

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, May 7, 1991**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 91/05/07

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

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

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to present a petition calling on Premier Getty and the provincial government to reinstate funding for seniors' services that were reduced in the 1991-92 budget.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

### Bill 31 Universities Foundations Act

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 31, the Universities Foundations Act. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

The Universities Foundations Act will provide, as agencies to the Crown, foundations as a method whereby our research-oriented universities could acquire funds to further the interests of research.

[Leave granted; Bill 31 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table with the Assembly the response to Written Question 352.

MR. ORMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table with the Assembly the 1989-90 annual review from the Alberta office of coal research and technology.

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to file copies of correspondence to the Premier relating to a statement by the managing director of Sunpine Forest Products that that company will not proceed with this project if an environmental impact assessment is required. These are remarks that the Premier called false allegations yesterday. There's the proof.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you; just file it.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. SEVERTSON: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly 33 grade 6 students from the John Wilson elementary school in Innisfail. They're accompanied by their teachers Mr. Grant Klymyk and Ms Della Oszli and parents Shirley Newsham,

Wanda Pye, Linda Fath, and Sharon Watchel. They're seated in the public gallery. I would ask them to now rise to receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. BRASSARD: It gives me a great deal of pleasure today, Mr. Speaker, to introduce to you and through you to the other members of the Assembly a number of people who are up today visiting the Assembly and attending a meeting with me and other ministers. I'd ask that they stand as I introduce them and remain standing: Mrs. Dora McCulloch, Betty Finch, Alice Henbest, Ken McKie, Dennis Dray, and Joyce Stannard. I'd ask the Assembly to offer our very warm welcome to this group.

MR. SPEAKER: St. Paul.

MR. DROBOT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and members of the Assembly 22 students from Mallaig school in the St. Paul constituency. They are accompanied by teachers Andre Tremblay and Ed Jobs. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would like them now to rise and receive the traditional welcome of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce 10 students from St. Michael elementary school in the riding of Edmonton-Highlands, with whom I visited earlier today and on several other occasions through the year. They're accompanied today by teacher Denis Beaudry. I'd ask them to rise in the public gallery and receive the traditional welcome of the members.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly today two distinguished senior citizens from Medicine Hat who have been here to meet with various ministers of the Crown. I'd like to ask Les Stanford and Noreen Foster to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**

### NovAtel Communications Ltd.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Technology, Research and Telecommunications. The secrecy, irresponsibility, and downright deception of the Conservative government continues. As all Albertans know, on January 17, 1991, this government shelled out \$159.4 million to repurchase NovAtel because of its botching of the Bosch deal; in fact, the government put out a news release admitting this amount on January 1, 1991. What the government didn't tell us and what we have just discovered from the 1990 Telus annual report is that on the same day, as owners of NovAtel, we also paid Telus Corporation an additional \$43.3 million to repay a Telus loan to NovAtel. [interjection] Another \$43 million. My question to the minister is this: will he explain why he told Albertans that his government paid \$159 million to repurchase NovAtel on January 17 when in fact it instead forked out \$202.7 million on this date?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader is quite correct in suggesting that \$159 million was the amount paid for the assets of NovAtel in accordance with the terms of the agreement that was entered into, which in turn preserved the integrity of the share offering, which in turn brought great benefits to the citizens of Alberta.

MR. MARTIN: It's on the Telus statement right in front of me that another \$43.3 million was collected for debts from before, and my question is: why weren't the people of Alberta told about this extra \$43.3 million?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, all of the financial dealings that related to AGT Commission before the privatization and NovAtel at that period of time are contained in the financial records of AGT and the annual report, which was tabled in this Assembly. The details of internal moneys that are advanced between those two companies are fully disclosed therein.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, this is \$43.3 million more than we knew about. The only way we'd find out is by looking at the Telus report; we certainly wouldn't get it from the NovAtel report. Instead of this government being deceptive, why don't they start telling the truth once in a while so we can get to the bottom of this? I want to ask the minister to tell us how the \$43.3 million was paid. Was it borrowed on the \$525 million of guarantees approved by this cabinet on January 11?

2:40

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear: nobody is covering anything up. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has just admitted that he saw that very thing disclosed in the annual report, so that information was available to him. He has found it, so there's no cover-up.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question. [interjection] Second main question. [interjection] Second main question.

MR. MARTIN: My second question is to the same minister, Mr. Speaker. Deception and incompetence are not the only traits this Conservative government exhibits; rank patronage is another favourite attribute. Let's look at Mr. Fred Weatherup again: failed car salesman, disco owner, Conservative fund raiser, and, unfortunately for Alberta taxpayers, an improving golfer. A classic example of this government's patronage, appointed to NovAtel's board without any expertise in telecommunications, Mr. Weatherup now says that even though he was paid for a year after he scampered to California, he said, and I quote: I had no signing authority and not a bit of power and was not involved in the policy side. My question is: can the minister tell us exactly what this man was paid for?

MR. STEWART: Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Weatherup was a director. He was paid in accordance with a schedule of fees that are payable to any director. True, he did not come into that position with a background in telecommunications, which is not unusual for any board of directors of any public corporation. In fact, the opposite is true: most public corporations try to get a broad spectrum of business experience and attributes that will bring strength to a board of directors. The appointment was made many years ago on consideration of those sorts of factors, and he did serve as a director. I'm not going to comment on Mr. Weatherup from the standpoint of his personal circumstances at all. He is entitled to a fair trial, and I resent any sort of implication that this man as an individual should not be entitled to a fair hearing and a fair trial of his particular circumstances.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, this has nothing to do with Mr. Weatherup; it has to do with this government's competence and who they hire. Don't hide behind that.

I'm just going by what he said. He collected money for over a year and said that he had no signing authority, not a bit of power, not involved in the policy side. I want to know precisely what we were paying him for then. Just to be a good Tory?

MR. STEWART: Mr. Speaker, I think there has to be something a little bit more reliable than information from the newspaper with respect to the internal responsibilities and duties of Mr. Weatherup which he carried out during the period of time in which he was a member of the commission. I can say again that he was a director, and so long as he was a director and attended meetings and carried out those sorts of responsibilities, he was entitled to conduct himself as such and receive remuneration in accordance with our schedule of payments therefor.

MR. MARTIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I still want to know what we pay these people for.

MR. SPEAKER: Was that the question?

MR. MARTIN: Do we just pay them because they're good Conservatives?

My question is to the Premier, then, to get to the bottom of some of this political patronage. The Premier must understand that this is hurting his government. Will he tell us if he plans on doing anything about his government's patronage policy of appointing unqualified Conservatives to positions requiring expertise and knowledge?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, the government follows the following way of selecting people for these appointments: we get the best people possible for the appointments. I wonder how the hon. Leader of the Opposition can bring some kind of a newspaper report in here and use it as some basis for facts. Is he prepared to guarantee what's in that newspaper report he just read into the record? If he isn't, I suggest it shouldn't be considered in the House.

### Women in the Public Service

MR. DECORE: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Mr. Speaker, a year ago the Minister of Labour brought forward initiatives that were intended to advance women in the work force. One particular initiative a year ago was the accelerated management training program. The expectation that I think Albertans had was that this program would be initiated and taken up by all government departments, not only people in the private workplace. We've learned that that is not the case, that there are government departments that have not taken up this initiative, this government policy. My first question to the minister is this: can she explain why a government policy, a policy intended to advance women in the work force, a policy intended to give equality to women hasn't been taken up by all government departments?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, we do have an accelerated management program that is available to women in the public service. I will say, though, that there are limits to the number of positions that are available in any given year. It may be that the member has some information that will expand upon this, but it's my understanding that those positions that we had available have been hotly sought after. It's a program that has met with a great deal of excitement in our civil service, and there has been some competition for the positions available.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, my next question is to the Minister of Family and Social Services, the minister who has more females working in that department than in any other department of government. It is my information that the department has not taken up this plan, has not taken up a plan of action to advance women in the workplace; in fact, the department has no plan to give advanced management training. My question to the minister is: why not? Why doesn't a department that has more females than any other have the good plan of action started by the Minister of Labour?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the leader of the Liberal Party that I'm working very closely with the Minister of Labour to implement the kinds of progressive and forthright recommendations that she is bringing forward, and we'll continue to work together.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the minister has again deflected giving an answer.

My final question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, we have a good plan initiated by the Minister of Labour, a plan that Albertans expected every government department would take up but that hasn't been taken up by a department that has more females than any other department. Women need this advanced management training. Will the Premier commit to reviewing this matter and getting all departments on side so that women can get equality in the work force?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll certainly commit to review the matter, yes. I'm pleased the hon. member raised it, but I should draw to his attention that he did not get the correct interpretation from the minister's answer. The minister said that he was working with the Minister of Labour in implementing the plan. If the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenarry wants me to review it again, I certainly will, but he should listen to the answer to his question.

MR. WICKMAN: Well, maybe he should give the answer correctly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Edmonton-Whitemud.  
Innisfail.

### Automobile Insurance

MR. SEVERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Alberta insurance policies have long set two different rates: one for men and one for women. Yesterday the Court of Queen's Bench ruled in favour of the Human Rights Commission judgment that insurance rates should not be based on gender. Can the minister indicate if he's willing to direct the industry to comply with that judgment?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the judgment yesterday, the insurance industry would be required to comply with the judgment within 12 months after all appeals are expended. They do have the right of appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. We have to give them that period of time to determine whether or not that appeal will take place. If not, under the request made by the Automobile Insurance Board to the court, there will be 12 months for the industry to comply with the court judgment.

2:50

MR. SEVERTSON: In order to ensure that the industry remains viable and the premiums to my constituents and all Albertans remain at a reasonable level in the midst of these changes, what steps is the minister taking to examine alternatives for the Alberta motoring public?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the question itself, there's no doubt that changes such as that which the court suggested yesterday and other losses to the industry – for example, an increase in claims by Albertans – do necessitate a look at our overall system. We have asked the Automobile Insurance Board to consider what alternatives there are in terms of coverage, in terms of the systems, no-fault and tort, and any other aspects that they can recommend with respect to either lowering accident rates or improving the automobile insurance system. So the short answer to the question is that we expect within the next couple of months a report from that board which will identify some options for us. We'll then look forward to discussing those options with the industry and the Alberta public before determining if significant changes should be made to our insurance system.

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

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and also deals with the recent decision that gender-based automobile insurance premiums are discriminatory, the differential between them. It seems clear that the government is bent on putting the profits of insurance companies ahead of the rights of Albertans. My question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is: since the practice of charging gender-differentiated premiums will now have to be abandoned, subject to the appeal mechanism outlined by the minister, does the minister plan to take steps to ensure that the insurance companies don't merely jack up the rates of young females to the levels paid by young males?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's preamble is totally inaccurate. This government has worked with the industry and with consumers to ensure that we have an insurance system which is second to none in the country. Premiums paid in Alberta are among the lowest in the nation, and the coverage is as good as others can expect to obtain in the country.

In terms of the question he asked, however, clearly if insurance rates have to be reduced for male drivers under the age of 25, the costs must be recovered in some other way, so the rate structures will likely have to be adjusted. The insurance companies will have to consider what their costs are and how they will determine that particular rate structure. It won't be an easy adjustment for the companies; it won't be an easy adjustment for all consumers.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, the public automobile insurance regime has proven itself to have a lower overhead and hence a lower cost to the consumer as well as fair prices governed by the driver's record. Will the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs undertake to put aside his ideological bias and establish a public insurance plan in this province or, at the very least,

provide Albertans with a detailed explanation of his reasons for not doing so?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's information is directly opposite to the information that we've received with respect to public automobile insurance versus the system we have in Alberta. I will say again: the rates in Alberta stand very favourably against comparable rates elsewhere and so does the insurance coverage that is received by Albertans. There's no question that we will have to evaluate our system overall, but I have not yet seen any evidence to suggest that the public automobile insurance system would be preferable for the driving public in the province of Alberta. Nonetheless, we will be looking at options, and we will be reporting back on those options once the report has been concluded.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

### Social Service Agencies

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For several months now the government has declined to release the government-commissioned Goldstein report on the wage differential between community agencies and government departments. Now, having read the report, I'm not surprised that the government wanted to keep it under wraps. One concludes that the government believes a certain salary has to be paid to achieve a quality of standards in the public service, yet when it comes to contracting the same work to community agencies, the government thinks it can get away with paying the staff up to 50 percent less. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. If the minister believes that a certain level of work in the public service requires a certain level of salary, why doesn't this rationale extend to the contracted community agencies that are picking up more and more of the department's responsibilities?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, let me first of all say that we work very closely with community agencies across this province, and we value very much the tremendous contribution that they're making to Alberta and to the Alberta way of life.

