

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, May 23, 1991**

**2:30 p.m.**

Date: 91/05/23

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head:

### Prayers

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

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

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

Amen.

head:

### Introduction of Visitors

MR. HORSMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you Dr. Leon Bagramov, the director for Canada in the Institute for the U.S.A. and Canada in the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. As you are aware, Alberta has strong interests in the Soviet Union, including our province's special relationship with the Russian Republic and, of course, close cultural ties with Ukraine. Dr. Bagramov is a distinguished Soviet scholar specializing in Soviet/Canadian relations. He has visited the province many times in the past two decades. During this visit he will be meeting with governmental officials and private-sector representatives to discuss current developments in the Soviet Union and Alberta/U.S.S.R. relations. I would invite Dr. Bagramov to rise in the gallery and receive a warm welcome from the Assembly.

head:

### Tabling Returns and Reports

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure today in tabling the annual report of Alberta Agriculture for the year 1989-90.

I'm also filing the appropriate number of copies of the response to Written Question 347.

I'd also like to file two studies done in connection with milk containers: one on their influence on flavour, riboflavin, and vitamin A stability, and the other on their impact on landfill sites.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to file with the Assembly the response to Motion for a Return 240.

head:

### Introduction of Special Guests

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Labour, followed by the Member for Redwater-Andrew.

MS McCOY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take pleasure today in introducing to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly 83 students from A.E. Cross junior high school in Calgary-West. They are accompanied by their teachers Art Hansen, Ross Hodgson, Sue West, Marguerite Boisjolie, and Marie White. I'd ask everyone in the Assembly to give them the traditional warm welcome that we give to our special guests.

MR. SPEAKER: Redwater-Andrew.

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly a young lady by the name of Piali Das Gupta. She's been hired

by the Alberta Multiculturalism Commission to do work with young people on the commission's youth strategy. This follows the release of the report on the youth retreat at Nakoda Lodge last fall. I'd ask her to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly the deputy mayor of Longview, Mr. Lenard Kirk. He's also the operator and manufacturer of fine Longview beef jerky. He's in the members' gallery, and I'd ask him to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway, followed by Drumheller.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly 14 students from the Adult Development Centre in my riding. They're in the public gallery, and they're accompanied by their teachers Barb Foxall and Jan Hrasko. I request that they stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Drumheller, then Red Deer-North.

MR. SCHUMACHER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the mayor of the town of Strathmore and one of the members of council. I'd ask Mayor Keith Schneider and Councillor Terry Peterson to rise and receive the usual warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Red Deer-North.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour and privilege to introduce to you today a home school group from Red Deer. The students are Corey, Nancy, and Jeffrey Moore, accompanied by their teacher, who is also their mother, Pat Moore. I'd ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, as is our custom in this House, we mark the anniversaries of members elected to the Assembly. On this date we take note of the fact that the Member for Stettler was first elected to this Legislature on May 23, 1967.

head:

### Oral Question Period

#### Landfill Pollution

MR. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of the Environment. Because of this government's failure to protect the environment, this province is faced with a series of environmental time bombs that threaten not only the environment but also the health and safety of many Albertans. Right now our province is dotted with over 700 industrial sites, so-called – and I say "so-called" – orphan sites whose owners have polluted, defiled, and abandoned. The consultants' reports to the minister's own department indicate that among these 700 sites there are 13 which documented evidence tells us are leaching toxins into our rivers, lakes, and groundwater from badly

contaminated soil. These abandoned industrial garbage dumps are polluting our province now and threatening even more pollution in the future. My question to the minister: what is the government doing to make sure these sites are going to be cleaned up and cleaned up fast?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, for some years the department has had in place a program called HELP, the acronym for Help End Landfill Pollution. Basically this program has been extended just recently with the involvement now of the federal government entering into a joint program with the provinces to identify these orphan sites and to put in place programs to address the problem.

Now, we do know one thing: it's going to be very expensive. We do know another thing: nothing that this government did, or even the government before it or the government before that, contributed to this problem. These incidents and these situations have evolved through environmental carelessness, environmental ignorance 60 or 70 years ago, and of course we're having to pay the costs today. Basically what we're trying to do is identify these sites, determine from an engineering and a scientific point of view what we can do to clean up these sites, and if it's going to take too much and it's going to require a concerted effort at this particular point, then what we will have to do is secure the site.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, these are not all 60 or 70 years ago. Some of these were abandoned by highly profitable corporations as late as 1982, and the minister should be well aware of that.

I agree with him that it is costly. Investigation of 11 of the 13 priority sites indicates that they could cost up to \$110 million, but because of this government's failure to get tough with companies who pollute, it will be the taxpayers who get stuck with this bill. My question to the minister is simply this: given that most of these abandoned sites were owned and operated by healthy, profit-making companies like Dow Chemical, Shell Oil, and Gulf, will the minister tell Albertans why they have to pay for cleaning up, instead of making the companies themselves pay for it? Indeed, they made handsome profits during this time, Mr. Speaker.

2:40

MR. KLEIN: If we can assess responsibility, if we can assess blame, then indeed that will be done. What we're dealing with here, Mr. Speaker, are orphan sites, sites for which no blame, no responsibility can be attached. A case in point is the Canada Creosoting site on the banks of the Bow River. This old family operation about 60 or 70 years ago, through environmental ignorance, put creosote on railway ties. It soaked into the ground. We do know that we have an environmental disaster there. It was through the diligence of the Department of the Environment that this site was discovered, and we decided to take action. That's precisely what is being done, and it's being done with all the other sites. What we have demonstrated within this government is responsibility, diligence, and a resolve to do something about the situation.

MR. MARTIN: The only HELP program we need is help from this government to clean up this mess. He says that they don't know who it was. Well, Mr. Speaker, the North Star refinery in Grande Prairie was last owned by Shell Oil, the Purity 99 refinery near Black Diamond by Gulf Canada, Vermilion by Husky Oil. I could go through them. The minister knows full

well who they are, but he doesn't want to go at them. They're not orphans; he knows full well.

My question, though, to the minister is this: given that government has not significantly changed the legislation on this since the early 1970s, can the minister explain his government's foot-dragging on changing this irresponsible, costly, out of sight, out of mind, and completely inadequate legislation?

MR. KLEIN: It shows where the hon. Leader of the Opposition has been: he's been in never-never land as usual. For the last year and a half we have been going through one of the most detailed public consultation programs relative to the restructuring and rewriting of environmental law in this province. If he had been paying attention, Mr. Speaker, he would have noticed that one of the major points of discussion was that of reclamation costs, of corporations putting in place an amount sufficient to clean up environmental problems that might occur 20, 30, 40 years down the road. Indeed, that's a key point of the legislation that will be introduced in this House very soon.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Second main question.

MR. MARTIN: Well, it's all talk and rhetoric so far. We're talking about sites that are already polluted, Mr. Speaker. What's he doing about them?

I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place.

### Sulphur Dioxide Emissions

MR. McINNIS: Mr. Speaker, the opposition has discovered that Alberta is a leader in Canada in a very important area; that is, asthma deaths. I wonder if the Minister of Health, who I'm sure has seen the Strategic Options for Environmental Health in Alberta report, has looked into the fact that many of the health units are struggling with the effect of sulphur dioxide emissions on asthma as a health problem in the province of Alberta. Since this report does recommend that the minister should be the sole minister responsible for environmental health issues, what is she doing to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions in the province of Alberta?

MS BETKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, the report is one that we commissioned as a result of looking at an environmental health strategy within the province of Alberta. That certainly involves the Ministry of the Environment as well as the Ministry of Health and defining the role of each in the issue of environmental health. How that comes together is the second stage in the process. Yes, we have the consultant's report, but now the next stage in the process is to work with health units to identify the programs they do have in place, the gaps in those programs, as well as to get better indicators for the direct health impact of environmental issues, none of which exist at the moment in terms of the bibliographies or the issues with respect to health and the environment. It's part of the reason we commissioned the study in the first place.

MR. McINNIS: Well, the report does also identify underfunding as a problem in environmental health with the health units.

Since the Minister of the Environment was identified as having a key responsibility with respect to sulphur dioxide emissions – the situation in Alberta is that the cabinet can increase the amount of SO<sub>2</sub> emission any day of the week by

issuing new licences and new permits – I wonder if the minister would indicate why Alberta doesn't join with the seven other Canadian provinces that have got together and agreed to a 50 percent reduction in sulphur dioxide emissions by 1994, Alberta being one of the three who hasn't any such initiative at all.

MR. KLEIN: I would like to know when the hon. member last attended a Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment meeting. I don't think he's ever attended one, not even as an observer, not even to snoop around a little bit. Had he been at one of these meetings, he would have found that we are not opposed to this 50 percent reduction in SO<sub>2</sub>. What we do want to do in conjunction with the Minister of Energy is to develop for this province a clean air strategy which will gather evidence and allow us to present to the national government a good position on the part of this province and certainly do our part in a responsible and reasonable way to achieve the emission standards that have been set by the national government.

MR. McINNIS: Well, I do hope to earn the privilege of attending these meetings soon.

The report's very clear on the point that while Alberta may not be opposed, it sure as heck isn't doing anything about it, and that's the point. You know, with all of the reviews and studies, research programs, consultative strategies now, why has the government failed to put any stepwise reduction in SO<sub>2</sub> in place to this day?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, aside from having some of the most stringent stack standards anywhere . . . [interjection] Really. Well, go out and have a look. Get out from under the dome and find out what's going on in the real world, Mr. Leader of the Opposition. I can tell you that we do have some of the most stringent stack standards in the world, not only in North America but in the world.

Aside from that, if the hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place had been listening, he would have heard that we are indeed coming to grips not only with sulphur dioxide but with the whole issue of carbon dioxide, with the whole issue of volatile organic compounds, with the whole issue of surface-level ozones, with stratospheric ozones. We're trying to get a handle on all these gases and what our real contribution is to the depletion of the ozone layer and to the greenhouse phenomenon. The way we do that is to go throughout the province, get as much solid evidence as we possibly can, develop a program, develop a position, and put in place what is right for Alberta and what is right for Canada.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Edmonton-Glengarry.

