, the only way not to do it now would be to have another unanimous motion.

#### **Debate Continued**

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, may I then request unanimous support from the House that this motion be left on the Order Paper?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those in favour of . . .  
The hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: You see, if the House leader is allowed to just pick and choose at the last moment like this and throw one in, he can look across to our side and see who's not here and then decide to throw that motion forward so that we don't get to debate on the issue. I don't think that makes any sense. The House leader should at least have to indicate at the start of the day which ones are before the Assembly for that day as a very minimum of courtesy to this side of the House. I don't understand why halfway through the afternoon he then decides to start putting some other numbers here without getting the prior agreement of the members on this side of the House that are putting forward those motions.

What I'm suggesting is that the House, if it were to be fair, would give unanimous consent to leave this motion on the Order Paper as is and call it on another day.

#### **Speaker's Ruling Reversing a Decision of the Assembly**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before recognizing the hon. minister, the Chair believes that it misled the Assembly with regard to the requirement for unanimous consent to have this matter stand at this time. The motion is to have it stand. That does not require unanimous consent, but it is debatable.

The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

#### **4:40 Debate Continued**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, just to indicate amazement at the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway and the House leader for the Liberal Party. When the House leader put the motion, they were sitting within the Legislative Assembly and granted unanimous consent to have it addressed, and now when they come to their senses, they suggest that we shouldn't deal with it. I wish they would react when we bring an issue forward, because we've already dealt with the unanimous consent to proceed with it. It's typical of the opposition parties. They don't know what

the heck is going on, and then they want to reverse themselves and swallow themselves. The hon. House leader for our party introduced it on the basis whereby we wouldn't have to deal with it had they not granted that consent.

I don't understand, hon. members. Please pay attention to what's taking place here.

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

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think this is a type of a game procedure. One of the etiquettes of the parliamentary system is that the House leader of the government presents to the opposition a list of the motions and questions that they're going to consider that day. Then to have the House leader double-cross or change that – I don't think he double-crossed. I think he just plain didn't know what maybe the House leader passed on.

It's a question of etiquette; I'll agree. They can sit there and put all the bloody questions on if they want, Mr. Speaker, and force it all through in the next 10 minutes, but that's not the point. The House leader circulated a list here, which I saw and I marked off, that had these questions ordered. Now, that's number one.

Number two, this is a motion, not a question. The House leader may well argue that they have decided to answer a question that wasn't on the Order Paper; therefore, we might be very churlish indeed to turn down a question that has been offered that wasn't on the Order Paper. But this is a motion, Mr. Speaker, and even though the government may agree with the motion, there may have been something some member in the audience wanted to say about the motion before it was passed, even though the government obviously was going to accept the motion.

I think it's just a question of very bad manners, Mr. Speaker. Maybe not that; I think it's just been a mistake. I've known the acting House leader for some years. He's always been very much a gentleman and a very much a person who tries to follow parliamentary procedure. I don't think he was aware that the House leader had sent over a list to us without that motion on there.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism. [interjections] Order please.

#### **Speaker's Ruling Speaking Twice in a Debate**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just before the hon. minister commences, the Chair would advise the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway that he has already spoken on this motion and therefore is not eligible to speak again.

MR. McEACHERN: That motion is debatable as many . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, we're in the Assembly now; we're not in committee. A person can only speak once in the Assembly.

The hon. Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism.

MR. MAIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, you have just . . .

#### **Point of Order Clarification**

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar is rising on a point of order.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, Motion 298 has not yet been moved, my understanding is. It has not yet been moved. Is that correct?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is correct.

MRS. HEWES: It has not been moved, so it is not yet before us.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The item before the House is a motion by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar that Motion 298 stand.

The hon. Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism.

#### Debate Continued

MR. MAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You have correctly identified exactly what the problem is here. The members of the New Democratic caucus and the Liberal caucus haven't got the foggiest notion of what's going on. They don't even know if they're debating their own motions. They don't know how many times they've spoken on the motion or exactly what's going on. We've been here for some considerable period of time debating these motions for returns . . . [interjections]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. [interjections] Order.