As it comes to specific salary negotiations, Mr. Speaker, those are something that are negotiated between the agencies and the employees themselves and are not something that I determine or negotiate.

MRS. HEWES: Well, Mr. Speaker, agencies are fearful for their survival and for their clientele. Does the minister, then, not agree that without wage equity for community agencies this situation is leading to the potential for less than quality support for the citizens who are the most vulnerable in our communities?

MR. OLDRING: Well, Mr. Speaker, again I would want to make the point that the services and the expertise that are being provided through this process are second to none. We get some very dedicated, committed volunteers that are doing outstanding work throughout this province.

As it relates to the discrepancy, I do have some concerns. I think the wage differential is higher than we would like it to be. We are taking some steps to address that. This year, as the member knows, there is a provision for a 6 percent increase in community funding, in a time of restraint. We hope through that process to be able to negotiate new contracts that will offer anywhere from 4 to 8 percent increases – 8 percent, obviously, in the acute situations; 4 percent where it's less acute – recogniz-

ing that in some instances at the end of a year some of our community agencies actually have surpluses. Now, I recognize that that's certainly not the norm or anywhere near it, but we're going to continue to work hand in hand with community agencies to see if we can't reduce the wage differential that is there, recognizing that we're not suggesting it should be matched dollar for dollar either.

MR. SPEAKER: Wainwright.

### Construction Employment

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a lot of happy news in the construction industry these days. Alberta Construction Association representatives say northern Alberta is the number one spot in Canada to be for construction this year. Alberta projects will spark over \$1 billion in growth, providing more than 1,300 new jobs. My question is to the Minister of Career Development and Employment. Given that we have 7.7 percent unemployment and many able-bodied Albertans on social assistance, what is your department doing to encourage these Albertans to take advantage of these new jobs?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's not very often that I would accept as fact a statement made or printed through the media, but in this case I'd like to pay my compliments both to the media for their accuracy in reporting and to the Alberta Construction Association.

The hon. member asked a specific question, Mr. Speaker, and I want to indicate that under the labour market strategies in specific areas as it relates to the social assistance programs, our department is involved in an employment alternatives program for some \$3,500,000, employment preparation services for over \$11 million, and enhanced employment skills for \$1.6 million. We're looking at some \$16 million-plus in those programs alone, specifically designed for Albertans and Albertans only.

Mr. Speaker, just a little follow-up with regards to the item. I just want to show that it is in fact following with what we've said: we have a program and a plan in place and working. I refer back to a February 15 news release that said:

Our economic performance, in spite of current national economic difficulties, is clear evidence that the provincial government's investment in petroleum, chemical and forestry projects in Northern Alberta are having a positive impact on our economy.

Mr. Speaker, just positive proof that the government's economic diversification plan is working.

3:00

MR. FISCHER: My supplementary: will these Alberta residents have first chance at available jobs over those immigrating into Alberta from other provinces?

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a very difficult question to answer, difficult because of course under the Constitution everybody in Canada has a right to work in any province. I would say, though, that our Bill 11, that we just recently introduced, the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act, is going to encourage Albertans to hone their skills, part of our Alberta awareness program as well, our Skills Alberta. The qualifications that individuals are going to require are going to be great and important in the forthcoming decade. I can only encourage the hon. member to encourage all those within his constituency to apply themselves in trades area and of course complete their schooling as well.

### Senior Citizens Programs

MS BARRETT: For four months or so the Alberta government was implementing a hidden agenda from a document that they kept in cabinet on seniors' programs, and if the opposition New Democrats hadn't got hold of a copy and released it, who knows how far they would have gone by now. Earlier today a small cabinet committee met with representatives of the Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired, members of the Alberta Council on Aging, as well as Lethbridge and Medicine Hat seniors' organizations, and those seniors came with two items on their agenda. Mr. Speaker, the government didn't consult these people before it started implementing its hidden agenda. I'd like to ask the Associate Minister of Family and Social Services if he heard the message today – that is, the request to reverse the cuts that this government implemented over the last few months – and if he's going to act upon it?

MR. BRASSARD: First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me clear up the misunderstanding that is being promoted in the prelude to the question. There was no hidden document; there was no secret agenda. I have a number of documents come forward to study the \$1.2 billion program that we administer for seniors.

The seniors were here at my invitation to meet with several cabinet ministers, and we had an excellent discussion. We have committed ourselves to improving the dialogue between their associations and our group. I make no apology for that.

MS BARRETT: You know, it's real interesting. He says that the minister was the one who initiated the meeting. Well, why invite people if you're not going to listen to them is my question. [interjections] Well, the minister said that he is going to open up communication, that he's interested in consulting. As far as I can see, he doesn't listen when he asks for consultation.

I'd like to ask the Premier a question about this meeting from today. The other agenda on their list was to ask about consultation in a meaningful way. The Premier's Bill on the Seniors Advisory Council doesn't contain any reference to an automatic number of members being seniors. Is the Premier willing to amend his legislation so that seniors, the frontline people, can have representation on this advisory council?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the Associate Minister of Family and Social Services went to some extent to answer the first part of the member's question, and then the hon. member has repeated it. Then, second, she's referring to a piece of legislation, a Bill, that's before the House. It's had first and second readings and is now in Committee of the Whole. If the hon. member is capable of convincing the House of an amendment, then let the hon. member take her best chance at it. I think most people in a Legislature in our parliamentary system know that's the way you deal with legislation, and I welcome the hon. member to make that effort. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm sure the member knows that the question was out of order. Thank you.

Edmonton-Avonmore.

### Family Violence

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Solicitor General. The tragic indifference shown by a 911 operator and the Calgary police towards a screaming woman's emergency call for help at 1:15 a.m. resulted in her sexual assault by a masked intruder in front of her baby. No police were

dispatched because of the operator's assumption: I thought it was domestic. In announcing his family violence program last October, the Solicitor General proclaimed that a victim of family violence is entitled to the maximum protection from harm and abuse as permitted by law.

### Speaker's Ruling Anticipation

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, hon. member. I'm sorry. I'm sure you can bring the question up in estimates of the department later today or, failing that, in question period tomorrow. Calgary-McKnight.

### Special Education Programs

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Education has done absolutely nothing to lower the dropout rate in our schools despite his statement at the ASTA convention in November that he was committed to a 10 percent decrease this year. He has made a statement that partnerships with business are showing positive results, but these are not to his credit. The credit belongs to business and school boards. Action is needed – we all know that – so that schools can be places where all students want to be. To the Minister of Education: does the minister intend to leave action to the school boards and the federal government despite the fact that education is a provincial matter?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would check the record – and we've discussed this in the House before – the government has implemented a high-needs school program in Calgary and Edmonton. We fund community schools across this province. We have an integrated occupational program for students whose needs are different than the strictly academic student. That program is in place and in fact is being expanded to meet more of those students' needs.

Mr. Speaker, I have to share the hon. member's concern that our schools are not the place right now for all of our students. I'm concerned about that. We've implemented those programs which I've described to her just now and others in previous exchanges in this Assembly. We are working with local school boards and with the federal government to try and combat what I consider a very serious problem, in that if students can't get what they need out of high school, then more than likely they're not going to find success beyond school. For the hon. member to suggest that this government in co-operation with school boards, the federal government, and other agencies in this community has done nothing is flat-out wrong.

MRS. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, none of these initiatives are new since November, when he promised he would decrease the rate 10 percent further.

My second question. We all know that high-risk students can be identified in elementary school. Why has the minister not implemented programs to identify these students at an early age and in an early grade?

MR. DINNING: Because, Mr. Speaker, we have taken an initiative with school boards, with teachers, with school trustees, with superintendents across this province to work specifically on the problem that she has identified, and that is high-risk, special-needs students. I welcome the hon. member's question, because this week the Minister of Education in the province of Alberta is hosting a forum on special education, with the focus of that

forum being: how do we co-ordinate our programs better, how do we fund special education programs better, and after spending all that money and investing the time of teachers and trustees and departmental people and folks in all of the agencies around this province, how will we know that we've done the right job? Those are the three main agenda items for a forum that is going to take place at Mount Royal College in Calgary on Friday and Saturday of this week. I look forward to reporting to the hon. member in the weeks ahead as to the outcome of that very successful conference, on which this government has taken the initiative in leading and making sure that we get . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister. [interjection] Thank you.

Athabasca-Lac La Biche, followed by Edmonton-Beverly.

### Native Housing

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. There seems to be some concern that housing for natives in rural Alberta will suffer due to a transfer of funds to help the urban homeless. Now, we all know that this province and this Premier lead this country in providing services to native people, which includes many housing programs. One example is the rural home assistance program, which is providing over 1,200 homes to northern native Albertans, granted to the families because the families are lower income, a decent program. My question is: will the hon. minister outline to this Assembly in detail the status of these programs that are providing housing for natives and other rural Albertans and include in that any proposed changes?

3:10

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member. The native home programs that we have in this province are very progressive and aggressive in their place in the residential model of this province. Two programs have been initiated directly by the province of Alberta and over a number of years have been very, very successful. These are programs that do not exist in some of the other provinces. The rural emergency home program, of which there are 1,200 units: where native families need homes on very short notice, they are provided these types of accommodation so they can use them as transitional homes and can move into permanent homes at a later date. That's been a very effective program. The rural home assistance program, which has some 1,200 units: this program is continuing as it did in 1990-91 and is also providing more stable types of homes for our native people. With Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation we have a program by which we work together, the rural and native housing program, and that program is continuing as well into this fiscal year of 1991-92. Under that program we have built some 1,800 units, and they are very accommodating to the native people.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My supplemental is: will the hon. minister give some assurance to this Assembly that the income criteria for the rural native housing program will be reviewed in the near future? If we target the right people and provide lower subsidies, it means that we can build more homes for low-income families.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, yes, that is an item of concern. We are doing a review of the whole housing portfolio of the Department of Municipal Affairs, and one of the items that will be in that review is the income level of the recipients of the various residential programs that are made available for natives.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Beverly, followed by Westlock-Sturgeon.

### Housing for the Inner City

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Municipal Affairs on housing as well. Yesterday the minister and his colleagues announced that they've finally started initiatives to provide housing in the inner cities, which of course are very necessary although, I submit, inadequate to meet the immediate needs of the homeless in Alberta. Behind the cautious optimism of housing advocates is the serious concern that the commitment to housing is only a shell game. While the minister was able to find \$15 million for inner-city housing, he did so by robbing \$14 million from the rural and native housing programs of his department. My question to the minister is: how can the minister say that social housing is a priority for this government when it has cut from one needy group to help another?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I can understand the question that the hon. member raises. One or two days ago I raised the fact that often my research in this Legislature when I sat on that side of the House was from the daily papers. Often I found even as a member of the opposition that that research was based on false information and I was misled in the House. We find that here again today. So when I'm here on this side of the House, I'm responsible to try and put some truth in the articles that often emanate from our learned colleagues that sit in the upper gallery.

I want to make it very clear that the article that was written by Mr. David Climenhaga of the *Calgary Herald* has more than one inaccuracy, and it is my intent to address those by direct letter to that author. I want to say to the hon. member – and I would have the same concern as the hon. member if we were taking away from one group and giving to another – that the funds that were made available for the announcements yesterday with regard to the inner cities of Calgary and Edmonton were funds that were put into a list of priorities, and other programs, a whole group of programs that are the responsibility of Municipal Affairs housing, were all balanced in that list of priorities. Some of the other programs – senior citizens' lodges, self-contained and others – were in that mix, and that's where the funds came from: from a priority list, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EWASIUK: Well, Mr. Speaker, the facts are, in fact, in the budget that was presented by the Treasurer earlier this year. This so-called commitment to housing is hollow. There is less money going into social housing this year than last, and the number of units provided is being cut by more than 1,300. What possible justification does the minister have for cutting housing programs when the need is so great?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, that again is a very good question and observation which has some accuracy to it in that we did reduce the number of dollars available for the housing budget. What was the reason? There are two very good

reasons. Number one, the object of the government was to balance the budget. Number two, we placed a very high priority on two programs of this government: health care and education. In order to provide needed and continued benefits to senior citizens and other needy people in this province, we had to move dollars from one area to another and reallocate in the most responsible way we could. Some of those dollars maintained excellent quality health care facilities and programs for senior citizens. That's where they went. There was not a loss of the dollars, just a proper priority reallocation, and I think that should be clear in this Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon, followed by Edmonton-Centre.