#### **Alberta-Pacific Pulp Mill**

MR. DECORE: Thank you. My questions are to the hon. Premier. Mr. Speaker, Albertans were led to believe that the Al-Pac pulp mill, the largest pulp mill in the world, would give benefits to Albertans of some \$1.3 billion. The environment was sacrificed for this economic opportunity. We learn now that some \$400 million in contracts have been awarded and about half of those contracts are going to corporations that are not in Alberta. Twenty percent of the contracts that have been awarded were awarded to offshore corporations, and it's believed that the bulk of the moneys in the \$400 million go to these offshore corporations. My first question is this. It would appear

that Albertans have been fooled. I wonder if the Premier would give us the figure newly revised downward from the \$1.3 billion, the actual benefits that will accrue to Albertans?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the hon. leader of the Liberal Party is of course incorrect again; there was no sacrifice of the environment. As a matter of fact, after extensive environmental studies in co-operation with the people and the company, they have received approval under the strictest of conditions. Now we have the project going ahead, helping to diversify our economy, helping to provide jobs in an area where there has traditionally not been meaningful jobs, and there will be, as has been explained by the Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

There also is considerable impact from this project spreading across our province. Now, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, when he is back in the House, may want to explain to the hon. leader of the Liberal Party that there are some things that cannot be provided in Alberta, and therefore a company has to go beyond our borders to seek them out. That wasn't unusual, for instance, in the GCOS project, the Syncrude project, and some projects where the benefits spread across our country.

**2:50**

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, this was represented as a \$1.3 billion economic benefit to Albertans. It's not that kind of a benefit. All I asked was: give us the new figure.

My second question to the Premier is this. Albertans are not getting the lion's share of the work. That's apparent from the contracts that have been let. What's even more disturbing is that selective tendering is being used; that is, Alberta companies are being excluded from even involving themselves in the tendering process. I'd like to know from the Premier why conditions weren't put into the agreement between the Alberta government and Al-Pac to ensure fairness and openness so that all Alberta companies could participate in this economic benefit.

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader of the Liberal Party is wrong again. Fairness and openness are, in fact, part of the contracting of services that is being followed by Al-Pac. Now, the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade would be happy to straighten the leader of the Liberal Party out on the details.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, it's sad that we're not getting the answer again. Steel fabricators are saying that selective tendering is taking place, and they're not able to be involved in that open tendering process.

My last question to the Premier is this. It's not too late for the Premier to intervene, because he was a big part of the development of this project. It's not too late for the Premier to go to Al-Pac and say: "Look; let's have some conditions. Let's ensure that Albertans get the major share of the work, and let's make sure the tendering is fair and open." Will the Premier commit to do that?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I just pointed out that the tendering is fair and open. I think what I'd also like to point out, because I think it's interesting to the House and to the people of Alberta, is the remarkable hypocrisy of the Liberal Party here, who did everything possible to stop the project from going ahead, who are now running about saying, "Let's make sure this project works in Alberta to help Albertans." I mean,

what kind of hypocrisy? It is projects like this that are going in this province because of the government's policies of diversifying our economy, having more people working, bucking the trends across North America. Retail sales up, more people working, lowest taxes in Canada: it's those kind of policies that are working in this case. It's really interesting to see that the Liberal Party, having now seen our policies working, is suddenly jumping on the other side of the fence and saying, "Let's make sure; let's make sure that they help Albertans even more." Interesting hypocrisy.

MR. SPEAKER: Redwater-Andrew.

#### **Milk Container Size**

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Agriculture. I'm very pleased to see that the minister has filed several studies on the four-litre plastic milk jug that were requested by the agriculture and rural affairs caucus. Now that the results are known, can the minister please tell us when he plans to make a recommendation to the Dairy Control Board and also, if he could, what this recommendation will be?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the hon. member that the recommendation was made this morning to accept the original recommendation of the Alberta Dairy Control Board. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps the minister would now like to continue.

MR. ISLEY: I think I've said sufficient.

MR. SPEAKER: Redwater-Andrew.

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the minister. I'm glad to see that the approval has been given, and I think it's great news not only to my constituency but to all of the province. I think that the minister allowing the marketplace realities to enter the dairy processing industry is a step in the right direction. My question is: can the minister give us an idea of when consumers will be able to purchase milk in the four-litre plastic jugs?

MR. ISLEY: That, Mr. Speaker, will depend entirely on the marketplace and the way in which the processors react to the decision.

#### **Employment Retraining**

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, the program for older worker adjustment is a federal/provincial program designed to assist workers over the age of 55 who have been the victims of major layoffs and are unlikely to obtain other employment. Despite the fact that Ottawa provides 70 percent of the funding for this program with the province only having to pick up 30 percent, Alberta remains only one of two provinces that has not yet signed agreements with Ottawa to participate in this program. I'd like to ask the Minister of Career Development and Employment, who is responsible for this: since we know that the government doesn't care about seniors in this province, can he explain to us why this government is not entering into an agreement to help the older workers of this province who are affected by layoffs? Doesn't he care about them either?

MR. WEISS: Mr. Speaker, if I may correct an inaccuracy reported by the hon. member: first of all, this government does care for seniors. The seniors' programs clearly indicate that. Unfortunately, the hon. member may be hard of hearing and not realize that as well.

First of all, with regards to the older workers' program, which the hon. member referred to, yes, he's quite correct; it is a federal government program. The province of Alberta assists and works very closely with the federal government in delivering the program. I might add as well that we have our own internal programs and work very closely with that group in relation to helping them to seek and retrain for entering the job market.

MR. GIBEAULT: Well, it's about time, Mr. Speaker. A lot of older workers in this province have been suffering layoffs all over the province. I'd just like to ask: when can we get an exact commitment from this minister to participate in this program so that the benefits of it can be extended to those older workers in the province who are laid off and cannot find other employment? Give me a date, Mr. Minister.

MR. WEISS: Well, Mr. Speaker, if I knew the date, I would give it to him, but I'm not prepared to make that commitment because I believe our programs are working effectively without any such agreement. It is not my intent at this time to make any such commitment.

I would like to add, Mr. Speaker, that if the hon. member is aware of any individual case or circumstance that he has a concern about, bring it to me personally and allow us the opportunity to review it as well. Our door is always open. I'm not trying to say that we're able to help everybody. Individuals have to help themselves as well. But I would indicate that we're prepared to work with any individual to try and help them.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Buffalo.

#### **Gambling**

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is to the minister of public works, responsible for gambling. The government is becoming increasingly hooked on gambling as a source of revenue to fund its activities. The minister in charge of gambling has now proposed an escalation in the kind and quality of gambling in Alberta to include video terminal gambling for poker and blackjack. Albertans that I talk to believe overwhelmingly that there's more than enough gambling in Alberta, and they tell me that mama don't want no video terminals here in this province. So in light of the strong feeling held by most Albertans that we shouldn't expand into video terminal gambling and become Las Vegas north, I'm wondering whether the minister will agree that there should be public consultation, including public hearings, before we take this next step.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I read with interest a news release put out by the Member for Calgary-Buffalo dated May 17. There are a number of erroneous statements in it, but perhaps we'll have an opportunity to correct those in the next question.

Mr. Speaker, the government, through the Western Canada Lottery Corporation and Alberta Lotteries, will ask the citizens of Alberta what their thoughts are about the whole aspect of video terminals. Currently we have 1,800 video terminals in the province of Alberta. Those are used now, of course, for

the purchase of 6/49 tickets, and we're really pleased that a citizen in this part of the world won \$10 million yesterday.

We will proceed with a pilot project later this summer that will ask for public reaction with respect to this concept, will evaluate the social impact, will look at operational issues concerned with it, customer preference, and in fact the potential associated with the realization of any profits. The whole pilot project, of course, will be controlled and governed by the province of Alberta through the Western Canada Lottery Corporation, Alberta Lotteries. Adults only will be in a position to access the machines, not grocery stores, such as in Liberal dominated New Brunswick. Whatever profits would be realized from this concept would flow towards the benefit of the citizens of the province in the same way that all other lottery funds are redistributed back to the citizens of Alberta.

3:00

MR. CHUMIR: Mr. Speaker, to the Solicitor General: in light of the fact that we'll undoubtedly be seeing these machines in our bars very soon and since the Alberta Liquor Control Board now has a task force which is specifically examining gambling in bars, I'm wondering whether the minister would tell the House about the process that is being followed to determine whether gambling machines will be allowed in bars in Alberta and his position on that issue.

MR. FOWLER: With respect to the hotel operators, consultations are being held with the Alberta Hotel Association on this specific matter, and at this particular time I don't believe any definite decision has been made.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Glenmore.

#### Medical Clinics

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has become very obvious that the health care system is changing at a very rapid pace. The people in Alberta are able to receive surgical treatment and diagnostic treatment on an outpatient basis, they're appreciating the fact that they can receive this treatment, and thus hospital stays are no longer required for many procedures. The need for freestanding clinics is also becoming obvious. An example is Dr. Gimbel's eye clinic in Calgary and a freestanding surgical clinic in my constituency. It appears that the Department of Health is planning to make some severe changes in regards to the focus on this community care. Could the Minister of Health please explain to the Assembly if she plans on limiting the focus on this community care?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, the prelude to the hon. member's question was very appropriate, because certainly innovation in health and advances in medical technology are making it very viable to deliver some services through the community that we formerly thought had to be done on an inpatient basis within a hospital. It isn't an either/or, however, as are few things in health. Striking the balance as to where to provide access to health services, whether on the institutional or the community side, is why I have launched a discussion with certain stakeholder groups in both the institutional and the community settings to try and define what should be done where before proceeding further in this area.