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, we've been here . . .

MR. McEACHERN: The first time ever. Totally unprecedented.

#### Speaker's Ruling Interrupting a Member

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway, will you keep your mouth shut. [interjections] Order please. You do not have the right to the floor; therefore, recognize the position that you have. You are supposed to be quiet until this debate is over and we move on to the next order of business.

#### Debate Continued

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway continues to make my points for me, that he's not really sure what's happening here.

We've spent the last considerable period of time debating a range of motions for returns. Granted, the particular motions that came before the House were rejected for a variety of very valid reasons not made up by us but based on parliamentary history that goes back to the 1600s in some cases. We have provided a great deal of information. Today in the routine of the House more information was granted, tomorrow I'm sure more will be, and as the days progress, more and more information will be granted all the time.

Now, what we have before us today is a motion from our Deputy Government House Leader to deal with another issue, to bring a motion forward that we can perhaps deal with and that would provide information either as the motion requests or in debate relating to that particular issue. The procedure was properly followed. The member stood up and made the request to the House. Our members were paying attention; we agreed with the motion. The members of the two opposition caucuses

sat there dazed, said nothing, granted unanimous consent, and then all of a sudden realized: "Oh dear, what have we done? We napped there for just a couple of minutes and missed what was going on." The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar then rises to her feet in panic and makes a motion: "Oh, wait a minute, wait a minute. Let's not do that. Let's try this." That's the motion we're debating.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the motion presented by our Deputy Government House Leader was correct. What we need now is to have someone in the Liberal caucus move the motion. If they don't move the motion, I guess we won't deal with it. But this is the exact kind of activity that should be witnessed by the people of Alberta on cameras and in the galleries to see what kind of blunders these guys are saying that they want to perform. They're just actually doing it. [interjections]

#### Speaker's Ruling Clarification

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. For the purpose of the orderly debate of this question, the Chair feels that it must recharacterize the motion. [interjections] Order please.

The Chair suggested to the Assembly that the motion before it was a motion by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar that Motion 298 stand. That is incorrect, really. What is before the House is the motion of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar that the previous motion of the hon. Deputy Government House Leader be rescinded.

MRS. HEWES: All right.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

#### Debate Continued

MR. WOLOSHYN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think you've finally shed some light on the matter. I'm quite frankly rather dismayed that we would have hon. cabinet ministers of some description get up and babble away like a bunch of baboons in a zoo. The problem here is that we have had faith, a lot of faith, in the procedures of the afternoon. The hon. deputy House leader inadvertently slipped in the wrong motion, Motion 298. I know that it was inadvertent because he is one of the few people over there of character that I could trust, and when this would come up I would say that it had to be inadvertent, simply because it was not on the list of motions that were going to be debated today. I feel very strongly that if this is permitted to go ahead, that if it is not withdrawn, we will now set up a situation in this House which will create a lot of unnecessary animosity. I can't stress strongly enough that procedures go on both sides. We have a large degree of trust that what's coming from the other side is going to be followed. For the minister of multiculturalism to stand up there periodically and get a stroke of wisdom from heaven knows where and start accusing us of not knowing what's going on in the House is totally inappropriate. It's just an indication of his lack of commitment to the job to be done.

I would very, very strongly urge the House – or perhaps have the minister stand up and in fact withdraw his suggestion that we consider Motion 298. If that were done, then we could go on with the business of the House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

4:50

MR. HYLAND: Mr. Speaker, I can hardly believe what I'm hearing. We sit here day after day on Tuesdays and Thursdays

and look at questions and motions for returns and get berated and berated and berated. "Why don't you handle them? Why aren't you dealing with them? Why don't you tell us? Why don't you give us something?" Now that we're trying to deal with one: "Well, what are you doing? You shouldn't be doing this. You shouldn't be doing that."