### **Alberta Wildlife Park**

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Recreation and Parks. This government continues to show its lack of competency and absolute lack of knowledge of any business management by continuing to leave the Wildlife Park, just north of town, closed in the high season, costing the taxpayers about \$40,000 to \$50,000 a month, maybe as high as a quarter of a million dollars for the summer. Could the minister explain, because of the fact that we already have full staff out there to look after the animals – all the personnel is in place; there's no reason at all to have the gates closed – why the minister isn't taking this opportunity of realizing \$40,000 to \$50,000 a month for the taxpayers rather than sulking over there in his pew?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the foundation that's running the Alberta Wildlife Park is at the present time looking at proposals for the option of takeover of this park. I think that in due respect to their process, which is ending on May 10, which is when the proposal should be in, that I'll reserve comment on the other discussion.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, there seem to be many that want the animals on the farm, but they don't want the government appointees to the foundation. That seems to be the problem.

Could the minister tell us that he will announce to this Legislature before May 12, because the wildlife foundation has said they're going to take until the end of the month. Who's right? The minister or the foundation?

DR. WEST: Under legislation the foundation runs the Alberta Wildlife Park. The legislation was set up in 1985. Those business arrangements that the foundation is looking at for the future of this park, preferably an Alberta solution, will be left to the foundation, and I'll await their comments after they look at the proposals.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Centre.

### **Diabetics Services**

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are well over 60,000 insulin-requiring diabetics in Alberta whose disease, as the minister knows, can best be managed by daily testing and monitoring of the levels of sugar in their blood. Yet the cost to diabetics in this province, many of them seniors, for blood testing can be well over \$750 a year, which they have to pay out of their own pockets. Will the Minister of Health not admit

that in the current negotiations with the Canadian Diabetes Association, Alberta Division, her department is offering a package which is far less than this full coverage which both type 1 and type 2 diabetics need, and hence leaves many of them, including seniors who are diabetics, still having to pay out of pocket for the full costs of blood testing strips, syringes, and other services that they desperately need?

3:20

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, one of the adjustments to the Aids to Daily Living program will now see us, through contract with the Canadian Diabetes Association and their Alberta offices, have an ability to deliver diabetic supplies and services that were not available either to seniors or to the general population for the treatment of diabetes. We are working very hard, and will continue to do so, with the Diabetes Association to come in on their ability to purchase at a better rate than probably most other agencies can purchase, including government, to ensure that we're getting the diabetic supplies that are the most contemporary possible. I believe that within that contract structure we will create the needed partnership to ensure that the issue of diabetes is dealt with in the community and exhausted within the community before institutional requirement is deemed necessary.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, I don't think that's good enough, Mr. Speaker. The minister dodged the question about whether there's going to be full access to coverage for both type 1 and type 2 diabetics, knowing as she does that the preventative costs of covering the needs of diabetics now will save thousands of dollars in treatment costs in the future.

I want to ask her again: given, from what I hear, that even Blue Cross, which has historically covered some costs of testing for seniors and other diabetics, will soon withdraw that coverage, does the minister not realize now how much added pressure that puts on diabetics to have full access to the health supplies necessary for them to manage all the aspects of their disease?

MS BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, the management of the disease is something that the hon. member, with all due respect, does not understand anywhere near as well as the Canadian Diabetes Association does. One of the things that we have done very deliberately is to work as a Health department with the Canadian Diabetes Association, with Blue Cross in order to ensure that we are managing this disease, with the understanding that diabetics are a prime example of how we can deal with a disease and an affliction within the community as opposed to in the institution. I believe that the way we are proceeding is in the best interests of all, including all age groups and other diabetics and all disease groups in the province. We will continue to ensure that service is enhanced, as it is this year under the new Aids to Daily Living program.

head: **Orders of the Day**

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

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.  
The Member for Dunvegan.

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

MR. CLEGG: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a delight today to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly 11 students and two teachers from Fairview College. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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: 351, 354, and 368.

[Motion carried]

**United Way**

351. Mr. Wickman asked the government the following question: Did the government commit itself in any way to funding or support for a \$500,000 computer system purchased by the United Way of Edmonton?

MR. GOGO: The government accepts Written Question 351, Mr. Speaker.

**Public Opinion Polls**

354. Mr. Chumir asked the government the following question:  
(1) How much did the government spend on public opinion polling during the fiscal year 1990-91, and  
(2) how much did each department spend on public opinion polling during the 1990-91 fiscal year?

MR. GOGO: The government, Mr. Speaker, rejects Written Question 354.

**Aids to Daily Living Program**

368. Mrs. Hewes asked the government the following question: How many seniors with net taxable incomes between \$5,500 and \$12,000 per year are currently receiving benefits under the Alberta Aids to Daily Living program?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the government is pleased to accept Written Question 368.

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: 185, 186, 187, 193, 194, 195, 196, 198, 200, 205, 208, 291, 292, and 300.

MR. SPEAKER: For clarification, hon. member: 291 has been included in this motion?

MR. GOGO: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

[Motion carried]

**Cormie Ranch Sale**

185. Mr. Bruseker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all agreements, correspon-

dence, and documents exchanged between the government, the Cormie family, and the Japanese investors regarding the sale of the Cormie ranch and a schedule specifying the disposition of the proceeds from that sale.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I could just speak briefly to the motion, it requests really information with respect to what's happening to the proceeds of a sale that occurred earlier on between the Cormie family and Japanese investors. Now, the reason for the request is that the sale was initially blocked by the Treasurer through a variety of legal manoeuvrings, which I must confess I don't understand and quite frankly don't care to. Nonetheless, I think it's important for Albertans to know where we are going with this particular information. Is the settlement proceeding? Has it proceeded? What's happened to the disposition and so forth? Therefore the request under Motion 185.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, as I embark on this fairly long course of dealing with the motions for returns, I thought it would be appropriate to make some comments now which will, in the widest possible way, have application to other motions for returns which we'll be dealing with. I don't think it's necessary to advise the House that I will be quoting from certain sections where we received guidance as to the conduct of dealing with motions for returns, yet I think it is helpful and perhaps instructive to at least outline where I'll be finding my arguments to support our position.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, it is a clear rule, and it is in fact commonly found in our own Standing Order 23. It's one of the sections under Standing Order 23 which deals with those items which are, in the Latin phrase, *sub judice*; that is, before the courts. I know that all members would want to respect the fact that should it be necessary in the judgment of the government for us to reserve the right to provide a document or an item while pursuing legal action against any other party, then of course the Standing Orders as provided in Standing Order 23 and other places, including *Beauchesne*, would be applicable. I draw that to members' attention because I will be using the references in Standing Order 23 in particular to answer these questions.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

More fully, Mr. Speaker, we also find that *Beauchesne*, both in those sections dealing with written questions, which I think are helpful, and more specifically in *Beauchesne* 446, sets out the general guidelines which certainly the government has followed in dealing with motions for returns, and it is in fact replete with and descriptive of the way in which the government will respond. I wanted to make it very clear that these sections are not the government's own policy. These are, in fact, an evolution of precedent which has been instructive to other Parliaments and, in fact, has been the framework of our own response here in this Assembly.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, when I look at the series of motions for returns which we are embarking upon today, many of them in fact do fall within the category of either being before the courts or in fact being limited in terms of our response with respect to section 446. In fact, 446 goes on to talk about consultant studies, which I'm sure at some point I'll have to refer to.



Let me say, though, with respect to Motion 185, that this motion fails for, among other reasons – certainly Standing Order 23(g)(i) is very clear when it says that we will not deal with any matter referred to "that is pending in a court or before a judge for judicial determination." Let me make it very clear that with respect to those issues of the Cormie family, Principal Group, the Principal Group of Companies, FIC, and AIC, all of those companies, which I put into the Cormie/Principal Group umbrella, are in fact before the court, and if you'll forgive the expression, before the court in spades. Any of these documents obviously would be either found on public record once the case proceeds or certainly will be used by the Crown or, for that matter, the defendants in these cases as the matters proceed before the courts.

As well, Mr. Speaker, only by way of a footnote, this of course requires the government to provide some information on the transaction which took place between two separate individuals apart from the government's operation; that is, in this case between the Cormie family and some group of Japanese investors referred to in Motion 185. The government would not, obviously, be able to accommodate any requests of that order which call for the government to provide information between two consenting members of a contract.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, for at least those two reasons this question is clearly (a) out of order and (b) rejected by the government.

3:30

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just a comment on order, please. Committee of Supply is this evening. We are in the formal session of the Assembly right now. I'd like to advise all members of that.

Further speakers?

The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to add my voice to the voice of the member asking for this information. It seems to me that the government is again just playing its old hide-and-seek game. The people of Alberta have a right to know what's going on. We had an inquiry to find out what happened with the Principal situation in the past. We didn't get at all of the information; the inquiry stopped a little short of getting right up to the modern day and age. Of course, neither of the two Premiers involved in that period of time was called. So some information didn't come out. Nonetheless, we did get a lot of information about the past history of what's going on or what has gone on with the Cormie family. Mostly the taxpayers are pretty disappointed in what they learned, and I'm sure that most of them feel that the government should be more forthcoming with what's going on now.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

This government continually makes commitments behind closed doors, and then the taxpayers have to pick up afterwards. In fact, it's got to a point now where you're going through the estimates and you look at something like the estimates for the Economic Development and Trade department – and it will be similar for the Treasury Department and for Technology, Research and Telecommunications when we get to them – what you get is, you know, a hundred million dollars or \$70 million being spent on the department, but the decisions that they make are outside of those estimates in terms of the impact on the people of Alberta. In other words, the Treasurer, because of

his position of power in representing the government in negotiating with various private corporations, can end up committing the taxpayers of this province for incredible amounts of money and never even have that debated in the estimates because you don't know when you do the estimates that it's going to come up. So a year later, or two years later depending on the timing, you get the public accounts, which tell you what commitments the government made on behalf of the taxpayers of this province.

I think it's time the government got around to realizing that the people of Alberta are not prepared to put up with that kind of government and that kind of unaccountability. The government should be more forthcoming in its information on all kinds of things it's doing. Already we've seen businessmen admitting that they would rather, if they are going to be using taxpayers' dollars or involved in government programs, that those were done in a public sort of way, that the announcements were made public so everybody would know and you wouldn't have this veil of secrecy hanging over and the assumption of Tory connections and donations and all those kinds of things banded about. It would be up front, and it would be done under some kind of program funding where there were some criteria and some relatively arm's-length administrators trying to administer a program.

I know this is a special one-case deal so it can't sort of come under an easy or obvious program. Nonetheless, it would seem to me the government could be much more forthcoming with the information they put out even on this kind of a deal. I think they will learn to their sorrow that that's what the taxpayers of this province are coming to expect.

[Motion lost]

#### Public Accounts Detail

186. Mr. Bruseker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all information relating to the expenditure of \$123,018,013, with sundry vendors at less than \$10,000 and more than \$1,000 in the 1988-89 fiscal year, identified in the 1988-89 supplement to the public accounts.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This particular motion deals with information disclosure in the public accounts. In the 1988-89 supplement to the public accounts there is a section that says that anything less than \$10,000 is simply lumped into a large category, the total of which, as you see in the motion for a return as printed, shows in excess of \$123 million. Now, that's a fair chunk of money that I think is not sufficiently well documented.

I note with favour that in fact the most recent public accounts that we now have, the 1989-90 public accounts, no longer use a \$10,000 figure but in fact use a \$5,000 figure, for which I commend the Treasurer. I think that is a step in the right direction, showing more disclosure of at least the more expensive items, between \$5,000 and \$10,000. This particular motion, which has been before the House on a previous occasion in a similar form, deals with a request for information between \$10,000 yet more than \$1,000.

Now, I suspect that the Treasurer's response may in fact be that this would take too much work to prepare. I don't want to steal the thunder from his no doubt eloquent speech that he has prepared, but I would like to propose to the Provincial Treasurer

that if that is in fact the case, I would be willing to accept an amendment that says from \$10,000 down to \$5,000, as opposed to \$1,000, since the Treasurer has already made a commitment to that in the most recent public accounts and in fact has already done so. Even that additional disclosure I think would be welcomed by the people.

So I move Motion for a Return 186 and look forward with anticipation to the Treasurer's comments.

MR. JOHNSTON: I'm not going to get trapped in any kind of an indirect amendment to Motion for a Return 186. I'm sure the member knows me better than that.