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, the people of Alberta sincerely appreciate these freestanding clinics. Could the minister explain if these facility fees will be dropped for all private clinics?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, currently in those areas where the College of Physicians and Surgeons has deemed that a medical procedure can be done in a clinic, that clinic can then set up and has the right to charge a facility fee. If we were to move in the area of providing access to some services under the Canada Health Act in a community setting as opposed to a hospital setting, which is becoming a viable opportunity, and if it's safely provided – if that access were provided under the Public Health Act in the community, there would not be a facility fee charged. However, finding that balance is precisely why we are out consulting with the groups. It may well be that we don't proceed in the area. I think it's important that we look at understanding what services can be provided in the community, and if access is to be provided in the community, then obviously the facility fee wouldn't be charged for those particular services.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Calder.

#### Poverty

MS MJOLSNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Family and Social Services. No matter which way you look at it, many people who are working full time in the province or are on social assistance are living in poverty. The Edmonton Food Policy Council reported that many people run out of money to buy food because they spend such a high percentage of their income on shelter. Given that in Edmonton this government has only increased shelter rates to families by up to 5 percent even though the cost of housing has increased in the last six years by 16 percent, will the minister admit that the high cost of shelter is one cause of hungry families and hungry children and now increase his shelter rates to match the increase in the true cost of shelter?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, I can only reiterate what I pointed out to the members opposite yesterday, and that's that we did just recently increase shelter rates, we just increased food allowances, as high as 19 percent in the case of children, and we just increased our standard benefits. I think it's fair to say that clearly the dollars that are provided are enough to cover those basic needs, being food, shelter, clothing. On top of that, of course, we provide dental and medical and optometric care. The last thing that I'd want to point out to the member is that obviously we're very sensitive to the needs of those on income security, and we monitor very closely our caseload. The most recent information that I've been provided by my officials tells me that in the city of Calgary, 1 and a half to 2 and a half percent of our caseload are turning to food banks on occasion. In the city of Edmonton it's perhaps a little closer to 5 percent. For the most part, the caseload is managing, and I have to be emphatic on that. You know, in the city of Calgary 98.5 percent of our caseload are managing on the dollars and supports that are being provided.

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the increases are not reflecting the true costs of living. That's the problem.

My second question I'd like to direct to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Despite this minister's announcement of new social housing units, there are many low-income families throughout Alberta who cannot access subsidized housing, and the minister has cut the number of subsidized units that will be available for these families. Will the minister recognize that

there is a desperate need for decent, affordable housing for families and agree to make more subsidized units available to poor families so that they do not have to choose between food and shelter?

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I can certainly identify with the concern of the hon. member. The government has in place the rent supplement program, which is an allotment of rent supplement agreements between the province and the federal government. Those that we receive we allocate towards this need. I know and so do others that there's only a limited ability we have there. It's not meeting all of the need but some of it. We recognize that, and certainly it has to be a matter of concern.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

### **Automobile Insurance**

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I tabled in the Legislature copies of a directive from an auto insurance company operating in this province to an insurance agent here indicating that the company will not insure, among other applicants, any new arrival to Canada who has not been licensed and insured in North America at least one year prior to their making an application for insurance or any applicants who provide only a box number or a rural route number as a mailing address; that is, anybody who lives in rural Alberta, by and large. My first question is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Given that he is responsible for fairness in marketplaces in this province, why would this minister allow a company with discriminatory practices such as this in issuing auto insurance to operate in this province at all?

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, if the document that the hon. member speaks of is the one tabled which I received last week, it had no heading on it, was signed by nobody, was in fact crossed out in many parts and had additions made in the column. I can't tell what company it was from, who it was responsible to, or whether in fact it was a final set of directives to anyone. Perhaps the member could clarify those things for me so I could consider the suggestions that he's making.

MR. MITCHELL: If the minister was in touch with insurance agents in this province in the way that we have been, he would know that, and we're not about to have to do his regulatory work when he's got a complete department to do it.

It's little wonder when you see a company invoking practices of this nature that the number of people being driven into high-premium, high-cost facilities pool insurance has increased from 33,000 to 50,000 in no less than two years. My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. How large does this facilities pool insurance program have to get before this minister will ensure that standard, consistent criteria are implemented across this province for determining who will be selected to that pool by companies and who won't be?

**3:10**

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member seems to be advocating once more that which I have heard advocated from that corner of the House before, though never in a clear form: government-owned, government-run automobile insurance. If that's the position, then that party should declare that.

Mr. Speaker, insurance companies do determine who they insure on the basis of the ability they have to deal with the

insurance premiums and the difficulties in the marketplace. We know that insurance companies have had increased costs over the past few years as a result of the dramatic increase in claims. That is a difficulty that we're going to have to deal with overall in terms of insurance in the province. We're going to have to ensure that we do have a viable system for individuals who want to be insured on a reasonable premium basis and for companies who need to operate in this province. I don't know that that would come by the government specifically telling a company that they have to insure somebody or not insure them.

Certainly if there are any companies who are carrying out discriminatory practices, by the human rights application, by our Charter of Rights, or by other means of that sort, there's other recourse to individuals, but the documentation the hon. member has shown thus far would not stand as a basis for any such accusation to any company. He also hasn't named or otherwise dealt with where that came from, and I think that's only reasonable.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.  
Grande Prairie.

### **Substance Abuse Programs**

DR. ELLIOTT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week there was an announcement of a treatment centre in Edmonton for teens with special problems with substance abuse. My question is to the chairperson of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, normally known in Alberta as AADAC. My question is around the fact that the media reports indicate that this program is unique. I was wondering if AADAC has a plan to provide services of this type to people in rural Alberta and northern Alberta?

MR. NELSON: The program that was referred to, the Adolescent Treatment Centre here in Edmonton, which is a similar program that was also officially opened in Calgary recently, is dealing with adolescents not only from Edmonton but from rural Alberta. It is a complete program for adolescents. It is developed to fit the adolescents, not necessarily the adolescents fitting a program. It is deemed to be a four- to five-month program. For adolescents who have difficulties with alcohol or other substance abuse, we have community support homes in place. Presently we've had 10 young people come from rural Alberta into Edmonton, and 20 people, both from Edmonton and rural Alberta, have accessed those community support homes. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, there are teachers in these treatment facilities to assist young people two hours a day with their continuing education so they can leave this program a better person and also get back into the normal life of the community.

DR. ELLIOTT: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. What about plans for similar centres in other parts of Alberta?

MR. NELSON: Mr. Speaker, there are always different groups that are assessing the need for programs in Alberta, both privately and of course through AADAC and other government departments. On June 11 we will be opening an additional facility in Grande Prairie, the northern addictions treatment centre, which is one of the most unique facilities probably in the world but certainly in North America. It will deal with all forms of community needs, including natives, adolescents, and all other adults that need assistance and treatment, from detox right

through to the systems in inpatient and aftercare. Mr. Speaker, I can say without qualification, without any doubt, that Alberta, through the commitment of Premier Getty and this government, has the finest programs for addictions in Canada, probably North America, and in my opinion has the most outstanding programs of anyplace in the world, under one roof, accessible by not only Albertans but the other people of western Canada.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Strathcona.

### Brewery Strike

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the hon. Solicitor General. A recent hearing of the British Columbia Industrial Relations Council confirmed that Molson's Alberta brewery is importing beer into Alberta to replace production lost due to the strike at Calgary, this in direct conflict with the interprovincial agreements between the liquor boards that generally require beer to be produced in the province in which it is sold. Given that the major reason for this requirement is to provide and protect jobs in each province, does the minister not agree that it would be in the best interest of Albertans to have the loss of production from Molson's Calgary filled by other brewers within the province rather than brewers outside of Alberta?

MR. FOWLER: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's great news to me. Within the past three weeks we had a direct request to my office from the chairman of the Alberta Liquor Control Board on whether or not we'd permit or agree with the import of beer by Molson's due to their strike. The request was categorically denied by my department. We are not in the strikebreaking business in this province. If the Molson's people choose to be on strike, then they will not bring in beer from other provinces.

MR. CHIVERS: That's good news, Mr. Speaker.

My second question is for the Minister of Labour. The interprovincial agreements do allow a brewery to import the equivalent of 10 percent of its production from outside of the province provided that the brewery reciprocally exports 10 percent of its production, but even with this allowance Molson's cannot realistically meet the demand. Given that if the strike lasts any significant length of time it is extremely doubtful that Molson's can meet the demand and still meet the interprovincial guidelines, what measures does the Minister of Labour plan to take to ensure that the rules are complied with and that beer importation does not become a full-blown attempt to illegally break the strike?

MS McCOY: Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General and I have had conversations on this subject, and I will rely on his 275 pounds of brawn and muscle to uphold the principle which he just enunciated a moment ago.

MR. SPEAKER: Westlock-Sturgeon.

### Lily Lake Road

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of the Environment, who's becoming famous for his fuzzy letters, difficult environmental decisions, and how he dances around a subject. About a month ago, in the middle of April, about the time I raised it in the House, the Minister of the Environment's deputy wrote a letter to the Sturgeon MD council about whether or not the council could build a road

through Lily Lake. I read the letter, and I think maybe they said that they shouldn't build a road through the lake. However, the council looked at the letter and said, "Well, sure; we've got permission to build it through the lake." So they passed a resolution to build a million dollar road through Lily Lake at a 75 percent cost to the Alberta taxpayer. What I want to ask the minister today is: just what did he mean by that letter? Can they build a road through Lily Lake, or can they not build a road through Lily Lake?

MR. KLEIN: I think the only thing fuzzy is the hon. member's thinking in this particular case. Mr. Speaker, an environmental impact assessment was done. The department, on the basis of the documents prepared, the public consultation relative to those documents, the deficiency reviews, and so on, determined that it wouldn't be in the best interests of the environment and certainly not Lily Lake for the road to go through. That was communicated to the county. Basically, if they decide to proceed, there are a lot of hoops to go through relative to the permits and so on that will be required, and if we have concerns, those concerns will be expressed and expressed very forcefully when it comes time to make a decision on the issuance of those permits.