Mr. Speaker, what's going on? We're trying to deal with a question after we've been told – this is, what, the third or fourth week of session? – at least eight times to deal with motions for returns, deal with questions. We try to deal with them. Nobody wants to deal with them.

Let's deal with the motion we've got in front of us, and let's get on to the other questions and the other motions.

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

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I understand the issue, what's happened is that . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: You weren't even here.

AN HON. MEMBER: How could you understand it?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Order.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some days your job is very difficult.

Mr. Speaker, fortunately, I was in the opposition lounge, and I was listening. I was indeed listening to some of the events that were going on.

Now, let's talk about how we normally deal with the process. The process we normally deal with on a Tuesday or a Thursday afternoon is that the Government House Leader or the Deputy Government House Leader stands up, moves a motion to deal with certain motions for returns and certain written questions. We vote on that motion. Quite frankly, what quite often happens is that the government supports the motion that's moved by the Government House Leader or the Deputy Government House Leader, and the opposition, wanting more motions to be dealt with, wanting more written questions to be dealt with, votes against it. But what happens is that once that motion is passed by the Legislative Assembly, by the members of this Assembly, knowing what is coming up, those members that haven't got either written questions or motions for returns on the Order Paper then have the opportunity to go on and do their business on behalf of their constituents, and sometimes that takes them out of the Legislature.

Now, I will tell you quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that I've had a motion for a return on the Order Paper the last session; the same motion for a return is on the Order Paper this session. I one day want to speak to this motion for a return. I want to do it in the Assembly. I would not expect the Minister of Labour, to whom that motion for a return is directed, to pop back into the Legislative Assembly and say: "Well, let's deal with it now that the Member for Edmonton-Belmont is gone. Let's deal with it now that we know we can sneak it under the door." Sneaking it under the door is not the purpose for members, regardless of what side of the House they sit on, to put a written question or a motion for a return on the Order Paper. You deal with it when the members are here. That's always been a courtesy that has been extended to the members. We even have negotiations that go on to make sure that when department estimates come up, the opposition and a third-party critic can

attend the House to make those political representations known to the Assembly.

The same thing, the exact same thing, happens with written questions and motions for returns. You expect, with the government's agenda, that when they stand up and move that certain questions on the Order Paper will be dealt with in that day, those will then be the questions. When we finish with those written questions and those motions for returns, we move on to Orders of the Day. We always move on to Orders of the Day. For them to turn around and then suddenly say, "Oh, well; let's have another half dozen written questions," after a motion has been passed, or "Let's have another half dozen motions for returns," after the Deputy Government House Leader's motion has been passed dealing with certain questions is just unthinkable.

The Member for Cypress-Redcliff stands up and says that he's amazed that the opposition is somehow now opposed to having more motions for returns dealt with. Well, he knows full well – the Member for Cypress-Redcliff has been here long enough to know – that when we deal with written questions and motions for returns, we do so when the member that has put those written questions or motions for returns on the Order Paper is present. [interjection] You're right. Pardon me. The minister of Occupational Health and Safety makes a very good point, that the person that puts the written question or the motion for a return on the Order Paper is not always here. But for those written questions and those motions for returns that are called, a colleague is here to move on behalf of that person that particular question or that particular motion, and then it's debated.

What's happened, though, hon. Member for Clover Bar, is that we know from the Government House Leader or from the Deputy Government House Leader that those motions or those written questions are coming up. If I on behalf of my colleague from Vegreville move a question after the Government or Deputy Government House Leader has given us notice, I'm able to phone the researcher and get some of the information sent over so that I can speak to the motion or I can get some kind of an indication from my colleague. But then to have all of a sudden somebody come in and change arbitrarily the motion that has been presented to the Assembly is just unheard of, and we shouldn't even deal with it.

For the hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff to stand up and say he's surprised and he's shocked that we wouldn't want to deal with those motions for returns or those written questions is far, far from the truth. We do want to deal with them. We want to deal with them when we have been given fair notice from the Deputy Government House Leader. If what we're going to do is start changing the way the system works, boy, we can make a ruckus over here as well. I don't think any member over there wants to start dealing with that.