He does make my arguments which I was going to make, Mr. Speaker, and I'm glad that from time to time he listens to what is said by the government. Of course, he is on the first point – that is, the repetition of the motion for a return – quite right in terms of the Standing Orders and in fact *Beauchesne*; he has not offended the rules there in that he, in his own words, brought this motion for a return back time and time again, and the time permitted between the two is legitimate. However, we have dealt with this question before, and I'm not going to disappoint the member, because I'll use the same arguments I used the time before. He is absolutely accurate, because *Beauchesne* is instructive in this case. *Beauchesne* points out to us in 446(2)(g) that in fact "papers of a voluminous character or which would require an inordinate cost or length of time to prepare" are not within the jurisdiction of the House to order.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I realize that there has to be some judgment involved here, but in my judgment at least there would be, in fact, an inordinate amount of time and cost to provide this information. The government here is abiding by the direction we receive from *Beauchesne*, and consistent with what I have said before, we are rejecting this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Summation, Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did just want to make a few comments with respect to the Treasurer's response. In this day and age of computerized printouts and computerized information handling systems I dispute the Treasurer's claim that in fact it would take an inordinate amount of time to prepare. I suspect it would be a simple matter of punching a key or two on a computer and asking it to print that information out. The time in terms of man-hours – or person-hours perhaps is more appropriate – might be half a minute in order to do the keypunching, a further 10 minutes to have someone send the information from the Treasurer's office to my office, and the whole task could be completed within probably one-quarter of an hour. So I do not see that as an inordinate amount of time.

Further shooting down the Treasurer's suggestion: I offered a proposed amendment that he may wish to undertake and in fact has undertaken for the last year, so obviously it cannot be all that difficult or voluminous or an inordinate amount of time to prepare because, in fact, they are now starting to make some movement in that direction. So on one hand the words contradict the actions of the Provincial Treasurer; therefore, I anticipate that all members will want to join in supporting Motion for a Return 186.

MR. SPEAKER: Before putting the question, the Chair must ask a question of the sponsor of the motion for a return. Was this submitted in this calendar year in its present form?

MR. BRUSEKER: No.

MR. SPEAKER: It was in a previous year. Thank you. That's what the Chair understood.

[Motion lost]

### 3:40 Gainers' Loans and Loan Guarantees

187. Mr. Bruseker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all financial analyses paid for by the government or done by its employees that investigated the financial transactions made by Gainers Inc. involving government loans and loan guarantees during the period before the government takeover of the company.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking briefly to this particular motion, the people's meat packing company, Gainers Inc., of course is now proudly moving along merrily. Before the time that the government took over that company, which is what the motion for a return deals with, there were, obviously, a number of transactions made between the government and Gainers, which, of course, now is a publicly-owned and Crown corporation. So what we have here is a Crown corporation for which we have, ashamedly, very little information that should be provided to the people that own this, the people of Alberta. Therefore, what is being requested here, the reason for this request, this motion for a return, is really for the people of Alberta and the people of this Legislature to get an understanding behind the rationale of this government in providing the loans and loan guarantees that were provided to this company before we in fact took it over.

MR. JOHNSTON: Those matters which are noted and contained in Motion for a Return 187 again deal with a matter which is before the court. I think it is widely known that the province has embarked on – if my memory's accurate – five or six different litigious moves against the former owner of this company, and the company, Gainers Inc., has also embarked on certain litigation against the former shareholder of that company. All of that is public record. The process is well advanced in the court judicial process. Again, Standing Order 23, by which we abide, is very clear that a matter should not be dealt with "that is pending in a court or before a judge for judicial determination." Clearly, Standing Order 23 would include any requests for information with respect to Gainers, Gainers Inc., or other subsidiaries of Gainers, because of course as I've indicated, we are before the court.

Notwithstanding that argument, Mr. Speaker, but only to support the position with respect to our rejection of Motion for a Return 187, I would add again that *Beauchesne* is clearly instructive when it comes to making public consultant studies. Those consultant studies which are, I suppose, referred to in 187 by the comment, "financial analyses . . . that investigated the financial transactions made by Gainers" would, in my mind at least, be consultant studies. Information which would be done by the department normally but which in this case was done by consultants still falls into that category of not being an order for a return, at least in not requiring a return of the Assembly because, of course, it's covered by *Beauchesne* in the citation just given.

Mr. Speaker, accordingly and along with any other item that's before the court, we will obviously reject this Motion for a Return 187 and others which have the same understanding.

[Motion lost]

### Pension Plans

193. On behalf of Mr. Chumir, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing
- (1) copies of all working papers relating to the calculation behind the original \$1.1 billion deposit to the pension fund in 1981,
  - (2) copies of all actuarial studies and forecasts completed since 1981 on each of the following pension plans:
    - (a) judges pension plan,
    - (b) Members of the Legislative Assembly pension plan,
    - (c) public service pension plan,
    - (d) public service management pension plan,
    - (e) special forces pension plan,
    - (f) local authorities pension plan,
    - (g) universities academic pension plan, and
    - (h) teachers retirement plan, and
  - (3) copies of all statements which show the date of the receipt for pension contributions and dates of payment to the pension fund for any net surplus since 1981.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, 193 is one of those questions, along with the other three that we've just dealt with, that have been before this Assembly as recently as June of 1990. Accordingly, I'll be consistent in my response to this request from the Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Let me say again that the guidelines and principles under which we are operating and under which the government adjudicates and judges as to whether or not these returns are acceptable is provided for us in *Beauchesne*.

What we have here, Mr. Speaker, is a request for recent actuarial estimates and planned liabilities. It should be noted, and I think all members who are now familiar with the process of government and the process of providing ample and adequate information on these amounts would know, first of all, that these requests are fully provided in the public accounts which were recently tabled in the Assembly. More fully, we provide, through the filing of the annual reports of these various pension funds, the full information which has been provided to the government. The point I'm making is that along with other returns that we have heard before in this Assembly, you cannot expect the government to do the research for the members, who have a very adequate research budget – in this case over \$400,000 in the Liberal member's budget – to do this kind of research for information which is normally provided in any event.

Accordingly, and consistent with the answer we have given before, the way in which we'll treat these kinds of questions, and certainly following both the guidelines and principles of *Beauchesne*, I must ask the Assembly to reject Motion 193 from my colleague Mr. Chumir, the Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, it's incredible that the minister can say that, well, he'll just treat this the same as any other one. I mean, it's entirely different from 187, which he rejected for reasons of court cases. He says that the information is available.

MR. JOHNSTON: Listen. Just listen for once.

MR. McEACHERN: I listened very carefully to what you said.

The information provided in the public accounts is not what's asked for here. It is true that the public accounts does provide some information, but I might note, Mr. Speaker, that it's as a footnote to the public accounts; it is not included in the assets and liabilities of the province in the way that the Auditor General would find acceptable and that the people of Alberta would find acceptable. The fact of the matter is that this government has stacked up about a \$10 billion liability in pensions, and this minister has been promising for two or three years now to bring before this House some kind of a plan to deal with that, and he has not done so. Nor does he provide the kind of detailed information we need on each of these pension plans to come up with a detailed alternative plan, since the government doesn't have one.

There is some information in the public accounts. Of course, you have to be a Philadelphia lawyer and phone the Auditor General to figure out exactly what's going on with them because it's merely a footnote to the public accounts; it isn't incorporated into the assets and liabilities the way it should be, nor explained fully.

Furthermore, part 2 of this motion says: "Copies of all actuarial studies and forecasts completed since 1981." Now, of course that's not in the public accounts. I mean, that question may be asking for too much information, which relates to something he said a little while ago on one of the others, and he might have reiterated that point, but the fact of the matter is that the minister has not dealt with this unfunded liability which the people of Alberta are going to have to pay over the number of years that these liabilities are called on as people retire under these pension schemes. He has been promising for two or three years now to bring some plan before this Assembly that would be acceptable to all the people involved in this. The fact of the matter is the way it works now, for anybody that gets a pension under this – in terms of a former MLA, for example – the minister decides off the top of his head each year what kind of a cost of living allowance he's going to make. Well, that's incredible, Mr. Speaker. There ought to be some kind of a formula. There ought to be some kind of a plan, and people ought to know what it is.

So it would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that the minister is long overdue to explain to the people of Alberta how he's going to deal with the unfunded liability of our pension plans.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Motion for a Return 193 from my hon. colleague from Calgary-Buffalo really is asking for information from this government with respect to where we are going with the pension plans. That's really the bottom line. It's asking: what's going on? What are the studies? What are the forecasts over the last 10 years? The Auditor General in his report this year made notes expressing concerns – strong concerns, I would say – with respect to the pension plans, and they are listed in the second part of this motion. The Provincial Treasurer casually gives some reason about sub judice, that I must admit I did not understand. Really what we're looking for here is: where is the province going? The province I think clearly has made a commitment to fund these out of the General Revenue Fund. There is a commitment to fund these different pension plans that are listed here, a total of eight of them in all.

The Treasurer casually dismisses them as being information that is in the public accounts. Well, quite honestly, that's simply not the case. What we're looking for is really some hard and fast figures: not just a footnote in the Auditor General's report, not just a footnote in the public accounts, but some real details as to where these are going. I think that as a responsible government they have a duty and an obligation to provide the information not only to the members of the Legislature but to all these people who are affected by these pension plans.

[Motion lost]

3:50

### Flat Rate Tax

194. On behalf of Mr. Chumir, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all documents and correspondence exchanged by the government of Canada and the government of Alberta regarding the implementation and administration of the flat rate tax.

MR. JOHNSTON: I said in my opening comments that from time to time I would be quoting from certain guidelines which direct us as to how to respond. I did not, with respect, Mr. Speaker, in dealing with Motion for a Return 193 quote the sub judice convention.

Nonetheless, in dealing with 194, I will simply draw the attention of the member who raised the words "sub judice" and admitted his lack of understanding of this provision to page 153 of *Beauchesne* wherein the sub judice convention is clearly spelled out. I will not take the time of the Assembly or of all those others who are aware of this provision to detail why it is that you cannot prejudice yourself before the courts or for those matters which are before the court; 153 spells it out and that in fact is where it is.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to Motion for a Return 194, again here we have a request for documents and correspondence exchanged between the government of Canada and the government of Alberta regarding a tax item, the implementation of the flat rate tax. I can't be too clear on this one that this clearly falls into the area covered by 446(2)(d). I'll quote again:

Papers, the release of which might be detrimental to the future conduct of federal-provincial relations or the relations of provinces inter se: [that is] (the release of papers received from provinces to be subject to the consent of the originating province).

Well, as between other provinces, we would first of all have to seek the consent of those provinces to release that information. In the case of dealings with the federal government, clearly those matters containing information which would prejudice any discussions or positions which may emerge between the province and the federal government on tax matters . . . Because it is a matter of record that the province is a member of a tax sharing agreement; that agreement is public. However, the correspondence which allows us to adjust the tax sharing agreement must maintain its privileged position because, of course, that is a clear convention that we have accepted.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, we cannot accept Motion for a Return 194 which, in fact, abrogates the direction we received that we would not want to impugn the relationship with the federal government or provide information which is of a confidential nature, which must maintain that confidential status to have any kind of policy discussion with the federal government particularly on tax matters. It is therefore quite clear to the government, quite clear to all members who have any history

of parliamentary procedure to know that in fact this motion is both out of order and clearly will be rejected by the government.

MR. SPEAKER: Additional comments?  
Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have a little trouble following the hon. Treasurer's argument. He quotes from *Beauchesne*, 446(2)(d), I believe, that somehow or another this would affect either commerce, people out there in the business world, or affect relationships between governments. A flat rate tax is a very broad, generic form of taxation theory that is floating around and probably even broader than the concept of free trade or democracy or something like that. It is a very valid one, because many societies are thinking now of moving away from the graduated tax to a flat rate tax and also simplifying the whole taxation procedure as far as write-offs are concerned; in other words, almost like a gross tax.

Mr. Speaker, there's no reason why the minister should not want to give this up except possibly a certain lassitude that approaches us all in the summer in that we don't really feel like working too hard. This is a very broad term, and I'm sure that the federal and provincial governments have exchanged correspondence on it.

I just wonder how embarrassed the Provincial Treasurer would be if the federal government is willing to release it. I don't expect the province would release it if the federal government said not to do so, but I think it probably would be worth while, and we'll probably pursue filing a request in the federal House for the same information. If it were forthcoming, then we would have proof positive that either the Treasurer was struck by lockjaw or an incredible sense of lassitude that often gets somebody at this time of year.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: A call for the question.

[Motion lost]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair would just briefly point out that the comments made by the Provincial Treasurer, sub judice convention: in this House it's a sub judice rule. Thank you.

### Loan Guarantee Agreement

195. On behalf of Mr. Chumir, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all documents pertaining to the loan guarantee agreement of \$3 million made on June 5, 1988, between the government and the principals of Sprung Instant Structures Ltd. and Sprung-Clindinin Limited.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'll use "postulate" in the future. That might cover both meanings.

MRS. HEWES: Can't hear you.

MR. JOHNSTON: It was an aside.