3:20

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, his answer is what I'm talking about. He says, "If we have concerns." This has been going on for two years. This is the third report. Do you have a concern, or don't you have a concern?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, who is capable of reading the report, will determine that, yes, we have concerns.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Kingsway.

### Free Trade

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs. George Bush and his sidekick Me-too Mulroney have conned a lot of North Americans, including this government, into believing that we need a North American free trade agreement because, it's said, that Europe is going to integrate in 1992. Now, one of the things that these politicians and their corporate friends do not tell us is that the Europeans also have a social charter as part of that integration plan. Will the minister explain why the proponents of the North American free trade agreement have no plans to protect the social programs and the workers of North America in the upcoming Canada/U.S./Mexico trade deal?

MR. HORSMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, it is up to each government of independent, sovereign nations to determine their social programs. It's as simple as that. What is happening to Europe, of course, is a move towards a confederal system whereby sovereignty of the nations in Europe is being surrendered to the central authority. That is not being proposed in the North American free trade association. Quite frankly, if it were being proposed, I would be opposed to that concept of giving up Canadian sovereignty. Hon. members are concerned today about the power of the United States. Our social programs in such a confederal system as Europe's would be swept under to the American model, and I will not stand for that, as a good Canadian.

MR. McEACHERN: Well, the minister's got it exactly backwards. It is this free trade deal that is the vicious kind of program that is going to cut the health care standards, the social standards, the worker safety standards, the workers' wages of Canada and the United States down to the Mexico level. It already has. Is that what the minister's saying that he's prepared to do: sit here and watch our social services fall to the Mexican level?

MR. HORSMAN: Well, this is so typical of the inward looking socialist philosophy that it is just wonderful. I love getting these questions from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway, because I can send them out to the people of Alberta and let them know the type of centralized, state-controlled society that party would bring into Alberta if it ever got the chance.

I want to say about this that what I hope to see out of a fair and equitable, prosperous trade deal with Mexico and the United States is Mexican standards raised to Alberta's standards. [interjections] Mr. Speaker, the socialists in the House are devastated by what is happening in Mexico, because Mexico, after decades of socialist, state-controlled oppression, have cast it aside. They're moving to a free market, and the NDP don't like it. Well, that's too bad. I wish them luck.

head: **Orders of the Day**

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

MR. McEACHERN: You're dealing with the same crook in power. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Hold it. Hold it.

Do you think we can have the unanimous consent of the House to continue?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Might we revert briefly to Introduction of Special Guests.

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.

In this order: Edmonton-Highlands, Dunvegan, Municipal Affairs minister.

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

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure, on behalf of my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Beverly, to introduce 66 of his special guests today. I'm referring to students from the Belmont elementary school who are seated in the public gallery along with teachers Mrs. Paziuk, Ms Dixon, Mr. Powley, Mrs. George, and parents Mrs. Pashko and Mrs. Slater. I'd ask these youngsters and their teachers and parents to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and through you 16 students from the Bonanza school in the Spirit River school division in the

wonderful constituency of Dunvegan. They are accompanied today by Mr. Tom Zieffle, principal, Miss Monica Orozco – I hope I said that right – teaching assistant from Mexico City, and parents Mrs. Brenda Zieffle, Mr. Allan Broadway, and Mrs. Carrie Broadway. They are seated in the members' gallery. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of MLA Don Tannas, the Member for Highwood, and myself, the Member for Little Bow, I'd like to introduce 27 students from the constituency of Little Bow from the Blackie school. They are accompanied by 13 parents and are seated in the members' gallery. I'd ask them to stand and be recognized and appreciated by this 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.

[Motion carried]

head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that the motions for returns appearing on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places, except for the following: 204 and 295.

[Motion carried]

### **Community Facility Enhancement Program**

204. Mr. Wickman moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing

- (1) the total cost to the government of the briefcases that were purchased to promote the community facility enhancement program,
- (2) a list of names and positions of the recipients of the briefcases, and
- (3) a copy of the invoice indicating the name of the supplier of the briefcases.

MR. KOWALSKI: Well, this is not the first opportunity we've had to address this type of question. We've certainly addressed it on previous occasions, and perhaps at the outset it would be important just to remind hon. members when we have dealt with such a question. I recall that this motion had been dealt with in the Assembly on a number of previous occasions, as I indicated: May 1, 1990, May 8, 1990, June 5, 1990. In fact, this motion is identical to Motion 304 of '90, which was defeated on June 5, 1990. Of course, *Hansard* has everything associated with it as well. Of course, a Member of the Legislative Assembly must be bound and geared by the decisions of the Legislative Assembly, and as a result of the defeat of that motion, it became inappropriate for the MLA in question, to whom the motion was addressed, to respond to it.

Mr. Speaker, I always take a great opportunity whenever I have it to deal with the community facility enhancement program, the importance of this particular program. All members will recall that it was nearly three years ago, on October 17, 1988, that the Premier announced that we would have a community facility enhancement program. That program was to be geared to the improvement of family and community life throughout the province of Alberta. Those members who



were present at the media availability session would have recalled without any doubt at all that this was to be a \$100 million program from the Alberta Lottery Fund, because all lottery funds are dedicated to the people of Alberta, allocated on the basis of 33 and a third million dollars per year. Mr. Speaker, I indicated at the time that there would be a minimal amount of advertising with respect to this program and we'd be asking our colleagues in the Alberta Legislative Assembly to go out and become aggressive, dynamic salesmen for the community facility enhancement program.

I indicated at that time that I would make available to hon. Members of the Legislative Assembly a briefcase, and I would fill it with paper, and I'd fill it with pamphlets, and I'd fill it with documents, and I'd fill it with programs with respect to the community facility enhancement program. Regrettably, a number of my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly in October of 1988 refused the honour. I had gone out and had purchased 84 briefcases.

3:30

MR. TAYLOR: There are only 83 MLAs.

MR. KOWALSKI: Eighty-three MLAs, Mr. Speaker, and because I was the minister responsible, I was to have two. I was to have two because of the volume of paper associated with the administrator of the particular program. Mr. Speaker, I indicated to all of my colleagues that for those who would accept the opportunity to become a positive participant in the delivery of an excellent, outstanding government program, I would deliver this paper to them and give them a valise that they could use as a cabinet for this very important information.

MS BARRETT: Hey, Ken, did you send us letters?

MR. KOWALSKI: In that briefcase, Mr. Speaker, were to be included pamphlets associated with the program, application forms associated with the programs. There was even an Alberta Lotteries pin – I think it cost us 75 cents – that was put into the briefcase.

MR. MITCHELL: You never asked us.

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I was just astounded, and I was absolutely appalled at the ridicule and the criticism that came from certain members of the opposition, who failed to attend . . .

MS BARRETT: I never got a letter.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. minister.

I hear some burbling in a part of the House. I don't know who's doing it, but I would remind hon. members that Standing Order 13(4)(b) still applies. You will only interrupt members on points of order. I will take note of those of you who are eager to participate, and you will go on the speaking list. But we're not going to have it just turn into Saturday night entertainment.

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. KOWALSKI: So, Mr. Speaker, we purchased 84 briefcases. Of course, there are 83 Members of the Legislative Assembly, and there are only a number of them that were members of the government caucus. Regrettably, the ridicule

– and I've used this phraseology before. This is why this is not a new discussion today with respect to this question, and that's why I dutifully pointed out the dates on which this matter was dealt with in *Hansard*, because some of the quotes . . . I used the phraseology in the past because of the vicious attacks by the opposition parties on me, on the government, and on this program. It just didn't seem to make much sense to me that they would want to become salespersons for the community facility enhancement program, so they never got a briefcase. That's the nuts and the bolts of the whole thing. But we had ordered them.

Mr. Speaker, what happened to the other briefcases? Well, I've donated them to a variety of charities. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has fund-raisers throughout the province of Alberta. They've all gone to excellent usage and availability since that time. I did have a name tag, though, with the hon. members' names on them, and we did have an election after October 17, 1988, in the spring of 1989. Some members, of course, never came back, and they never returned those briefcases to me, but they were good salesmen for the four or five or six months that they did retain them. The new members that were elected after the election in the spring of 1989, of course, got one as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it was a very, very modest investment for the outstanding return to the people of Alberta. We're talking about a \$100 million program, thousands of successful applications from around the province of Alberta. All members will know that the most recent news release that we issued with respect to the community facility enhancement program, dated May 15, 1991, indicates that at this point in time, holy mackerel, we've approved well over 2,000 applications; in fact, 2,151 applicants throughout the province of Alberta, some \$72 million in funding throughout the province of Alberta.

What a variety of worthy community groups in all parts of the province of Alberta have benefited from this, including all those good citizens who live in northeast Calgary who worked with the MLAs in the area, who basically said that of all the priorities they had, one thing they didn't have was a sportsplex. They worked together as community groups for nearly three years. We brought the city of Calgary into the question. We got the community groups all together. Of course, on May 15 we were able to allocate funding in the amount of \$250,000 a year for three years, totaling \$750,000, and we've already heard about it again. It's unfortunate that the Liberal Party is opposed to helping the citizens who live in northeast Calgary, but I'm sure they'll all hear about that in the days and the months and the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, this program: no dollars. We haven't spent any dollars advertising this program because of the outstanding salesmanship of those people who accepted the challenge, got a briefcase loaded with paper and application forms, went out and met with people, dealt with people, discussed with people, helped people fill in application forms, and brought them back in the valises, the briefcases that they had. In fact, the program has worked very, very well, and we haven't had to spend 1 percent of \$100 million advertising or anything else. What we did for the investment in 84 briefcases – I've been quoted in the past as saying that a briefcase costs over a hundred dollars. In doing a double check, it was approximately \$175 a briefcase for 84 briefcases. Remember that there was a little name tag plaque that was engraved for all hon. members. That cost a few bucks, but that was included in the \$175.