#### **Point of Order Sequence of Business**

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Vegreville rises on a point of order.

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, I refer to Standing Orders 43(2), a section of our Standing Orders that was brought to our attention by the Speaker at the beginning of this session to remind all hon. members that our established procedures may have been at variance with the Standing Orders. It reads: "An order not

proceeded with when called shall be dropped and placed on the Order Paper for the next sitting day." I submit that upon calling Orders of the Day, the hon. Deputy Government House Leader made a motion that was passed by a majority vote in the Assembly here, and that the motion for a return that he tried to sneak back on the agenda today has already been dropped and placed on the Order Paper for the next sitting day and, as such, is not eligible for consideration. I hope he takes that advice and doesn't try any more sneaky little moves like that in the House.

#### Point of Order

#### Reversing a Decision of the Assembly

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

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to the point of order, as the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon noted, the House leaders for the two opposition parties receive copies of the Deputy Government House Leader's intentions with respect to motions for returns and written questions prior to him making those motions.

I would like to repeat today the motion that the Deputy Government House Leader made, and then I'm going to give you references as to why it is absolutely out of order for him to attempt to rescind by any other means that motion which was passed. He said: Mr. Speaker, I move that the motions for returns appearing on the Order Paper stand and retain their places on the Order Paper except for 201, 219, 235, 265, 266, 267, 286, 287, 288, and 297. That motion passed, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I'm going to refer you to a couple of citations. We'll start with *Beauchesne*; okay? That citation would start with 586, Withdrawal of Motions and Amendments. We are not allowed to revisit an identical motion, as you know, unless extraordinary circumstances obtain. Section 586 says:

The Member who has proposed a motion may withdraw it only with the unanimous consent of the House.

That provision has not been made. What he is trying to do, Mr. Speaker, is provide an amendment to a motion which has already passed unamended. That is not allowed.

An amendment may be withdrawn with the unanimous consent of the House, but neither a motion nor an amendment can be withdrawn in the absence of the Member who moved it.

These references are very clear.

5:00

Mr. Speaker, go down the page further to section 592, Rescinding Resolutions. As a matter of fact, what the minister has attempted to do in the previous question is to rescind a resolution he sponsored and had approved by the Assembly a short while ago. The rule under *Beauchesne* says:

A resolution may be rescinded and an order of the House discharged, notwithstanding the rule that a question, being once made and carried in the affirmative or negative, cannot be questioned again, but must stand as a judgment of the House.

He himself sponsored that motion. He surely understands the rules.

Technically indeed, the rescinding of a vote is the matter of a new question; the form being to read the resolution of the House and to move that it be rescinded; and thus the same question which had been resolved in the affirmative is not again offered, although its effect is annulled.

I'd like to go down, then, to *Erskine May*, to the bottom of page 362, "Notice necessary to rescind a resolution."

Notice is required of a motion to rescind a resolution, or to expunge or alter an entry in the Votes and Proceedings or the Journal, and in no circumstances may the House rescind a

resolution during the sitting in which the resolution was agreed to. However, notice is not required of motions brought forward as matters of privilege.

Mr. Speaker, actually there are several other sections in both *Beauchesne* and *Erskine May* that make the case. The minister, the Deputy Government House Leader, is not allowed to overturn his own resolution without notice, period. That is the rule. This point of order I request be ruled upon prior to any further consideration or deliberation of the Assembly.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, to the point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, hon. member, I assume the hon. Deputy Government House Leader was speaking against the point of order. The Chair is prepared to rule as follows.

Just to review the situation. Following the list of motions for returns as accepted by the House at the appropriate time earlier today – they were all completed – the hon. Deputy Government House Leader moved a motion to bring forward Motion 298, that was not on the list. That could not have been called without the unanimous consent of the House. The Chair called the vote on the Deputy Government House Leader's motion.