Mr. Speaker, in dealing with 195, which requests that we provide information on confidential commercial arrangements between, I believe, a Calgary company and the government, it has been rejected by this government before.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I note that this motion is identical in every respect to Motion for a Return 283/90 which was before the Assembly in June of 1990. It does not, of course, satisfy the same test, of being within the same Legislative sitting, but it is in every sense a repetition of that question. My response at that point was clear. Consistent with that response, we will reject this motion for a return quoting *Beauchesne* 446(2)(o) which indicates an "internal departmental memoranda" or analysis will not be provided.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In speaking to Motion for a Return 195, the request here is dealing with loan guarantees. Now, quite honestly I simply do not agree with the Provincial Treasurer. Guarantees or any financial arrangement, once the arrangement is completed, as this one has been, should no longer be a private and confidential document. What we've got is the government acting on behalf of the people making a loan guarantee, in this case of \$3 million to a corporation which on May 7, 1991, appears to be on somewhat less than absolutely rock-solid financial grounds. Again, here we have a commitment of \$3 million. The Provincial Treasurer says, "Sorry; that's a private matter." I don't understand how you can have a private matter with public funds. I mean, that's really what we're talking about here. What we're looking for is really the open, honest disclosure that the Treasurer says he enjoys and feels so strongly about. I sure would encourage him to live up to that in supporting Motion for a Return 195.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question.  
Summation?

[Motion lost]

#### 4:00 Federal Transfer Payment

196. On behalf of Mr. Chumir, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of any Treasury Department analyses of the effects of federal government budget transfer payment cuts on the Alberta economy.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, Motion 196 requests that we provide "analyses of the effects of federal government budget transfer payment cuts on the Alberta economy." This is a far-reaching analysis. First of all, to paint what might happen with respect to federal government budget transfer cuts on the Alberta economy is more than just dealing with established program financing, Canada assistance plan financing. In fact, the question is quite vague.

First of all, it's a very vague question because it's difficult for us to know exactly what they mean by this question, but more specifically, Mr. Speaker, should the question ask for analyses done internally within the department of Treasury, or for that matter any other government department, which would allow us to analyze, to have a view on, or to form public policy upon, then of course *Beauchesne* is again instructive. It directs us to refuse this motion for a return because, of course, all analysis which leads to public policy, decision-making, or recommendation purposes to a minister or government is not in fact required

to be tabled. In many cases you will act upon that analysis; in other cases you simply consider it for the paper it's upon.

So, Mr. Speaker, along with all other items which require us to provide information on internal analysis, internal consulting work, a series of options or working papers which may be provided to cabinet, cabinet committees, or government, the government would not establish a precedent and, on a consistent basis with other requests of this type, will refuse this question and all others like it.

MR. SPEAKER: Summation, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Well, I suppose I shouldn't be surprised, having heard the other answers this afternoon, but it truly seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that this is exactly the kind of information. The Treasurer says he is not required to table this kind of information, which I understand. That's the very reason this question is on the Order Paper. We are invited to put questions on the Order Paper in order to secure information on behalf of our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, there's no question that the budget of 1991-92 was based on something, and certainly a good percentage of that, the factors that came about as a result of reductions in established program financing and in cap funding from the federal government in Ottawa, has led to considerable changes in programs offered here in Alberta. It's also led to a pass-through of responsibilities for picking up costs to municipalities and to private organizations and agencies throughout the province. We've seen the results and the consternation that has been caused in our communities as a result of these reductions. I think it is imperative that people in the province understand what it was about these reductions from the federal government that caused the Treasurer to present a budget that has the kinds of results we have seen and the kind of impact upon Albertans. Whether we're talking about seniors or health care or education, the results have been profound, and we have not seen the end of it. It's going to get worse and eventually will cost money.

Now, if the government does have analyses of what these costs are and does have what the reductions are from the federal government and what the impact is to be not only this year but in future years, I think it's incumbent on them to discuss that with the people of Alberta and to let us know what in fact those analyses show so that we may work together in order to deal with and find reasonable solutions to the problems.

Mr. Speaker, now is not the time to hide this kind of information. Now is the time to share it.

[Motion lost]

#### Federal Stabilization Payments

198. On behalf of Mr. Chumir, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a detailed breakdown of payments received by the province from the government of Canada under the Canada assistance plan by department and by program component for the fiscal years 1988, 1989, and 1990 forecast and 1990 estimated.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, in considering our response to 198, again the question is fairly vague in what it requires. We have parenthetical expressions throughout the question which make it difficult to ascertain what is meant by the question. Aside from that imperfection in the question it is, however, largely imperfect in that it requests the government to provide

again confidential information, "the release of which might be detrimental to the future conduct of federal-provincial relations." Again, this is fairly clearly handled in *Beauchesne* 446(2)(d).

Let me make it clear, Mr. Speaker, that the government has put forward on many occasions an abundance of information. We file data, we provide information as a result of our estimates, we table information in the Assembly, we are statutorily required to provide information whether it's on pensions, on public accounts, on any other item which might be helpful in the consideration of the Assembly either of estimates or of legislation. The government has done that consistently as long as I've been involved, and I'm now running out towards 16 years somewhere. I know that there's an awful lot of information there to be dealt with, and I know it's generally difficult for most members to access that information, because it requires work. It requires them to be diligent in their responsibilities, and it is easier to simply ask the government to produce the information.

Mr. Speaker, the government has provided all this information on many occasions, and on still other occasions we're guided by what has emerged over, I guess, centuries of precedent: the way in which we can provide information to the Assembly. Precedents which are well prescribed, which are well codified, which are laid down in our authorities are the guidelines that we use for these matters. It isn't on whim or fancy that we simply say we're not going to provide the information; it is more fully on the basis of evolution of precedent and history as condensed in such writings as *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, sixth edition, and in that section 446 is very instructive. This section didn't emerge overnight. This section emerged as a result of careful thought, of precedent, of careful consideration of what it is that is necessary for the government to do its work without having to provide full information, because in many cases the full information is not even used by governments. If it is out there, then you're deflected from debating the real issue but are debating what might have happened, as we saw with respect to the leaked document on senior citizens, which is very, very clearly a working paper document, not at all the government policy but one which has deflected the issue to such a considerable extent that even the Member for Edmonton-Norwood who raises it knows that he's wrong but is having some fun with that paper.

You can see how that would happen time and time again if that kind of information was provided. We would be responding to not what is our policy but to what might be or what could be or what might have been suggested by others, and that fully is not what this government is about. We put our policies forward, we give the clear outline of the guidelines of the programs, and of course as good managers we continue to review on a time-to-time basis all of these programs. To release information that's internally generated would, in fact, put the bureaucracy at some disadvantage, because they would be always looking over their shoulder to see whether or not this document had to be made public. A minister or government would not receive the fullest and most objective assessment of these particular programs, policies, or information, and as a consequence you would not be dealing with full information.

One of the hazards of a large system, Mr. Speaker, is screening upwards. That is to say, information is screened from those people who have to use it, because many people anticipate what the outcome may be or what the reader's impression may be, and that is a very faulty premise which this government will not follow. We want our bureaucrats to provide us with full information, to have full flexibility to debate public policy and to make straightforward recommendations. To have that on

one hand, Mr. Speaker, it is a requirement that you not be required to file that kind of free-flowing thinking, free-flowing objective assessment of programs and evaluation. That's why, in a very few words codified here in *Beauchesne*, it says clearly that documents of this order must not be filed so that that kind of freedom within the civil service that serves the government is not impaired, so the objective full assessment of these policy questions can still exist. That's what the people of Alberta want, that's the policy under which we operate, and that's why we're refusing this motion for a return, Mr. Speaker.

4:10

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can see that there's a chinook blowing in from Lethbridge this afternoon. With the blast that came from the other side just now, I quite frankly think the Provincial Treasurer is just filling in words here, and in fact the reasoning offered by the hon. Provincial Treasurer this afternoon really escapes me.

I mean, one just has to go to the public accounts. One can find – and I'd even ask him; I'm sure he's got his own personalized copy over there at his desk. Now, this is for the most recent public accounts available for the year beginning April 1, 1989, page 1.20, which estimates the revenues received for the government of Alberta. This is, of course, the consolidated financial statements which include all of the financial statements for the province. In that schedule we will find listed in the public accounts of that year that \$513,790,000 was received in revenue: payments from the government of Canada under the Canada assistance plan.

One then can turn further into the public accounts, Mr. Speaker, to page 3.64, and this has to do with the revenue received and accounted for for the Department of Family and Social Services, again for the year beginning April 1, 1989, ending March 31, 1990. Here we find payments from the government of Canada, the Canada assistance plan, and once again we find the figure \$513,790,063, right down to the last dollar. So we know that all of the money received by the government of Alberta from the government of Canada is earmarked against expenditures of the province of Alberta in the Family and Social Services department.

Now, why couldn't the Provincial Treasurer simply give us a schedule that outlines the expenditures of the Family and Social Services department, a statement of expenditure by element, and alongside it the revenue received under the Canada assistance plan by that element? I don't see what confidentiality is entailed in simply breaking down a gross amount received from the federal government by the province of Alberta, earmarking it against the elements in that Department of Family and Social Services. I can't see what confidentiality is betrayed in doing that. I can't see what agreements would be violated by doing that, although one could assume that under the federal program, where 50 percent is shared by the federal government, one could almost break it down by the expenditure of the Family and Social Services department and assume that almost 50 percent of it was the funding received by the Alberta government. I can't see how any confidentiality could be violated in any way, shape, or form. This could easily be done by going back through each of the public accounts for the fiscal years from 1988, and of course there's no reason why those forecasts and estimated figures for the just completed fiscal year couldn't be provided as well.

So it's a simple matter, almost an arithmetical request that's being put by the hon. member to the Provincial Treasurer today, and as far as I can tell, his reasons for denying the information are nonsense.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar, summation.

MRS. HEWES: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Just very briefly, the Member for Calgary-Mountain View has, I think, explained the circumstances. Of course nothing is going to be breached here; nothing is going to be revealed that isn't and shouldn't be public information.

Mr. Speaker, the only answer I can come to or the only reasonable kind of summary of what the Treasurer is saying is that he doesn't have the information; maybe he doesn't have it, never did have it, and doesn't care about it. That's the only kind of sense I can make out of what he's saying. There's no reason clearly that we shouldn't have it if in fact he's ever looked at it.

MR. McEACHERN: Don't try to make sense out of what he says.

MRS. HEWES: Yes, I am trying to make some sense out of it, hon. member.

Mr. Speaker, the point of the matter is that these are major transfers, and we need to know whether or not Albertans are accessing all of those transfers that they have the potential to do so. We need to find out if in fact we are getting all of the money and if in fact the government of Alberta is applying for all that money that is available on our behalf that they should. It isn't so long ago that the city of Edmonton had to beg the government to access money for child care through this fund. The province was leaving it on the table. The Provincial Treasurer has in no way assured me or other members of the House that this isn't occurring. Now, if I can't have that information and if the Treasurer insists that this is confidential, which we cannot accept, then I can only assume that he does not want to share with the House the fact that this government is not accessing on behalf of Albertans all the funds through the Canada assistance plan that we have a right to and are entitled to. That's a very sad kind of explanation, but I can't think that there's any other one that applies in this case.

[Motion lost]

### Financial Statements

200. On behalf of Mr. Chumir, Mrs. Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all audited and unaudited financial statements, both year end and quarterly, for S C Properties Ltd., S C Financial Ltd., N.A. Properties Ltd., and 354713 Alberta Ltd., Softco, for the years 1988 through 1990 inclusive.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, in reviewing Motion for a Return 200 by the Member for Calgary-Buffalo, again it is very difficult to unravel what it is that he means to achieve. I'm not too sure whether he wants audited quarterly statements or unaudited year-end statements. The meaning of the question obviously is as confused as the member, and for that matter the Liberal Party, and therefore we will reject this question.

In rejecting it, Mr. Speaker, I must go on to say that again the sloppiness of the Liberal Party is evident. I mean, they are

asking for information which has been provided before. That's why we're taking time to read chapter and verse. They should listen to it, because Mrs. Hewes just a few minutes ago drew some inaccurate conclusions. She should at least have the courtesy to all members of the Assembly to review what it is that's in *Beauchesne*, because it is *Beauchesne* that provides us with the guidelines as to how to operate. I doubt very much if, in fact, the House leader of the Liberal Party has read the sections.

Now, what does *Beauchesne* say about these matters? Well, *Beauchesne* says that it is, in fact, out of order and the government need not respond to a written question should a question seek information which has been set forth in documents easily accessible, previously filed, statutes, et cetera. That's what it says. We're not making this up, Mr. Speaker, and I'll tell you one other thing: we're not doing the research for that sloppy party across the way.

Now, what it says is that they want us to provide by motion for a return information which has already been provided through the Alberta public accounts, for example.

MR. McEACHERN: That's nonsense.