Mr. Speaker, in essence, the briefcases were purchased in the city of Edmonton through a private-enterprise firm, J.M. Morie

speciality advertising of Edmonton. That was done. I suppose I could ask for all of those valises to be returned at the conclusion of the program, October 17, 1991. That is something that I guess I could do as the minister responsible for the program. We could probably then have them returned through surplus sales or something, but then somebody would probably say, "Well, they're in such poor repute that we would just want to junk them." That would just fill the landfills, and I don't want the mayor of the city of Edmonton to get mad at me for us doing that. I think we'll ask all hon. members to make good use of these briefcases for as long as there's life in the briefcases, and at the end, if they feel that they would want to return them, they can certainly return them.

I'm sorry for the members of the opposition who are so regressive about being involved with this that they missed the opportunity to have one, but they've made a lot of so-called political hay with respect to this matter over the last couple of years. I really believe that they think this is kind of important. Well, Mr. Speaker, it works both ways. I've talked to a lot of people who've said to me, "What is all that nonsense about; what is that about?" I mean, you go and visit communities throughout the province of Alberta, whether or not it's Hinton or Legal or Westlock and you ask people, "What do you think about the community facility enhancement program?"

MR. TAYLOR: Busby.

MR. KOWALSKI: And Busby. What a wonderful group that I met with the other day, the Busby Lions. Mr. Speaker, it was really quite remarkable. These very determined men in this community and the Lionettes, the ladies who go along with the Lions, came to me and said: "You know, Mr. Kowalski, we know we're not in the constituency you represent, but can you help us? We've got a phantom MLA, and we'd like to talk to you. Can you tell us about the community facility enhancement program?" Well, I reached down there, took out my briefcase with all my papers in it, and laid it on the desk. There it was, all orderly. There was the application form, the pamphlet. We sat down, and we talked about it. In a matter of minutes they understood what the program was all about.

They had come very, very well prepared. They had all the documentation that went with it. We stapled their accompanying information along with the application that I helped them fill out. I hope nobody'll get mad at me for doing that, but they wanted help, and I was prepared to help. We filed it, got it through the whole system, the process. It met all the qualifications of the whole program, and away we go. It was delivered to them, and they are happy. Sometime this summer I'm sure that they'll extend an invitation to come back to Busby and say hello to the folks there and deal with the Lions, the community hall, the baseball diamond.

That kind of enthusiasm at the grass roots in this province is very important, and to those individuals in this House who took up the challenge to participate, I really want to thank them. I want to thank them very much in the dying days of the community facility enhancement program, because it will come to an end on October 17, 1991. I would like all members to know that it would be helpful to me if they had all the applications in by September 1, because we have to adjudicate and we want to make sure it ends on the day on which that is to happen. I'd be very, very pleased as we continue to go through the program and the process to make sure that as much information as possible is available.

I come back, really, to Motion for a Return 204, Mr. Speaker. I've provided all the answers to the questions. I was surprised that the Legislative Assembly last year voted down the motion. I don't know what it's going to do today, but the answers have now been given. The answers have now been given. The information was available then; I was prepared to make it available then. I've basically answered the questions today. It's in the House. It says, "the total cost." I've provided an answer to that. "A list of names and positions of the recipients": I've indicated that. It said, "a copy of the invoice," and I've said what it cost. This, of course, Mr. Speaker, could all have been dealt with during public accounts.

3:40

Maybe we should just spend a minute or two dealing with public accounts. The Public Accounts Committee meets once a week, chaired by a member of the opposition, and that chairman will invite various ministers to appear before Public Accounts. I love going to Public Accounts, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I've said on numerous occasions, "Please invite me to come back." I've said I would discuss any matter that any individual member would want to talk about that would come under the responsibilities that I have. I think that's a worthy and a very important process. Why, why, why time is being taken on a very important day like today, this day in our history, to discuss motions for returns when the matter could have been dealt with in Public Accounts, Mr. Speaker, is very surprising to me. Now, maybe it's their lack of experience. But, you know, some of these men and women have been here more than one or two months, and it's important, I think, that they should know what the process is. I repeat: distinguished member of the opposition who is the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, I would accept an invitation to come forward to discuss this all again.

But I've already handled this motion now today, answered all the questions today, so really one has to ask the question: why would anyone invite me to go before Public Accounts to answer these questions again? I'll bet you that that will happen, and I'll have to then go back in *Hansard* and say, "Here we were on the 23rd day of May, 1991, and we've dealt with it one more time." We've dealt with it a lot of times, and I can't think of anything that I've missed with respect to the motion. We've dealt with the briefcases, who they went to, what the cost was, and everything else, the importance of the community facility enhancement program, the tremendous number of people who have been assisted.

We could really talk about some specifics with respect to that, Mr. Speaker, but I've answered all the questions. The motion is now redundant, and I would ask, I guess, for the Assembly to be consistent with what it did a year ago and defeat the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, it was very enlightening listening to the minister, as usual, when he gets the chance to run off at the chops there on some of his good programs like the community facility . . .

**Point of Order**  
**Parliamentary Language**

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

MR. SPEAKER: Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 23(j), I don't think there's any necessity for the Member for West Yellowhead to cast aspersions on hon. members.

MR. SPEAKER: It's agreed.

Member for West Yellowhead, are you prepared to withdraw and to rephrase?

MR. DOYLE: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'll withdraw that if it upsets the Deputy Government House Leader. I didn't mean any hardship towards the minister of public works. Indeed, I rather enjoy his speeches, no matter where he gives them.

Do I continue, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes. I was just making the comment that you withdraw whether or not. However you feel, it's just a matter of doing it.

MR. DOYLE: Yes, I withdrew the statement.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Now you may continue.

### Debate Continued

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was very enlightening to hear the minister of public works addressing a program that was very beneficial to the people of Alberta from north, west, south, and east. Indeed, I appreciate the funding that the minister passed on to the constituents of the riding of West Yellowhead, especially since when I was the mayor of Edson, I applied for many. I received some, but indeed, since then, I've received many more, and I appreciate that.

The minister was speaking, though, in regards to the briefcases in Motion for a Return 204 from the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. It was interesting to note that he stated that some members of the opposition did not receive their briefcases or they were upset over it or something along that line. It was my understanding that those briefcases would be the property of the people, the constituents of each riding to which those briefcases were given. I would like to point out to the minister that indeed there was a briefcase given to the MLA of the day for West Yellowhead. I believe that's the property of the people of West Yellowhead, the constituents of West Yellowhead, and I would like to ask the minister if he would contact the former member and have that briefcase returned to the rightful owners. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I would carry that briefcase with pride to promote the community facility enhancement program, as I have in the past, and I would hope that someday in the near future I will see that arriving in my office so that I can return it to the rightful owners.

Mr. Speaker, the community facility enhancement program indeed last week contributed some \$25,000 to a seniors' lodge in Grande Cache, which I supported and was very pleased to see was approved, and also to a curling facility some \$17,000. Tomorrow, in fact, the Edson seniors' friendship centre, Pioneer Cabin, is opening with some \$130,000 contributed through the community facility enhancement program. I'm looking forward to tomorrow when the Member for Whitecourt comes out to open that particular facility in the riding of West Yellowhead, at some expense to the taxpayers of Alberta. I'll be there myself. I'll be watching to see if he has that briefcase and the scissors in it, so it's not an added expense to the citizens of Edson who have worked so hard to build such a fine facility as the new Pioneer Cabin to help the seniors of today and those of us who are reaching those days in the future.

Mr. Speaker, while the minister is on the topic of the community facility enhancement program – and perhaps it doesn't have that much to do with the briefcases exactly – I was wondering about the signs for the community facility enhancement program. I wonder if we could take funds out of our constituency accounts to put the opposition's names on those signs in opposition ridings. The minister told me I could put it on if I wanted myself, but it's unfortunate that they pay for government members' names but they don't pay for opposition members' names on the signs for the community facility enhancement program.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that if the minister gets a chance to respond, he would indeed return that briefcase to the constituency of West Yellowhead, for whom it was meant in the first place, so that the member there now can have something to promote that great program that he established some years ago. Also, I would like to see in the future that the minister, if he's going to spend money on putting the names of the minister and the Premier on, perhaps would look at being fair to the citizens who choose who represents them in the riding and see that all members of this Legislature have their names on those signs when they're established in other areas in the province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Additional?

All right. Edmonton-Whitemud, summation.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Motion for a Return 204 asks specifically three questions, and the minister responsible for lotteries gave some indication that he in fact had answered the questions. Let me first of all go through the three questions one by one, because in my opinion the questions that have been put forward have not been answered, not specifically. They have not followed the intent of the motion.

First of all, I go to (1):

The total cost to the government of the briefcases that were purchased to promote the community facility enhancement program.

He indicated that it's sort of like \$175, a little more than that hundred dollars he had talked about originally. Then there was some indication given for the cost of personalizing what I believe were Samsonite briefcases. I believe that cost of personalizing was about another \$30 or \$35 per briefcase. A little over a year ago when this matter was first raised, I recall very, very specifically that the minister talked in terms – and it is recorded in *Hansard* – that an expenditure of roughly \$6,000 had taken place to purchase these briefcases. Now, it becomes very, very obvious, even giving the minister every benefit of the doubt, that based on the verbal information that he's given us here today – no written information but the verbal information – by my calculations we're talking in terms of a minimum of roughly 84 briefcases at a ballpark figure of somewhere about \$200 apiece. So we're now talking in terms of a total cost of roughly – possibly more, but roughly – \$16,800, which is a sizably different figure, much more substantial than that original figure that was given when this matter was first raised. Because of this doubt, because of the differences in these figures, the great variance, I believe it becomes extremely important for the minister to lay the cards on the table, to provide that cost of those briefcases in writing so all members of this House are aware as to what that cost was.