MR. McEACHERN: Point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There's going to be no point of order on a point of order, hon. member. That's one of the basic rules of this House. The Chair is in the process of rendering a judgment on this matter because there has been wide-ranging debate on it.

The motion was put with regard to calling 298. Only ayes were heard, no nays. Therefore, it was a unanimous decision of the . . . [interjections] Order please. The Chair asked for the ayes and the nays, and there were no nays. Therefore, it was a unanimous decision. [interjections] The Chair is ruling that it was a unanimous decision of this Assembly to call 298.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, I for one person was here, and I did not agree.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, why didn't you say something? [interjections] Order.

MR. McEACHERN: You didn't say it was unanimous consent.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair has ruled that there were only ayes and no nays heard. [interjection] It isn't a mockery of anything.

Following that, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar rose in her place and said that because the hon. member who proposed Motion 298 was not here, she would like to ask the Assembly to rescind its previous decision. That is the matter before us, and that is what the Chair is going to call for a vote on unless some other member wishes to participate in the debate on that motion to rescind the motion to call 298.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

#### Debate Continued

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, speaking to the motion by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, I had received instructions earlier from the minister responsible who would normally answer 298 being put forward by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark. The Minister of the Environment, who is going to be out of the province for the next several days unexpectedly,

had indicated to me that he would appreciate if I would call 298 because he agrees to accept that motion for a return. If the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar wants to put forth the question that the previous motion be rescinded, the government would have no quarrel with it.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Just before I recognize the hon. member, is there anybody else who wants to participate on this? If the hon. member speaks, debate is closed on her motion.

The hon. Member for Lacombe.

MR. MOORE: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I find this a little ridiculous the longer it goes on. You have ruled and the House has agreed unanimously, and we should move with the motion and decide on it.

However, I would like to point out one thing that I find totally unacceptable in this House, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Stony Plain when he was up in debate made a threat to the House. He said: if this motion is not passed, we will take disruptive action. I looked to Standing Order 23(l), and it says, "introduces any matter in debate which, in the opinion of Mr. Speaker, offends the practices and precedents of the Assembly." That totally offends this Assembly, that we will make decisions under threats instead of under debate. If that's what the member over there had in mind when he made that threat of disruptive action if we did not agree to the motion – that was my understanding of it – I find that totally unacceptable. That makes further ridiculous what we've gone through, to listen to this sort of thing coming from that side of the House. I would like, Mr. Speaker, for you to take some action on that, perhaps after you read the Blues or whatever.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker . . .

#### **Speaker's Ruling Speaking Twice in a Debate**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair is advised that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway has already participated on this motion for rescission and therefore is not eligible to be recognized again.

MR. McEACHERN: They've changed the motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The motion was not changed; it was recharacterized. That's all. It was the same motion. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has made one motion, not two.

The hon. Member for Vegreville.

#### **Point of Order Explanation of Speaker's Ruling**

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I assume we're awaiting some further judgment from the Speaker regarding the points made in the point of order by myself and the hon. House leader for the Official Opposition, because it remains my contention that this issue isn't even on the Order Paper because it dropped to the next day's Order Paper, and I hope we'll get a clarification of that. But in terms of the . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. To help the hon. member with the situation as it is now – I'm sorry; the Chair

should have made a few more remarks. If this motion of rescission does not pass and the motion is not moved, then this thing will fall to the bottom of the list completely, as if it had been called and the member was not here to move it. It doesn't retain its place on the Order Paper; it goes right to the bottom. That's where it'll go.

As far as the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands' point about notice being required, this is not required for a motion of rescission if the original motion to be rescinded was passed unanimously.

The hon. Member for Vegreville.

5:10

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do want to address the motion of the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, although I do have difficulty debating a motion about something that isn't even technically on our Order Paper and even eligible for consideration by this Assembly today because it was by motion of the Assembly moved to the Order Paper for the next sitting day. It's not even eligible for consideration, but I will . . .