4:20

MR. JOHNSTON: My colleague Mr. Hawkesworth spoke about not providing information in public accounts. Well, here we are. Part of the motion for a return is already covered, and the member from Edmonton something or other says that that's nonsense. Well, I draw his attention to pages 7.54 and 7.58 where, in fact, much of what is requested is already there, already provided.

Still further, Mr. Speaker, with respect to other statements, the government has provided by way of normal filings and tablings the kind of information always provided by this government to the Assembly. Copies of the '89 audited financial statements for S C Properties and S C Financial for the year ended December 31, '89, including comparative data for 1988, are included in Alberta public accounts - I've noted that - and statements ending March 31, '90, were released to the public on March 22, '91. The information's been made public already. It's a matter of information. You know, check the public accounts, check the library, check your own files somewhere, but don't waste our time in this Assembly with nonsense kinds of motions for returns. That's the kind of sloppiness you're seeing from the Liberal Party across the way, and that's why the government is sticking right to the rules of *Beauchesne*, listening carefully to what is pointed out in *Beauchesne* itself, and obviously we're not going to accept this nonsense request for a return because, like the Liberal Party, it is confused. The information has been provided. I, certainly, as a personal request, would ask the Liberal Party to do its research, check *Beauchesne*, check what's tabled, and for goodness' sake, if you can't do that, check out. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the great oratory of the Treasurer, the fact of the matter is that we do not have the March 31, 1990, annual statements for Softco, S C Properties, S C Financial Ltd. N.A. Properties is probably rolled into North West Trust, although I just got the latest statement from them the other day, and it's not clear that N.A. Properties is listed in their books in a way that makes it clear what they are doing separate from North West Trust.

Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister the other day about the Softco annual statement. He said, "Oh, well, it's already available," but, in fact, the '90 one is not. We have the '89 one, we have the '88 one, I will agree, and I recognize that this motion does ask for those, but we do not have the updated one. I've been asking his office for the last three or four months. It is now 13 months since March 31, 1990, and still we do not have that annual statement for Softco or S C Properties or S C Financial. There is no reason in the world why the Treasurer should sit on those. He just plays games with it and releases it when he feels like it a year and a half later. Recognizing the fact that the information when you get it is already for the previous year – I mean, we're now two years and a month out of date on what's happening with Softco, for example – and this minister has the gall . . . Sure, we can go to the public accounts and find some of the liabilities of the government in Softco, but that is not a financial statement for Softco. That's a different thing.

MR. JOHNSTON: Check the sections.

MR. McEACHERN: Yeah, I'll check the sections you mentioned. I have checked the sections on what the liabilities of the government are for Softco, but that does not mean we have the financial statement.

We're two years and a month out of date on the financial statements, and unless the Treasurer can do better than that, I don't see any reason why we should listen to the garbage he puts forward each day.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just would like to make a few comments with respect to the Treasurer's tirade that we listened to just a moment ago.

MR. JOHNSTON: It was soft.

MR. BRUSEKER: Softco?

I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, we shouldn't engage in this sort of debate.

The request here for both year-end and quarterly statements: the Treasurer danced around a little bit and was confused as to what was being requested here, and I think what really is being requested is detailed information. There is some information, I admit. Perhaps the Member for Calgary-Buffalo did not see the public accounts. I think the Treasurer did have a point in that one regard. However, there is information that is not provided that is requested in this motion for a return, that is not provided in the annual report or the public accounts. So, the 1990 annual returns for these . . . Part of the problem with the process we have in this Legislature is that we tend to get data, information, that by the time it is tabled in this House under statutes like the public accounts – the next set of public accounts that we get are a year off and by the time we get them will, in fact, be two years out of date. So it's very difficult really to get information that is fully accurate and up to date with what's happening at the time.

So I guess we have to thank the Treasurer's thoughtfulness here in this afternoon's debates. He's been very eloquent and has batted a thousand this afternoon. Not only has he managed to look out for the welfare of our arms wheeling that wheelbarrow out, because there's nothing in it, he's even managed not to scratch the paint. It's been completely undamaged by any efforts

on behalf of the Treasurer, which I think when push comes to shove, as we'd like to do with the wheelbarrow with some information in it, is absolutely shameful.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: A call for the question.

[Motion lost]

#### Labour Relations Code Enforcement

205. Mr. Sigurdson moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing all documents, reports, evidence, and information received by or prepared for the Minister of Labour respecting the minister's investigation into allegations that Maxam Contracting Ltd. and/or Mr. Willard Kirkpatrick authored and circulated a document which breaches the Labour Relations Code.

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, I stand to reject the motion. I would make a couple of points in so doing.

There is on file with the Legislative Assembly already at least photocopies of a series of documents which form, as I understand it, the core of the allegations. Secondly, as I said in debate on my estimates last week, I personally spoke to the parties who were most directly affected and urged all of them, if they felt that their rights or other privileges or responsibilities had been in any way adversely affected, to take their case to the Labour Relations Board, which is, of course, the appropriate judicial forum in which to investigate such allegations. All those parties declined. Thirdly, let me say that any documents, et cetera, that I do have have been prepared as internal departmental documents, and those, of course, are exempted by the rules in *Beauchesne*.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Edmonton-Belmont, summation.

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This motion for a return was placed on the Order Paper after I'd raised questions in the Legislative Assembly about a document that I had received from concerned workers who found a handwritten letter that was later typed onto Maxam letterhead. Quite frankly, the content was offensive, and if certain words had been deleted and substituted or exchanged with others, I'm sure that every single member of this Legislature would have cried out calling for an investigation or some kind of action by an appropriate body.

What the letter said, Mr. Speaker, again for the record, was that those people that are involved in the trade union movement should be demoted and those people that are involved in the anti-union movement should be promoted. I would hazard a guess that if you were to take out the words "trade union" and say, "Those people that are black or Jewish or Chinese should be demoted," you'd have a human rights case and you'd have an investigation, but because what we had was the word "trade unionist" in that context being used, we haven't got any investigation at all.

4:30

When I raised that matter in the Legislative Assembly last year, the Minister of Labour said, "Provide me with documents," and I did. I provided the Minister of Labour with photocopied documents of the letter that had been typed onto the letterhead. I also provided the Minister of Labour with photocopies of the



handwritten documents. That wasn't good enough. The minister said that it didn't prove a single thing; not a blessed thing was proved. So what did we do? Mr. Speaker, at the expense of the constituency budget allotment and the amount of money through the Official Opposition fund, we sent that document down to a forensic handwriting analyst. The discovery? The discovery was that the handwritten document was that of the president of the company, the president of Maxam. We had all of the information, provided it to the minister, and nothing at all was done.

Now, the minister says that photocopies are on file. I know that they're on file. I don't need to go to the Legislative Assembly or to the library or to the minister's office to take a look at those photocopies; I've got the originals. Why would I want to go and take a look at a photocopy when I've got in my possession the original document? I don't need to go and find out what I've delivered before. What I've asked for in this motion for a return are those papers and evidence, information that deals with the minister's investigation into the matter. The minister says that calls were made. Well, were they followed up with letters, Mr. Speaker? Were they followed up? Surely when a member of the Legislature names a member of the public as having done something that he thinks to be wrong, you would think that a letter might go out from the minister. Was a letter sent out? I don't know.

The minister says that there are documents that were generated as a matter of course in the investigation of this matter but that it's "internal departmental memoranda," and therefore under *Beauchesne* it can't be released. Well, that's truly sad, because I can tell the minister and members of the government that there are a number of working Albertans out there who believe that because this individual that penned the hate literature against trade unionists is a friend of the Conservative government, nothing was going to be done. That was part of the concern they had when they brought the document to me. You could've taken bets on it. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, as it turns out, they were right. Nothing at all was done.

You provide the information, bring it forward, and all you ask for . . . I'm not asking in this instance for the minister to prosecute. I'm asking the minister to provide the Assembly with the information that the department has with respect to the investigation. Mr. Speaker, we can't even get that. I think that in itself tells a story. We shouldn't be terribly surprised by the response, but we can most certainly be very disappointed in the response.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all members to vote in favour of this motion and show those workers that brought this concern forward that indeed something was done by the minister and the Department of Labour.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion lost]

#### **Volunteer Incorporations Act Task Force**

208. On behalf of Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Taylor moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the report of the task force on the volunteer incorporations Act and copies of all written briefs submitted to that task force.

MR. SPEAKER: On behalf of the government, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, the same motion was on the Order Paper last year, and the House voted against that particular motion for the reason that the volunteer incorporations Act committee was established to give ministerial advice. I believe at that time the motion was represented by the hon. Liberal House leader. I suggested that if the member who sponsored the motion wanted to see and discuss the Bill, I'd be happy to do that with him. I haven't heard from him since that time or from any of the other hon. members.

However, in reassessing the report that I have, I don't have a problem with giving that to hon. members of the House, remembering that it is a response in some detail to Bill 54, the volunteer incorporations Act, which was introduced some years ago, and one has to read it in that vein. It wasn't a report developed for public consumption as such. I would have problems with giving copies of all written briefs submitted to the task force. Those briefs were given with the understanding that it was advice to the minister, and without the consent and involvement of those groups and individuals, I couldn't do that. But to facilitate discussion of this particular motion, I would propose an amendment that deletes "and copies of all written briefs submitted to that task force." The motion, if amended, would read,

that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of the report of the task force on the volunteer incorporations Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Speaking to the amendment. The amendment is a deletion of the last line.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, speaking to the amendment. After some discussion with my colleague, who apparently has already had some discussions with the minister, the amendment as presented by the minister will be quite satisfactory. I'd like to support the amendment.

[Motion as amended carried]

#### **Advanced Education Funding**

291. On behalf of Mrs. Gagnon, Mr. Bruseker moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all documents and correspondence between the government and postsecondary institutions providing direction to the institutions regarding budgetary matters, including the increase in tuition and elimination of programs, for the 1990-91 and 1991-92 fiscal years.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, Motion for a Return 291 is similar to motions for returns dealt with last week. It asks for and seeks "copies of all documents and correspondence" between the minister, or the government – the minister speaking for the government – and the postsecondary system concerning direction to the institutions on budgetary matters, including the increase in tuition fees and the elimination of programs.

Mr. Speaker, the government is not prepared to release that information for several reasons. One, the tuition fee question is a public document that's now been released. Surely hon. members don't have to ask for that. When it comes to budgetary matters, as members are aware, universities, colleges, and technical institutes have separate statutes. They must deal with budgets in different ways. There's a fair amount, to be quite frank, of negotiation that goes on between the minister, the ministry, and the postsecondary institutions.

Then on the question of the elimination of programs, Mr. Speaker, that would be, I presume, in accordance with Bill 27 dealt with last year. I don't think for one moment that I as minister should be at liberty, without the consent of the other parties to the correspondence, to release that type of information. I think that's a matter of confidentiality, and if one reads *Beauchesne* under 446, I'm sure hon. members would accept that.

So unless it were worded substantially differently, Mr. Speaker, I would recommend that members reject Motion for a Return 291.

4:40

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-McKnight, summation.

MRS. GAGNON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I was seeking here was information regarding the autonomy of boards of governors, administration, and general faculties councils at all of our institutions. I just wanted to know whether the minister was directly involved in telling them basically what to do about tuition, about which programs to cut, which programs to retain, and so on. I think it's extremely important that all of us know whether this minister has an arm's-length relationship with the institutions or whether he directs them and makes the decisions. I truly believe that we need to know that, because I feel that the institutions know what is best for their institution, for their students. If the minister is directing them, I think we have a right to know, and we also have a right to see what the correspondence has been, what the written directions have been. There is nothing of a confidential nature that I can see, and I do respectfully submit that the minister should not have said no to my request for this information.

Thank you.

[Motion lost]

#### Payments to Human Rights Commissioner

292. On behalf of Mr. Decore, Mr. Wickman moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing
- (1) details of the services provided for the payment of \$16,279 to Fil Inc. by the Department of Labour in 1989-90 and
  - (2) details of the services provided for the payment of \$75,580 to Fil Fraser by the Department of Labour in 1989-90.

MR. SPEAKER: For the government, the Minister of Labour.

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, the information is of a confidential nature insofar as those were the per diem payments made to the chief commissioner, either as his personal corporation or himself, which of course we would not reveal any details of due to the confidentiality thereof. As the member knows, of course, the chief commissioner has been moved to a full-time job and is now on a salary scale, and this sort of information would come up in public accounts in that way in the future.

Needless to say, too, we have made arrangements with Mr. Fraser that any earnings he receives from the Spicer commission are automatically deducted from the payments that he receives as chief commissioner for the time he has spent on the two.