3:50

We talked in terms of (2), where we asked for "a list of names and positions of the recipients of the briefcases," and reference was made to the government MLAs receiving theirs.

My understanding is that when the 84 were initially made, they were personalized for all 83 members of the House, and obviously now it appears that two were personalized for the minister. Maybe one wasn't personalized; I'm not sure. Obviously, there was intent somewhere along the line to supply all members of the House with these briefcases, but the minister chose to follow some other direction later on and give these surplus briefcases, what he deemed to be surplus, to other members of the community, people that he felt were going out there and selling the program.

Now, we're not sure who these people are. I guess one could speculate. Was it nominated candidates for the Tory party, for example? Were those the people that were out there selling the community facility enhancement program within their constituency? I just speculate on that, Mr. Speaker, because I have no choice but to speculate on that because that list has not been provided. The question is very, very specific: "a list of names and positions of the recipients of the briefcases." The minister can say no, no, no; that was not the case. But show me the documentation, show me the proof, show me the people that received those briefcases, and then I'll be satisfied that the minister in fact did not further violate an abuse that may be there, at least an abuse in the minds of the public when it comes to the expenditure of public dollars, which lottery dollars are.

Now (3) asks specifically for "a copy of the invoice indicating the name of the supplier of the briefcases." The copy of that invoice would satisfy all members of this House once and for all, all members of the public, that the cost of the briefcases was X number of dollars, whether it be \$16,800 or a bit more, whatever the situation may be. But at least members of the public, Members of the Legislative Assembly, all members would be aware of what that cost was, and that of course has not been provided.

So those three questions, of course, have not been answered to this particular point. I guess they haven't been answered for a reason. What that reason is only the minister knows. Obviously, the minister prefers not to file this type of documentation. Possibly the minister may feel that this type of documentation would be embarrassing to himself and to other members of his government.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to pursue this matter because I think this is a clear indication of the failure of this government to be open, to release basic information that there is absolutely no reason to keep under wraps whatsoever. Instead, the minister has tended to take an approach in an attempt to make it light-hearted, like it's insignificant. In terms of the \$100 million he talks about for the community facility enhancement program, if you worked it out to a percentage basis, from that point of view I guess then he can term it to be insignificant. But in terms of the average family out there, when we talk in terms of \$16,800, it is not insignificant. It is in fact a significant amount of money. It's a significant amount of money to a family or an individual that may be living on \$500 a month social assistance and trying to make ends meet; \$16,800 is not insignificant.

More important than that, I believe that what it relates to the public is an attitude, a perception by the government, an indifference to the expenditure of the people's dollars. This was not taken lightly throughout Alberta, Mr. Speaker. This was not taken lightly at all. I can point to a number of examples. I remember one occasion when the minister was at a function held at Northlands where there were hundreds of people and a number of MLAs, including myself. The minister got up and made some reference about seeing Mr. Wickman in the crowd and how he would appreciate people telling Mr. Wickman that

government MLAs deserve briefcases. Well, around where I was sitting, people moaned and groaned. Certainly they didn't give their approval and say yes, they felt that this was a justified expenditure of lottery dollars. Another instance that was brought to my attention was a volunteer conference in Red Deer when some type of portfolio cases were handed out to the volunteers and again reference was made to briefcases supplied to the MLAs. Again, the information provided me was that that did not go over very well, that those members of the public did not, in fact, enthusiastically endorse the minister's action.

I can recall, Mr. Speaker, when we had hundreds of nurses out in front objecting to the government's approach to handling health care and social service matters in the province – it was basically social service matters – and the crowd started to chant, "We want briefcases; we want briefcases." That was obviously an indication to this government that they were very, very unhappy with what had happened. So even though the minister may write it off as being a very insignificant amount of money, to the public out there it was not an insignificant amount of money. Papers throughout Alberta did editorials on this, and if members took the time to read them, there were references made. At least one rural newspaper was very, very specific, saying that the best purpose that the minister could use for his briefcase was to pack his belongings when he left the Legislative Assembly, because that's what he deserved to do, leave the Legislative Assembly because of the disregard that he had shown for public dollars.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Barrhead has not answered the question. This question will be pursued. There will continue to be questions in the minds of the public as to why the government has failed to, why the government refuses to, why the government does not want to tell what is happening, and why they prefer to operate in this cloak of secrecy. On that point I'm going to conclude. I would certainly urge the minister to change his mind, to change his position, and file those documents that have been requested in this House a number of times.

[Motion lost]

### Tourism Poll

295. On behalf of Mr. Decore, Mrs Hewes moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing
- (1) particulars of the expenditure of \$593,891 during 1989-90 by the Department of Tourism for poll(s) conducted by Gallup Canada Inc.,
  - (2) questions asked by the government in the above poll(s),
  - (3) documents showing the results of the above poll(s), and
  - (4) particulars of the expenditure of \$225 by Executive Council with Gallup Canada Inc.

MR. SPARROW: Mr. Speaker, the question addresses a very important tourism study. As Minister of Tourism I'm proud to provide this information, and we'll accept the motion.

[Motion carried]

### head: Motions Other than Government Motions

#### Housing Availability

215. Moved by Mr. Ewasiuk:

Be it resolved that in recognition of the importance of having an adequate supply of affordable housing in Alberta, the Assembly urge the government to ensure that the supply

of affordable accommodation is improved and that the cost of both rental and owner-occupied accommodation is not unfairly increased as a result of shortages, including: the introduction of legislation to protect tenants' rights and provide for rent review where vacancies are low; a commitment from Municipal Affairs' housing branch to ensure the provision of low-cost housing accommodation; a commitment to co-operate with not-for-profit and co-operative housing agencies to fund housing alternatives; the encouragement of the renovation of industrial, commercial, and school properties to affordable, quality housing; the implementation of a tax to apply to profits made through the sale of nonowner-occupied residential properties or multiple-unit residential complexes sold within two years of purchase; and a commitment to protect Albertans from high interest rates on residential accommodation.

[Debate adjourned May 16: Mr. Ewasiuk speaking]

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes Calgary-Bow.

MRS. B. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to speak to Motion 215. This is a caring government. Our government is dedicated and committed to providing affordable, decent housing for Albertans. We always have been, and our past and present record speaks to that.

I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to commend the Minister of Municipal Affairs for the excellent work that he has been doing to ensure that Albertans have access to affordable, decent housing. Under his direction several initiatives have been done showing this government's commitment and can be seen through the steps that were taken to reorganize the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Last year AMHC underwent a major review and reconstruction in order to focus the corporation on providing social housing to meet the needs of low-income seniors and families and people with disabilities and special needs. Given the current period of fiscal restraint, the government is doing an excellent job in the area of providing affordable housing, and our record speaks for itself.

4:00

Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that currently, at the end of 1990, a total of 40,000 community housing units have been delivered for low-income Albertans. Out of this, 10,554 units are houses for families. Another 2,222 rent supplement units have been committed, of which 324 units were developed in co-operative housing agencies.

As further evidence of this government's commitment to providing affordable housing to Albertans, I would like to point out three programs that provide housing assistance to seniors. First, there is the seniors' independent living program, which provides financial assistance for low- and moderate-income seniors, homeowners who can repair and improve their housing. Since 1979, 135,000 senior citizens have received assistance under this program. Second, there is the lodge program, which provides room and board to seniors who no longer wish to live independently. Under this program, 8,360 clients have been served. There's a very ambitious rejuvenation program currently coming into place which will see the renovation of these units, making this a very efficient use of existing housing inventory. Third, the senior citizens' self-contained housing units program provides affordable accommodation for low- to moderate-income senior citizens who cannot afford or obtain adequate housing for their needs. The rents are based on 25 percent of their household incomes, and this assures them decent, affordable housing.

In addition, there are 604 housing units which have been provided for people with special needs. For the 1991-92 year, Treasury has approved additional funding to make sure that affordable housing is available for low-income families, seniors, and individuals. Alberta Municipal Affairs will maintain its social housing focus in order that people in need, such as seniors, people with special needs, and low-income families are able to obtain affordable shelter accommodation.

There is also a commitment, Mr. Speaker, made by this government to Albertans who rent. There are rental units under the community housing program in the current budget. The rent supplement program has allocated 300 units. This program ensures that rents are 25 percent of the household income. The actual market rent is cost shared by the federal and provincial government to ensure again that low-income needs are met.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

In this year's budget there are new spaces for seniors: 15 new lodge accommodations. In addition, there are 131 seniors' self-contained units for the current 1990-91 year. These will be made available to seniors, based again on affordable rent geared to their income. As well, there are 199 units that have been approved for special needs housing programs. A significant portion of these rental units will be delivered to the inner-city residents of both Calgary and Edmonton.

Recent studies which were undertaken by local, community based task forces in both Edmonton and Calgary, have shown that the area of social housing requires immediate attention, and the government is responding to that need. Social housing is a priority of government, and the inner-city housing initiatives announced by the Minister of Municipal Affairs on May 6 are the first in a series of government actions aimed at addressing that social housing need. The city of Edmonton will receive more than \$5.4 million, and the city of Calgary will receive \$8.4 million for inner-city housing initiatives in the 1991-92 fiscal year.

To clearly show the commitment that this government has to social housing in the inner cities of Alberta's two major cities, I would like to outline some of the projects that have been funded.

In Edmonton the following projects will be developed. Ten rooms, which will encompass 32 beds, will accommodate abused women and their children: families escaping from violence. A total of 30 two- to four-bedroom apartments and town houses will be available to assist low-income families or singles. Thirty rooms will be available to help the single, mentally ill men, who will share a common kitchen and dining facilities. Another 10 rooms with shared kitchen and dining facilities will accommodate single, mentally ill women. As well, 20 youth shelter beds will be provided.