#### **Speaker's Ruling Relevance**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. I believe the hon. member has misunderstood something. The motion that passed unanimously in this Assembly was to call Motion 298.

MR. FOX: It wasn't on the Order Paper.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It doesn't matter. The Assembly moved unanimously to call it. That's what's before the House. Now the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has moved that that motion be rescinded.

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. FOX: Speaking to the motion, then, I think my colleague for Edmonton-Belmont made a very eloquent case here for rescinding the motion proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. We have had procedure in this House that's been well established over a period of time where the hon. Government House Leader or his or her designate presents a motion to the House on private members' day immediately following the calling of Orders of the Day, and we put without debate a question as to whether or not written questions shall stand and retain their places. Those that aren't are called and either rejected or accepted, and then we deal with motions for returns on the Order Paper, many of which stand and retain their places, some of which are called and then moved by the respective member or designate from his or her caucus, and away we go.

The difference this year, I guess, Mr. Speaker, is that instead of us being able to debate the motion that orders for returns stand and retain their places, that question is now put without debate. The Speaker will well remember the amount of debate that sometimes went into the motion as put by the Government House Leader that motions for returns shall stand and retain their places, because it was the only opportunity we had as members to try and emphasize the fact that these things were left on the Order Paper ad nauseam and important issues of concern were left unresolved as the sitting days in the House dwindled in number. That change was brought to our attention by the Speaker and accepted by members of the House, so we now deal with that motion without debate, and we deal with that motion in good faith.

Certainly on this side of the House we don't expect the hon. Government House Leader to get up and with the tyranny of the majority propose to alter the procedure without any notification or consultation between House leaders or members of the Assembly. It's totally out of character for the hon. Deputy Government House Leader, who himself was a Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees; really an unacceptable process. The motive for the hon. Deputy Government House Leader's motion was clearly that the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark was not in the House at the time, and he thought he could bring that . . .

#### **Speaker's Ruling Imputing Motives**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The hon. member is just provoking a point of order on the basis of making false or unavowed motives on the part of the Deputy Government House Leader. The hon. member knows he can't do that, and he shouldn't do it.

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. FOX: Mr. Speaker, if I may continue, I'm just making a case for rescinding that offensive motion that the member proposed, and we've got to be very careful. There are very many . . .

#### **Speaker's Ruling Imputing Motives**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, you may be trying to make a case, but the hon. member shouldn't try to make his case using unparliamentary language. Now, the hon. member should withdraw that.

MR. FOX: Which term?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That allegation about the motive of the Deputy Government House Leader in proposing his motion.

MR. FOX: Okay. I withdraw the comment that the hon. Deputy Government House Leader didn't notice that the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark wasn't present in the House, if that's offensive. I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that after question period, it is often the case for the front benches on the government side to deplete themselves because government ministers go and tend to other business. We don't call that to question. We don't point that out. It's unparliamentary to refer to the absence of a member in the Assembly, and we just don't think it acceptable for the well-established procedure of this House to be changed by the tyranny of the majority in this Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

#### **Point of Order Items Not Debatable**

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West is rising on a point of order.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, when I look at Standing Orders, section 18 talks about debatable motions. We've spent quite a bit of time debating this motion here, but I don't see

this one as being one of the ones that is debatable. I would suggest that perhaps, given the ruling that the Speaker made earlier talking about this type of motion, we should deal with this, vote on it, and get on with things.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair rules that the motion to rescind is a debatable motion.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, to close debate on this motion.

#### **Debate Continued**

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, this has been a most unfortunate set of circumstances. We have rules in this House, and I think all members try to adhere to those rules. We have traditions, and we understand those. One of the traditions of the House has been spoken to any number of times by other members, and that is that in fact during question period a list is circulated by the Deputy Government House Leader as to what motions for returns and questions are going to be dealt with that day. We all know and have an opportunity to prepare ourselves for them and to move them at the appropriate time and to debate them if desirable or necessary.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that tradition has been breached, and I regret that.