MR. SPEAKER: Summation, the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the remarks made by the minister responsible for the Human Rights Commission. I'm particularly pleased with the response about the avoidance of double-dipping as far as the participation of the chairman of the Human Rights Commission is concerned in his relationship to the Spicer commission.

Mr. Speaker, on a point of principle, at least from my point of view, I believe it's important to the electorate, the taxpayer, those people that pay the dollars to these different positions that are created, the so-called political appointments, that that information be made available. I don't see any reason why we should hide the facts or not be prepared to disclose the facts, whether a person is under contract or not, as to what that per diem is, what that position pays, whether it's this particular commission, whether it's the Workers' Compensation Board, the ALCB, and on and on and on. The public do have the right to know that, and I would have preferred that the information requested by the Member for Edmonton-Glenarry be released to this House so members of the public would have access to that material.

[Motion lost]

#### Decentralization

300. Mr. Wickman moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all studies prepared by or for the government in 1990 and 1991 on the impacts of a decentralization and relocation strategy in Alberta.

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, I stand to reject this motion, as well, through rule 446 under *Beauchesne* and particularly subsection (2)(l) and (o), that any documents that have been prepared or studies of this nature are for internal use.

I might also point out, of course, that there is an ongoing policy of this government, and that is to provide balanced services across Alberta and also services that are relevant to Albertans. As their needs change, of course, the services we offer them change over time. It always requires some refocusing of our overall operations. In addition, with an eye always to increasing the efficiency of the delivery of government services, that from time to time also leads to reorganizations or refocusing.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Summation, Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These are the types of discussions that I've had in the past in this House with the Provincial Treasurer, trying to point out the necessity for his department in particular, being the provincial Treasury, to undertake and to release cost analysis on the possibilities or the thoughts of decentralization and relocation. I remind members of this House that there has been a great deal of discussion in this area. We have a Department of Agriculture where we have potentially up to 500 employees affected. Up to 500 employees this August and next August could be relocated to other parts of Alberta, such as Stettler, such as the hon. Minister of Agriculture's riding, or who knows where.

After the embarrassment that this government felt very, very clearly, the humiliation as a result of the foolishness in the move of 52 employees to the riding of Stettler for the marketing division of lotteries, I guess there is some embarrassment to release this type of documentation. The 52 families, of which

five chose to relocate, could have located to much more sensible locations here in the province of Alberta that have access to the type of tools that one would need in that type of division. But that strategy wasn't employed, Mr. Speaker, because I don't believe there were any efficiency studies done, there was any relocation strategy developed ahead of time. It was simply a decision made, a political decision that we're going to plunk that department from Manitoba into Alberta. That part of it has some logic to it, but to say that we're going to plunk it in the riding of Stettler was unbelievable. It was unbelievable; it was unbelievable to members on the other side of the House. Many of them expressed a great deal of shock.

Mr. Speaker, to close up . . . [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order.

MR. WICKMAN: To close debate here before the members on the other side get a little too overreactive, a little too . . . Gee, I don't believe it. I don't blame them in a way, because I think this particular motion for a return does hit a sore spot. It hits a nerve, because there is a great deal of ill-thought strategy involved, if there is any strategy involved in this whole concept, a political rationale of decentralization and relocation.

I would ask government members who are involved in this decision that if they have not undertaken cost analysis, looking at the impact on the economics, on the efficiency of the service to the user, on the question of the impact on the life-style of those families, please do so. I'm sure it would be appreciated by the taxpayers of Alberta; it would be appreciated by those employees that could potentially be affected. If it is to be done, that information should then be released to the public so Albertans, so the taxpayers know they have a government they can feel a little more comfortable with, that at least is attempting to do some things right, that is attempting to show there is some logic behind some of these decisions that Albertans are becoming more and more disillusioned with, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion lost]

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**

**4:50 Women's Shelters**

211. Moved by Ms M. Laing:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to increase funding for the basic emergency services provided by women's shelters to 100 percent, as requested by the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, and adequately fund community-based treatment programs for offenders and all victims, including children.

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, violence in the family is a major social problem, and this motion calls for a response from the government that will aid victims of that violence – women and children – and treat offenders, a primary form of prevention in both the present and in the future with the treatment of children who are either witnesses or targets of the violence in the home. We need to heal these children and to break the intergenerational cycle of violence. This motion only deals with part of the solution to violence in the family. On another day I will look at it in a much broader sense.

We are confronted on almost a daily basis with the reality of violence which is perpetrated by one family member against other members of the family in the name of power and control and presented in the rhetoric of love and need. Two weeks ago

we heard of a woman who left a shelter who was found beaten to death. The husband from whom she sought to escape is the alleged killer. A short time ago in Edmonton a woman leaving a restaurant was shot and faces a life of paralysis. Her estranged husband is the alleged assailant. Three thousand battered women and 4,000 children found refuge in Alberta shelters last year, and some shelters report turning away twice as many families as they take in. One in eight women living with a partner is assaulted or abused by that partner. One in nine females is abused sexually or physically in dating relationships. Sons of batterers have wife battering rates which are 1,000 percent greater than the sons of nonviolent fathers, and 75 percent of men who abuse women witnessed abuse in their own homes. One in four females and one in 10 males are sexually abused, 50 percent prior to the age of 17, the majority by a family member. In excess of 90 percent of offenders are male.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Between December 6, 1989, and December 6, 1990, 106 Canadian women died in violence in the home. This is a painful reality that brings me to this motion today. It is a painful reality that many would ask us to minimize and deny. At some level for people who have not worked with the targets, the victims and the survivors of this violence, it is an unbelievable reality. To believe it is to challenge several of the most basic beliefs upon which our society is built. One of those beliefs is that all men protect and nurture women and children, although there is a hint of things amiss in the notion of protecting women, for the question is: protect women from whom? The answer, as we heard a long time ago, is, of course, from other men.

We have heard concerns raised about women beating men. I would just like to answer those concerns, because I think in fact it is a concern that we must address. Since men tend to have greater financial security, better jobs, less responsibility for children and greater credibility in society, they are generally less in need of support than women who are battered. Because the dynamic of our society and the dynamic of the violence against men is very different, and because of women's inequality in terms of political, economic, and social power, the two issues are quite different, and the solutions at some level and in some ways are quite different.

The second belief we have is that the home is a place of safety, of nurturance, and of loving relationships, a place where children can grow into adulthood protected from the consequences of their innocence, their immaturity, their lack of understanding of how the world functions. I think of the child having to learn about the law of gravity, and children have to learn how to treat other people. It's a place where children are protected from the consequences of unchecked impulses, emotions, and intellect. It is a safe place to find the limits of permissible behaviour and action. These beliefs are shattered by the reality that the sanctity of at least one in eight homes is destroyed by violence. Our beliefs are shattered by the reality that some women, in attempting to escape these homes that have been likened to war zones or concentration camps, are hunted down, injured, and sometimes killed by the men from whom they are attempting to escape.

Mr. Speaker, it was not until the mid-1970s that the issue of wife battering and child sexual abuse in the home was brought forward, and when it was, it was met with great resistance. As late as 1982 Margaret Mitchell encountered laughter when she raised the issue in the House of Commons, and I remember the attacks on me as a result of my comments in this House in 1986

in regard to violence in the family. However, in the late 1970s and early 1980s women worked together with men to establish shelters, sexual assault centres, and child sexual abuse treatment programs to aid the victims of these forms of violence. In addition, we worked together to create treatment programs for men who batter and men who sexually abuse their children. Yet we struggle today, as we did then, to find sufficient funds to meet an ever increasing demand as more victim survivors seek to escape the violence in their homes. We fear, however, that the increased demand may also be a result of an increased incidence of violence.

Mr. Speaker, women seek refuge and shelter because they fear for their safety and for their lives and for the safety and the lives of their children. There is ample evidence that this fear is a realistic one, as evidenced by recent newspaper reports and research which show that women are injured and killed when they try to leave abusive relationships. I've seen no evidence that men are injured and killed by women when these men attempt to leave the relationship with an abusive woman. Shelters that offer safety and protection are clearly needed. It has been reportedly asked why the latest victim, who died in Calgary a couple of weeks ago, was out and about. The more reasonable question: how come her assailant was out and about? This incident demonstrates how difficult and inadequate is the protection offered battered women.

Mr. Speaker, the 1985 Alberta special report on family violence and plans for action calls for 100 percent funding for emergency services for shelter. Similarly, the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters requested in January of this year 100 percent of funding for basic emergency services, a total of \$8.2 million, \$2.7 million more than they received in the past year. Indeed, the shelters this year received a paltry \$200,000 increase. This failure to provide 100 percent core funding has meant shelters must seek community dollars to meet those costs for emergency service, and they cannot provide the much needed ancillary programs, programs that are essential if we are to provide effective intervention services to battered women and their children. Mr. Speaker, our jails do not go begging to the community for funds to offer basic services. In this context I'm reminded of a sign on my office door. It says: "It will be a great day when our schools have all the money they need and the military has to hold a bake sale to buy a bomber."

5:00

Mr. Speaker, in the wake of the military expenditures on the Gulf war, this saying has real significance even as it applies to the need for funding for shelters and for battered women. The reality is that we fund jails, but we cannot find the money to protect women and children from injury and death. This lack of funding means shelter staff are grossly underpaid. Recommended salary levels that I received this January from the council were cause for disbelief. A crisis councillor: the salary range was \$21,000 to \$25,000 a year, with an average salary of \$23,000. The most difficult work there is to do is to work with the battered woman and her children. The executive director: between \$29,000 and \$37,000, with \$33,900 as the average. An assistant director: \$25,000 to \$29,650, with an average of \$27,560. That is appalling. It's totally inadequate for the kind of work these people do.

Mr. Speaker, the need for support services for children is well documented; 87 percent of children in Edmonton shelters are reported to have suffered abuse. In a national survey 26 percent of mothers reported that their children had been physically abused by their partner, 48 percent of those children had been

emotionally abused, and 7 percent had been sexually abused. In addition, 8 percent of these women reported physically abusing their children themselves, 3 percent reported emotionally abusing their children, and 1 percent reported sexually abusing their children. Some women reported turning to shelters because although they themselves were not being abused, their children were, and social services was unable to offer protection.

We would note, however, that the Child Welfare Act holds that domestic violence is a form of abuse and that children exposed to this violence are children in need of protection. Research indicates that children who live with domestic violence experience the most insidious form of abuse. The physical abuse received at the hands of one or both parents appears to have less long-term effect than the psychological scars left by watching their mother being beaten. These children become withdrawn. They try to blend in, to become an inconspicuous part of the background. They spend a lot of energy avoiding any confrontation in the home. They retreat into their own world of make-believe, only to become impulsive, unmanageable, and aggressive towards peers, under adults. Some children end up with severe learning problems that affect both academic and social development. They may experience a sense of hopelessness and depression and are in a high-risk environment, are potentials for suicide and/or homicide. Suicide studies identified that a number of teen suicides lived in an environment with continuous and permanent dysfunction, a situation prevalent in families where there is domestic violence. I've heard statistics that as high as one-third of teen suicides are victims of child sexual abuse. These children suffer in a way far too many of us cannot imagine.

But they learn also, Mr. Speaker. They learn to use violence with their siblings, with their peers, with their teachers, and with their parents, particularly their mothers. Certainly I worked with mothers whose 10-, 11-, 12-year-old sons were already beating them up. Ninety percent of these children are children who run away, live on the street. They are charged as young offenders. They live off prostitution. They use alcohol and drugs to blunt their pain. They are the children that see the violence on the street as a safer place than their own home. They are our society's casualties. They people our jails, our welfare rolls, and our mental health facilities. Then they grow into adults, and if they are males, they will batter their own children and their wives.

Mr. Speaker, research indicates that 70 percent of battered mothers with disturbed children return to their husbands because they do not believe they can handle their children. They are afraid of their children, and there are no supports for them. We need to heal these children. We need to teach them how to resolve conflict in nonviolent ways, how to recognize and deal with feelings in nonviolent ways. We need to help them learn to live with others in loving and respectful ways, having had their love betrayed and their respect denied. This is not an easy task, but if we are not to pay increasing costs for our jails, we'd better be willing to fund shelters and treatment programs for children.

We need to treat the sexual abuse that so many of them have experienced. We must be deeply concerned, I would mention at this time, about the funding changes to treatment programs that work with children who are sexually abused. These are the programs, the agencies that broke the ground in bringing into public awareness the horrible problem that child sexual abuse is. These are the agencies that advocate for children and that educate for children. When these agencies no longer get funding in such a way that they can continue, there will be a

terrible loss to the children of our society, the children of our cities and our towns.