In Calgary, the following projects will be developed. A total of 60 one-bedroom apartments will be provided for the mentally ill or low-income singles. Thirty apartments with either one or two bedrooms will be available for low-income families. Five single-family homes for physically disabled individuals and their families will be provided. Thirty apartments with either one or two bedrooms will be available for use by landed immigrants in need of temporary housing. These are new Canadians who need many things, and housing is very important to meet that need. Existing projects will begin to use the rent supplement program to provide 55 rooms or apartments for single women who will be long-term residents. Four houses will be provided for 12 rooms for homeless youth. Many of these youth are street children and youth off the inner-city streets, and giving them some guidance

in these homes, families who will provide for them and support them, will certainly help, I think, to make that transition off the street. Two homes each with three beds will be available for persons with AIDS. They will receive support there from agencies and their families and be able to rest and receive the care they need. Fifty-six rooms with kitchenettes and a common lounge area and bathrooms for hard-to-house individuals. In addition, up to 100 existing two- to three-bedroom apartments developed under the cost-shared social housing programs of previous years will be made available to abused women and their children leaving a women's shelter. This again is a new use for existing inventory and makes good and efficient use of existing stock. As the chairman of the Calgary Inner City Housing Committee, I feel these initiatives reflect the government's commitment to providing decent affordable housing to Albertans.

As further evidence of this commitment to affordable housing for all Albertans, legislation such as we saw with Bill 33 was introduced by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs on May 2, 1991. This will enhance both tenants' and landlords' rights. This Bill will address many of the concerns that the Member for Edmonton-Beverly has raised in the past concerning Alberta's landlord and tenant legislation. Through an extensive consultation process to find out what Albertans think about the issues, the government feels that it has established a fair balance between tenant and landlord rights.

These amendments include renaming the legislation to the residential tenancies Act, and expanded power to deal with rooming houses and permanent hotel residents. A landlord can now terminate tenancy for cause only for specific reasons. Tenants' security deposits must be placed in trust accounts to ensure that the deposits are returned safely to renters. Entry to premises will be set for limited times and emergencies. Forty-eight hour eviction notices where tenants are abusive or cause willful damage to the premises will be allowed. Pre- and post-tenancy inspection reports will be required. Rent increases limited to two in a 12-month period will ensure that there is security in your rental accommodation. A definition of wear and tear to assist in the resolution of damage disputes. Penalties will be increased from a maximum of \$1,000 to \$5,000. Improved remedies for landlords to deal with abandoned goods. Unauthorized subletting is restricted. It will now be an offence to evict a tenant for making a complaint. Provision for regulation of language and form of lease and inspection documents is provided. These amendments reflect our government's commitment to finding a fair and equitable balance between the rights and responsibilities of landlords and their tenants.

In response to the motion's proposed commitment for co-operation with nonprofit housing agencies, this is already being done. Since 1986, 6.3 percent or 390 of the federal/provincial cost-shared units have been provided by nonprofit groups, and an additional 5.8 percent were provided by co-operative housing agencies. The government is very supportive of the role that nonprofit agencies can play in the delivery of housing. Efforts are now being made to better utilize resources of nonprofit agencies in meeting the housing needs of low-income Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, it has always been a priority of this government to provide the people of this province with affordable, quality housing. I would challenge the opposition to put forward their proposals and their alternatives, because I'm sure that any initiative they put forward would be more than matched by the government's existing programs.

In conclusion, I cannot support this motion because I strongly believe that this government, a caring government, is meeting the needs of Albertans in a very responsive manner.

Thank you.

4:10

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak relatively briefly on this particular motion as brought forward by the Member for Edmonton-Beverly, to allow someone from his caucus to close debate on his motion.

First of all, I do support in general terms the thrust of the motion, the concept of the motion. But I do that with some reservation, that reservation being that the motion is worded in such a way that it makes it appear that government can be all things to all people, and it can't be. We've seen that throughout any province, the federal government, or whatever, even coming back in the province of Ontario. People down there are quickly learning that no government is all things to all people. We have to recognize that, and we have to recognize that there's an onus on other than government to fulfill everything. The previous speaker made a request that there be some option, some alternative presented by opposition as to how it should be tackled, so I'm going to speak from that point of view.

I think that what we have to do, Mr. Speaker, is first of all define the role of Alberta Mortgage and Housing. The role of Alberta Mortgage and Housing should be one to stimulate activity within the marketplace, within private development, amongst nonprofit organizations. In other words, I don't believe that there is a need for Alberta Mortgage and Housing or the government to be out there wholeheartedly building all kinds of units, trying to create sufficient numbers of units to satisfy everybody. Rather, I think government should be participating, should be in a partnership with private development, with nonprofit organizations. They should be going to these nonprofit organizations and the private sector saying, "What can we as government do to ensure that you have the incentives, the motivation to develop the type of housing that should be developed?"

There is a small role for Alberta Mortgage and Housing in the direct development of housing units, and that's to provide housing in those areas that the private sector does not cater to, being the disadvantaged, seniors, persons with disabilities, the low incomes: those areas where there really aren't the substantial profits that you all see in the private marketplace. That's the role that government has, and to the previous speaker I would point out that that member should be urging her government to follow that type of direction, ensuring that there is co-operation with the private sector, ensuring that there is co-operation with nonprofit groups to develop housing, to develop various alternatives so that there is reasonable housing available for all segments of the population.

Another tool that can be used, that is used in the United States, that is used in European countries, is further incentives such as rewards for creativity, rewards for innovative ideas, new ideas for housing. Central Mortgage and Housing, for example, provides fairly substantial scholarships to students in architectural schools who develop new concepts for providing housing, for filling a social need. That's a good incentive. There is a program by the Minister of Municipal Affairs or his department at the present time that rewards architects, that rewards home builders by recognizing them once a year for developing low-

cost or affordable housing in various categories. Those are the types of incentives that should be provided by the provincial government, particularly by Alberta Mortgage and Housing.

Now, when we talk in terms of a reference being made within the motion to reviewing and protecting tenants' rights, yes, I firmly believe that tenants' rights should be protected. Tenants or renters should have some degree of tenure. The rented unit is their home. They have to stay in that particular home, so they shouldn't be able to be bounced at the whim of a landlord. I realize that an amended landlord and tenant advisory Act has come forward and will be debated in this House, but even that amended form needs a great deal more teeth.

One of the areas that has concerned me is government's involvement when they have become involved in the marketplace. The most recent example, of course, was taking over West Edmonton Village. The information that I've been given – and possibly somebody will correct me if I'm wrong, but my understanding is that since Alberta Mortgage and Housing has taken that over from the Ghermezians, the controllers of Triple Five, there is now some question as to how many of those units are going to be subsidized. What program is replacing the program that was presently in there? Is the government in fact going to place those tenants at a disadvantage compared to the position they were in when it was held by the private sector? I am informed that very, very recently another rental increase was given in that particular complex by Alberta Mortgage and Housing, and that follows fairly rapidly on a rental increase that was given a short number of months ago, shortly before Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation took it over. It means that in a relatively short period of time some of those tenants in there have faced rental increases of close to \$100 a month. Now, that's very, very frustrating for those residents in that when they got wind that Alberta Mortgage and Housing was going to be taking over that complex, they anticipated, if anything, better liaison with the owners of the building, with the landlord of the building. As it's turned out, it's worked in the other direction. Now they're very, very frustrated, saying that they were better off when the Ghermezians controlled West Edmonton Village rather than Alberta Mortgage and Housing. The government has to set an example, provide a proper example, and in that particular case they are not.

There was also some question, too, when the provincial government disposed of many of the houses they owned and made them available, as to whether it was being done in a fair fashion to those people that had lived in those units for a period of time. It made it very, very difficult, and it created hardships for many of them. That's why we saw that latest tenants' rights group out of Mill Woods come forward and start expressing their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, the thrust of the motion is good because it does recognize that there are some real shortcomings in terms of suitable housing, various alternatives for all Albertans, and that there are many segments of our population that don't have the type of accommodation they need. This motion, of course, is an attempt to address it, although it doesn't address it in the fashion I would like to see it addressed.

I would just conclude by asking government members – and I expect they're going to vote down this motion – that they present an alternative rather than just ask the opposition to present alternatives, that alternative being giving a strengthened position within Alberta Mortgage and Housing to ensure that the marketplace, the private sector, and nonprofit groups are stimulating the type of housing that has to be stimulated so Albertans can have proper accommodation.

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

4:20

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make some comments on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Beverly, who is sponsoring this motion. I think it's a very good motion, and I don't understand why the Member for Calgary-Bow, having said all the good things that the government has been doing, would then indicate that she couldn't vote for it. If the government is doing all this, all she has to do is say, "Yeah, we're doing all this," and vote for this motion.

I'd like to go through this motion section by section. It's a subject that's of great importance to me and my colleagues in the Official Opposition New Democrats. The first thing we're talking about is ensuring that "the supply of affordable accommodation is improved." The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud said that it sounds like they expect the government to do everything. I don't think so. Perhaps the member doesn't understand the difference between improvements and superlatives. It's an increment. What we're talking about here are a number of mechanisms for increasing the supply, through market and nonmarket devices, of affordable accommodations so that we don't end up in a situation that has occurred in Vancouver and Toronto and some other cities where the price of housing skyrocketed.

Right now in the riding I represent, Edmonton-Highlands, which contains the core of the inner city, we have got thousands of units which three years ago were identified to have a structural life of less than five years remaining in them, and they are for the most part simply collapsing without being replaced. Where there are plans for replacing, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that what's being looked at by developers is high-priced condos. Well, high-priced condos in the centre of town may be very attractive. They are also very expensive, and they shut out the people who are currently living on the second and third storeys of buildings that are currently used for commercial purposes on the first storey. Where do we think they are going to go? Well, they don't have very much choice. As a matter of fact, we can anticipate the rate of homelessness will increase as this occurs.