#### **Point of Order Waiving Rules by Unanimous Consent**

MR. GESELL: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Clover Bar on a point of order.

MR. GESELL: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would cite section 18 of *Beauchesne* for reference to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, who claims that we are breaching some tradition or some rules in this House at this point in time. I would quote, under *Beauchesne* 18(1), sixth edition:

Within the ambit of its own rules, the House itself may proceed as it chooses; it is a common practice for the House to ignore its own rules by unanimous consent. Thus, bills may be passed through all their stages in one day, and so on. Now, I find it a little bit offensive when the member speaks that we are breaking some tradition here. These are the rules that we are guided by. When unanimous consent is given by this body, that is the ultimate decision.

MS BARRETT: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Clover Bar fails to acknowledge the rule that governs this Assembly, the one, in fact, that was decided by this Assembly and is used frequently, which I suspect puts both the current and previous motion out of order, and that is the provision for unanimous consent. That is the argument that I was making before. Both of them were out of order. One attempted to rescind a prior decision of the House on the same day without requesting unanimous consent. This one does the same thing. The comments of the Member for Clover Bar fit precisely into that. He's talking about unanimous consent. Look closer to

home, Mr. Speaker; that's what we have Standing Order 40 for. The whole debacle is out of order, both motions.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. [interjection] Order please.

Hon. member, if the Chair had heard a nay vote, the Chair would have told the hon. Deputy Government House Leader that his motion was out of order and had failed.

MR. FOX: There has to be a request for unanimous consent.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no . . . [interjections] Order please. There is nothing in our Standing Orders that says the Chair has to request unanimous consent, using those magic words, at the beginning of a motion. Those are words that have been used with great frequency, but there's nothing that requires those words. The important part is whether the decision was unanimous or not. That's the important part.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, what was your ruling on the point of order?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The ruling is that if the hon. member hadn't gotten up himself and somebody else had raised it again, the Chair was going to cite section 18 in *Beauchesne* that was cited by the hon. members. Therefore, the Chair certainly agrees with citation 18 of *Beauchesne*.

5:20

#### Debate Continued

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, very puzzling.

Mr. Speaker, I was speaking to the traditions of the House, which we all respect and attempt within those traditions to live with courtesy and respect for one another and for one another's ability to be here and to debate the issues before us.

Mr. Speaker, these motions for returns are not put here frivolously by members; they're put here because we want and need or believe our constituents and the people of Alberta need the answers. This is unfortunate, too, because I hope this is not some kind of a test. I hope this is not something here to find out whether or not this can become the rule rather than the tradition that we have had. It's my earnest hope – and I believe the minister was trying in some way to ameliorate the situation when he suggested that the motion was going to be accepted. Now, that's not the point at all. Whether or not it's going to be accepted is not at issue here with me. At issue is the process that we have come to depend upon. I request all members to support my motion to rescind; otherwise, we will have a situation that is unknown, is susceptible to all kinds of frivolity and so on from all sides. So I'll ask that you accept the motion to rescind. Otherwise, this drops to the bottom, and the government still has the option to bring it forward at any time if it is on the list.

Mr. Speaker, I hope such unfortunate incidents will not occur again.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

#### Point of Order

#### Seeking Unanimous Consent

MR. FOX: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there have been many points of order raised today for consideration and citations used. I would like to raise a point of order under *Beauchesne* section 20 as well for the Speaker's consideration. "It is not in order for one

Member to ask for unanimous consent to compel another Member to do something." Because the motion moved by the hon. Deputy Government House Leader required unanimous consent, even though he didn't request it, I would suggest that the passage of that motion compels the member to move the motion for a return standing on the Order Paper under his name. The hon. member, of course, wasn't here, so he can't move it, and I just submit that for your consideration.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Chair rules that the hon. member has stretched that too far.

#### Debate Continued

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has moved the rescission of the motion, passed unanimously, made by the hon. Deputy Government House Leader. All those in favour of such rescission, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That motion carries.