Mr. Speaker, the lack of adequate funding also means that shelter workers spend valuable time fund-raising, writing grant proposals, lobbying for funds; one of those things drove me into this Legislature, in fact. Time that is stolen from direct services – outreach, education, and prevention – is precious time lost. We need to see funding as a tool to aid women to change their lives and to give them hope and a future for their children. Shelters must not be dependent on charity. They are essential services to meet a serious social need, to deal with the violence that touches, at minimum, over one in eight families in our society.

More than shelters and treatment for children, we need second-stage housing. Three weeks is a very short time in which to deal with the emotional chaos precipitated by the flight from one's home without anything but one's clothes and one's children's clothes, to build a new life, find a new home, care for the children and deal with their losses and grief, to get social assistance or a job, to find a lawyer, to deal with the courts: all in the context of mixed and desperate emotions. We need second-stage housing for at least six months, or far too many women go back.

We need low-cost housing for these families, and we need adequate social assistance allowances, because too many battered women face a very cruel choice. They face a choice of staying in a violent, life-threatening environment or moving with their children into poverty. We need outreach programs because often these women leave behind friends and support networks. We need parenting courses and retraining courses and quality child care courses. We need to recognize the needs of these women and their children as they seek to build new lives.

There is another person for whom we must be concerned, and that is the batterer. If we do not treat the batterer, he or she may well find another family to abuse. We can only raise our concern that a recent application for a mere \$40,000 program, which treats 100 offenders in a year, was turned down and that we see no commitment to ongoing funding for treatment for batterers. Mr. Speaker, battered women want help for the men that batter them. Ninety-one percent who went to shelters said they wanted this. They often support charges being laid and prosecuted in the vain hope, I would suggest at this time, that treatment is available and will be mandated and enforced. Again, that's another problem, our probation officers enforcing treatment.

#### 5:10

We also need programs for women who batter. Such programs very clearly place responsibility for the violence on the offender and teach new ways of living in relationships, new ways of resolving conflicts, of dealing with feelings, of dealing with issues of power and control – because battering is all about power and control – and of dealing with issues of sexuality and loving.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of violence, especially violence that occurs in the family perpetrated against the more vulnerable members of the family, be it those members physically, psychologically, or emotionally vulnerable, must be a concern to all of us. Some people call for a gender-neutral approach. However, we must recognize that great inequities exist for women in terms of physical size and social, economic, and political power. We need to understand the pervasiveness of violence against women and children. We have to recognize, however reluctantly, the societal acceptance of male violence. Violence is learned

behaviour because it works for the perpetrator; it allows the offender to achieve his own ends quickly. We need to recognize that as we check our own impulse to hit a child. Violence is used out of the belief that one has the right to use it to control and to shape up another. The contradiction that we see when working with violent offenders is that they desperately need the person or persons that are harmed, driven away, and sometimes ultimately killed by their violence.

We need parenting courses, courses on conflict resolution. We need a society that understands the common humanity of men and women so that we work for a society free of violence and inequality even as we recognize that social, political, and economic inequality are forms of violence that make women and children more vulnerable to the physical, sexual, and emotional violence that I have talked about today, inequalities that entrap women and children in homes characterized by violence.

Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Calgary-Bow.

MRS. B. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak on Motion 211. This government does not care about battered women? We do care. Women's shelters and the issue of domestic violence are important to this government, although the members opposite would like everyone else to believe otherwise.

However, I wish to speak against this motion, because this government is working towards a better system, a better approach, a better way to deal with domestic violence. As is typical of the New Democrats, we are again hearing a call for money, an indiscriminate, unexplained call for an unconditional release of funds. The problem of domestic violence in our society will not go away by pouring out more money in an indiscriminate fashion. We need to look deeper into the problem and into the structures and functions of our programs. I will leave the examination of the government's general approach to family violence to my hon. colleague, but I will address the funding model of women's shelters and the steps that this government is taking to ensure that the vital role that shelters play in society is taken very seriously.

Currently, Alberta's Family and Social Services funds basic emergency services in women's shelters. These include food, clothing, emergency transportation, and staffing for counseling, child care, and administration. This funding system covers the fixed costs associated with operating the shelter and the variable costs associated with the client number. Onetime-only costs may also be funded if they're directly associated with the delivery of the basic emergency services. As basic services are the goal of the government, ancillary programs such as outreach and follow-up are for the most part supported by the community. This model ensures a stable, adequate, and ongoing source of funding for the shelters. This source is not subject to fluctuations in demand for services and provides a reliable foundation for the budgetary requirements for the management of the shelters. This rational funding model also directly relates to actual operating costs yet provides a ceiling on government contributions to staffing, which is the largest part of the budget.

The staffing model used within this funding structure for shelters in Alberta is logical and flexible. Currently the number and the type of staff positions funded by government are determined according to requirements to deliver basic emergency services which vary according to the shelter bed size. This model directly reflects the needs for frontline and child care positions

according to the shelter size, and it recognizes the needs of children who have witnessed assault or have been assaulted themselves. The model provides for funding of staff for a 24-hour availability of service. In large part the staffing model is based on recommendations submitted by the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, as reported in 1987. This model attempts to meet the major areas of need identified by that report.

I should also add that this funding model is very similar to the ones used in the provinces around us. Saskatchewan, for example, also funds on an up-front, grant basis which is determined according to a number of factors, especially the shelter bed size. Most of the shelters in that province also find an alternative source of funding for nonbasic services to supplement the operational base. British Columbia funds with a monthly grant to each shelter, as opposed to our quarterly allotments. They, too, watch the occupancy rates and make adjustments where necessary. In these other provinces there's also a question of whether the government is doing enough and doing it right. Constant review is required.

This government does realize that the current funding model does not always cover a hundred percent of all the basic emergency services. The demand has been great, and the determination of what constitutes full-service funding is a very difficult task. There is a philosophy behind this model. This model ensures an appropriate division of responsibility between the government and the community. This is an essential feature. The government funding maintains an adequate service for the foundation, while the community contributes to meet the individual community needs.

The community-funded services are designed to provide women and children with the support of the community and keep them integrated into the community. These services are often provided to the community at large in terms of public education or support groups, not just to the clients of the shelter. This community funding aspect will not be rendered unnecessarily, regardless of the contribution of the government, nor should it be. Communities will and should continue to support the victims of domestic violence in their home communities and acknowledge that this is a problem that must be addressed by the neighbourhood, the community, and the society as well as government. The member opposite suggests supporting community-based programs. Well, this government encourages communities to remain involved in the struggle to end domestic violence, to recognize the responsibility to do so.

An additional feature of this particular funding model is that it also provides a clear definition of appropriate program and operating expenses. All services and programs must operate under a budget, and this model provides shelters with guidelines for their spending. As a result, it also ensures an equitable distribution of resources among the different shelters in this province.

Nonetheless, the system is not perfect. There are fluctuations in need and demand for services, and we're looking at ways of improving the consistency of funding with respect to the delivery of these services. For example, the shelter occupancy rate is examined by the director of the wife abuse program at the office for the prevention of family violence on a regular basis. Every month these figures are compiled and examined, and steps are taken to improve the funding service in successive shelter contracts by taking these rates into consideration.

The funding structure does have its shortcomings, which are being identified, and the agencies and groups involved are working together towards funding an even better model. The Minister of Family and Social Services is currently reviewing the

funding model with the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters. He's looking at making improvements that will best benefit the shelter system of this province. We're looking at improvements to the funding system and to our approach to family violence programs as a whole. There is currently an interdepartmental review of the programs and policies under way. A variety of departments are involved and will be involved in solutions to this very difficult situation. The government has said time and time again that this is a multidimensional problem that requires multidimensional solutions. The solutions are going to come through careful, thoughtful review from a number of different departments and groups.

#### 5:20

The plan is unfolding. In the recent announcement of the Alberta budget we were pleased to announce that there would be a new women's shelter for Edmonton. The plans are now being ironed out, and we are not taking any chances with the women and children of Alberta by making quick decisions and offering band-aid solutions. There will be announcements made in the next couple of weeks concerning this shelter, and I am certain that even the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore will agree that this initiative shows the commitment of this government to the protection of battered women and children.

Yesterday in Calgary the Hon. Ray Speaker made an announcement for housing initiatives in Calgary for the inner city. Included in that were about 50 to a hundred units which are offered as housing for women and families suffering from violence, coming out of the shelters, so that second stage of housing is being developed as well. There were other initiatives as well which are directed to battered women and children. Edmonton also, besides the shelter, had again other housing units that will be used for this purpose.

In addition, the member opposite calls for funding to community-based programs for offenders and victims of family violence. This government is also committed to this stream of initiatives and is taking a careful approach to this as well. The Member for Edmonton-Avonmore recently has been accused of not reading her press releases, because this government has recently announced a program specifically designed to support services for victims under the victims' program and the assistance branch administered by the law enforcement division of the Solicitor General.

The Victims' Programs Assistance Committee will review applications from any qualified community group or agency that is interested in providing programs for victims, including victims of violence. That committee will approve funding for these programs as they meet the specific need in a treatment area and will support them in their establishment of new programs or the administration of existing programs. The end result of this committee, a community-based program for victims of violence – I've heard it said many times before in this House, and in this instance the old maxim is no less true: the government is one step ahead of the opposition and is already putting the necessary programs in place.

In conclusion, it's too clear that this motion is not the answer to the problems associated with domestic violence or with shelter and treatment programs in specific. The answer lies in keeping the community involved in the process and the administration of programs and aids to those in need. This is a shared responsibility. It is shared between the 10 departments involved and the task force looking at family violence programs. It's shared between the government and the community, and that is the approach we will continue to take. The answer lies in the

program that this government has already put in place and in the programs that it will put in place in the future. The answer is not in band-aid dollars but in the careful review of our approach and of the needs of Alberta women and children.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Motion 211 is quite simply far too narrow in its focus and therefore is ineffective in the prevention of family violence. If passed, the motion will not help prevention of family violence because it chooses to ignore the fundamental causes of family violence. Motion 211 seeks to treat the symptoms of the sickness – that is, family violence – while ignoring the causes of the same illness. Motion 211 is too vague. The member opposite calls for

the government to increase funding for the basic emergency services . . . to 100 percent . . . and adequately fund [all] community-based treatment programs for offenders and all victims, including children.

Motion 211 ignores the responsibility that all Albertans have to eradicate family violence. It would take away the vital role that the community has to play through active support, funding, prevention, and treatment of family violence. For these three reasons – the narrow focus of Motion 211, the vague nature of the proposed changes, and because Motion 211 would rob Albertans of responsibility in the elimination of this serious crime – I cannot support this motion put forward by the member opposite.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the few minutes left to me, I'll just try to get quickly through this. I just want to express my support for Motion 211 brought forward by the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore and thank the member for presenting it.

Mr. Speaker, we're dealing with the tragedy here of family violence. Many of us can hardly bear to talk about it, but as legislators we must deal with the reality and do everything we can to prevent and to ameliorate any attacks on helpless women and children. To achieve the 100 percent funding level for basic emergency services, the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters estimated that \$8.2 million would be needed in this budget. We see only \$6.8 million provided. What portion of it will actually go to shelters is still really unknown. We've been told that announcements of the funding are coming sometime in stages. Against that we have to look at the facts: the demand has more than tripled in the past year, shelter turnaways rose by an astonishing 346 percent, drop-in counseling increased, and phone contacts increased. Alberta's 14 shelters provide refuge for more than 3,000 women and 4,000 children every year. Hundreds, even thousands, take refuge elsewhere. For every woman or child who finds shelter, three are turned away.

It's estimated that one in eight Canadians are living with an abusive spouse. We only have to read the Cawsey report to see the indictment of our society in not being able to deal with this. I'm surprised, Mr. Speaker, that the government, under the direction of the minister responsible for women's affairs, announced an ad campaign issuing 20,000 posters that read: "If You have been Assaulted, Call the Police. Family Violence is a Crime." Well, we know what happens when you call the police for help in some places. Radio ads broadcast a similar message, but women and children who take this advice to heart will be frustrated when they learn that emergency shelter and counseling are severely limited.

Mr. Speaker, I do welcome yesterday's initiatives on housing in the inner city. I would hope that the Solicitor General and the Minister of Family and Social Services will look more closely at the London model for early intervention, which I think has had some success.

In light of the time, I am just going to simply say that to do anything less would be to reinforce the tragedy. We must, in fact, support the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, who are doing excellent work for us, and help them in every way we can. I believe the motion is a correct one, and I think every government member should support it.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Foothills.

MRS. BLACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the time, I move to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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.  
Government House Leader.

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, this evening we propose to deal in Committee of Supply with the estimates of the Department of the Solicitor General. I move that the Assembly stand adjourned until such time as the Committee of Supply rises, reports progress, and requests leave to sit again.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

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