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**

#### Worksite Safety

209. Moved by Mr. Gibeault:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to implement joint worksite health and safety committees

- (1) to assure workers' rights to know the hazards they are dealing with,
- (2) to enable participation of workers in the development and implementation of safety procedures, programs, and standards, and
- (3) to permit workers the opportunity to refuse to do any unsafe work without suffering prejudice or penalty.

[Adjourned debate April 25: Mr. Trynchy]

MR. TRYNCHY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'll try to be as nice as I can be after this harangue all afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, on Motion 209, I would urge all members to reject it. As you look at the questions put forward on that motion, the four of them – "be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to implement joint worksite health and safety committees": that's being done. It's been done extensively by government, so there's no need for that. The next question was "to assure workers' rights to know the hazards they are dealing with." That's being done. "To enable participation of workers in the development and implementation of safety procedures, programs, and standards": that's being done. "To permit workers the opportunity to refuse to do any unsafe work without suffering prejudice or penalty": Mr. Speaker, that is being done because it's in the Act.

Mr. Speaker, just quickly. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods made a statement – it's in *Hansard* – that there were "100,000 accidents in the province of Alberta." Now, I had an inquiry come to me, and the person asked, "Is it true that there are 100,000 accidents, because it's in *Hansard*." I says,

"No, that's not true, because the only records we have are the ones that go to compensation, which are about 40,000 and some lost-time accidents." The next question that came to me was: "Why would the hon. member tell a falsehood?" I says, "Well, that's . . . [interjections]"

#### **Point of Order Imputing Motives**

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods is rising on a point of order?

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, false imputations.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Citation.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order.

MR. GIBEAULT: There's a clear violation of 23(i) of the Standing Orders, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry. The Chair apologizes for continuing to stand while the hon. member is speaking, but what is the violation the hon. member is . . .

MR. GIBEAULT: He is accusing me of making false statements, Mr. Speaker. He's accusing me of lying.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.  
The hon. Minister of Occupational Health and Safety.

MR. TRYNCHY: Well, Mr. Speaker, if it's not a falsehood, it's inaccurate. It's not true, because he states in *Hansard* that there are "100,000 accidents in the province of Alberta." The records I have show that there are 45,100 lost-time injuries. That's not even 50 percent of what the hon. member has suggested.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. TRYNCHY: Now, Mr. Speaker, he goes on to suggest that we should have a regulation passed the same as in the city of San Francisco, and I would say to him, as I would say to all members, that he should be talking to the city of Edmonton, because when you look at the number of injuries in the province of Alberta, the cities rate number two. He should also be talking to the hospital in his constituency and see where they're at, because all hospitals in the province are number one in the frequency of accidents. He has a real opportunity to discuss the matter of injury or reduction of injuries with the city of Edmonton, the mayor, and also with the hospital in his own constituency. I would urge him to do that.

Mr. Speaker, he goes on to say that we haven't had a single new health and safety regulation implemented in the province.

Well, there again, the hon. member is wrong. [interjections] We have changed regulations, which I don't consider minor, in the radiation Act. We are working . . .

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

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. minister.

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, please keep your mouth to yourself at the moment. This is not debate. You had your chance in the course of debate. Perhaps if we get along far enough, you might get a chance to do a wrap-up.

I've been listening outside. This is disgraceful conduct that's going on in the challenge of the Chair, and so there will be no comments made.

Hon. minister.

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. TRYNCHY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I listened intensively, when the hon. member spoke, to his words. I never talked back. I wrote down the things. I read *Hansard*, and he has the nerve to stand there and chatter away in regards to this.

Mr. Speaker, we are working very closely with labour and industry on a number of regulations. Just to name a few, we're working on the mining regulations, we're working on asbestos regulations, we're working on the first aid regulations, the chemical hazards regulations, and others. As soon as industry and labour can get together and bring them to me, we'll take them forward.

Mr. Speaker, I think we've run out of time. I beg leave to adjourn debate.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion carries.  
Deputy Government House Leader.

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

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:29 p.m.]