Now, there are preventive measures that could be taken. I see that the government's track record is very sad, Mr. Speaker, in this regard. It is true that a few weeks ago the Minister of Municipal Affairs announced a couple of housing programs that included not only social housing but also badly needed additional housing for battered women and badly needed shelter for those with a history of mental health problems, who as a result of the government's deinstitutionalization policy found themselves dumped in the core of the inner city on 96th Street over the last few years and told to go and look after themselves. I laud any effort that the government has made in the last few weeks to alleviate this problem, but let me try to describe the magnitude. If you have hundreds and hundreds of women who are turned away every year from battered women's shelters because there is no space and you add 10 new spaces, that's not a lot. If you have thousands of people who have been dumped into the Boyle-McCauley area over the last nine years as a result of Lougheed's great deinstitutionalization program, adding 30 is not very much. Do you get the sense of the perspective I'm trying to portray?

Then I look at government spending as a percentage of a number of factors. What I see in 1990 is shocking, and it will be barely any different in 1991, even given the announcements from the minister a few weeks ago. Let's have a look.

Social housing as a percentage of the National Housing Act programs that are being used in Canada: Newfoundland, 58.6 percent; P.E.I., 23.7 percent; Nova Scotia, 40.0 percent; New Brunswick, 54.5 percent; Quebec, 16.3 percent; Ontario, 73.3 percent; Manitoba, 37.3 percent; Saskatchewan, 39.7 percent; British Columbia, 73.9 percent; Alberta, zero percent.

Social housing as a percentage of total housing in Alberta in 1990 – this is on dwelling completion by type of financing, and I'll get to dwelling starts by type of financing – Newfoundland, 6.7 percent; P.E.I., 9.4 percent; Nova Scotia, .7 percent; New Brunswick, 3.7 percent; Quebec, 2.1 percent; Ontario, 7.7 percent; Manitoba, 10.8 percent; the raging socialists in Saskatchewan, 19.9 percent; their counterparts under Vander Zalm, another raging socialist in B.C., 4.5 percent; Alberta, zero percent.

Mr. Speaker, I could read the other statistics. Perhaps what I'll do is file them tomorrow for the benefit of all members of the Assembly. They're quite shocking. I'll just give you one example, and again this is a visual example; it's a bar graph. This shows social housing as a percent of NHA financed. The graph is unbelievable. Alberta doesn't even make a blip on the graph, and everybody else is well up there. What that shows is that other governments, regardless of their political stripe evidently, do have some commitment to social housing. That's one area where this government announces things during an election or just before an election, takes three years to deliver on, and then doesn't talk about again until we're getting close to another election.

Now, I'd like to talk briefly about some of the other sections in this motion, which I think is a very good and comprehensive motion. It calls also for protection of tenants' rights and provision for "rent review where vacancies are low." The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs did recently introduce a Bill which would improve tenants' rights, including a measure that the New Democrats have been calling for for years and years and years. That is a requirement that security deposits be placed in trust so that the owners or managers of the rental dwellings can't dip into the money, use it for themselves, and then claim all sorts of phony reasons to not return the damage deposits to the departing occupants.

Now, where the Bill fails, of course, is that there is no rent review mechanism. Worse yet – and I remember Grant Notley talking about this when the government decided to introduce shelter allowance ceilings. It must have been in '84, I guess, or maybe '83, in the social services department. What they said was: you know, we're paying way too high a rent for these people on social allowance, and we're going to establish ceilings. Grant Notley argued that establishing ceilings is like establishing floors in this case. What you will find is that every landlord who knows that her or his tenants may be living on social assistance will automatically ask the ceiling amount for the rent, whether or not it is warranted. I can assure you, some of the stink holes that I've been in, some rooms that would not even – well, they might be the size of the Table here in the Assembly, maybe a little bit bigger but a slightly different configuration. I've been in places like that where the rent is the maximum for a single person – I think it's \$180 a month – where the circumstances and conditions are totally disgusting.

Why can't we have a rent review mechanism? We're not asking for rent controls. We're talking about a mechanism whereby rents increasing beyond either the rate of inflation or the cost of improvements on a scheduled basis would have to be justified in front of a board. What's the matter with that? Are

you basically arguing that the sky is the limit when it comes to profit from property?

On the subject of making profit on property, another mechanism that is proposed in this motion is that we pursue a tax on profits that are made through

the sale of nonowner-occupied residential properties or multiple-unit residential complexes [when they are] sold within two years of purchase.

That's basically to protect property flipping, which only, quite frankly, escalates the cost of properties. I can tell you who benefits from that, and that's the owners, and I can tell you who doesn't benefit, and that's the renters. What we're talking about is protection of a group of people who look to government for some mechanism, some involving the private sector and some involving the public sector.

The renovation of industrial, commercial, and school properties is a very innovative idea, I think. It's being done in other cities, and I believe quite successfully. There are properties that can be picked up quite cheaply now for residential purposes and developed into multi-unit residential buildings in a way that is quite affordable, often a lot more affordable than trying to buy property on Jasper and 95th Street, which is currently a very expensive area in terms of land acquisition and will be a lot more expensive when the condos are actually developed.

The motion also calls for co-operation with "not-for-profit and co-operative housing agencies." I feel like the government has been dragged into doing this over the years. They've been kicking and screaming all along the way, but quite frankly, you know, independent agencies that work with government are very efficient. They're on the ground, they're all frontline workers, and they know the needs of the community. They have been very innovative in the types of dwellings they have purchased, renovated, or developed from scratch, and those buildings are in really good condition. The assumption by many is that people who are poor won't look after property. What they really need is a walking tour of the inner city. What they'll find out is that people who are poor and get a chance to live in a decent place actually look after the place because it is decent. It's people who live in those squalid little slum houses owned by a handful of people who get rich off it month after month who have nothing but disdain for their places, and you wouldn't either if you could see some of the conditions or, quite frankly, smell some of the conditions.

So working with the people . . .

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but according to Standing Order 8(3) we must now proceed to the next order of business.

head: **Public Bills and Orders Other than**  
head: **Government Bills and Orders**  
head: **Second Reading**

4:30

**Bill 209**  
**Air Quality Act**

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. Minister of Advanced Education, who anticipates his appreciation of an excellent presentation on an excellent Bill.

The Bill that I rise to present, Mr. Speaker, is Bill 209, the Air Quality Act. This Bill has two objectives. It is to ensure that the air in Alberta is of excellent quality and presents no hazard to human health. It presents a new emphasis, with standards being set and measured for ambient air quality at levels approved by the Minister of Health. Secondly, to enable



the government to take action not only on traditional pollutants that affect the quality of the air we breathe but also to focus attention on gases such as carbon dioxide, chlorofluorocarbons, and methane, which contribute to global warming.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the need for a Bill of this nature that focuses as it does on overcoming serious air pollution problems in this province is very, very clear, or at least it should be. With respect to greenhouse gases and global warming, Alberta ranks amongst the most proficient producers of these kinds of gases. Alberta produces one-half of 1 percent of all the carbon dioxide produced in the world today. It is, I believe, quite an amazing statistic to consider: that 2 and a half million Albertans produce one-half of 1 percent of all the carbon dioxide produced in a world filled with literally billions of people.

We have, I believe, Mr. Speaker, and I've said it before, in particular a moral obligation to do something about these kinds of greenhouse gases because we contribute so significantly to this very severe emerging environmental problem. It is severe to the extent that scientists today – the international panel on climate control, to mention but one group of outstanding, internationally renowned scientists – are identifying that global warming is occurring and are projecting that the temperature in the world's atmosphere could increase by as much as one degree centigrade within the next 35 years. That is a huge amount, which can potentially have a huge impact on social, cultural, economic processes as we understand them today in our society.

We also have, of course, a tremendous economic responsibility and stake in this particular matter because Alberta's economy is so dependent upon the burning of fossil fuels here and around the world to which we export. If the world begins to understand, as I'm sure it will, the threat that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases have to the world's very survival, then markets can change dramatically. We should, if we can anticipate the future, be in a position to have altered our economic pursuits, either by diminishing the effect of carbon dioxide and the burning of fossil fuels one way or another or by finding other energy pursuits and becoming world leaders in the development of those kinds of energy sources.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear that there is a serious problem if we simply consider the nature and the amount of toxic, dangerous gases that are being emitted in increasing amounts into our atmosphere. I'm speaking, of course, of gases like carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ground level ozone – while ozone is a positive gas in the upper reaches of the atmosphere, it is a dangerous gas in concentrations at the ground level – and sulphur dioxide, to mention but a few. I would like to note some of the health effects of too much of each of these gases. Carbon monoxide: first symptoms are impaired perception and reflexes; at elevated levels carbon monoxide can aggravate chronic heart and respiratory diseases. Nitrogen dioxide: can affect health, reduce visibility, corrode metals, and damage vegetation. Ozone: high levels of ozone at ground level by itself or combined with other pollutants can cause eye irritation, breathing difficulty, decreased visibility, and can damage vegetation. Sulphur dioxide: combines with water to form acidic compounds that can irritate the eyes and lungs, corrode metals, and damage vegetation. It also, of course, contributes to acid rain.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that we need to address this issue, both because of the global warming concern and, secondly, because of the nature of the gases that are emitted into our atmosphere. Some people will wake up in Alberta daily and say: "Well, the air is clean. It smells clean; we can see through it. There isn't a problem. Why should we be concerned in a way

that a city like Los Angeles is now becoming concerned?" I can imagine that the Member for Lacombe often wakes up and says: "Hey, at worst this would be an urban problem. It's probably not even an urban problem, because I can't see it, I can't smell it, and I can't touch it when I'm living in Edmonton while the Legislature's sitting. I certainly can't see it and smell it and feel it when I'm living in Lacombe. It's rural Alberta."

Mr. Speaker, there are startling statistics that should bring home to back-bench members, who I know are the bane of the Environment minister's existence, back-bench members like the Member for Lacombe, about what is happening to air quality, the significance of what is happening to air quality in places like Edmonton, like Calgary, like Fort McMurray, and, in fact, like rural Alberta. On Refinery Row in Edmonton ozone levels exceeded the 24-hour limits established by this Department of the Environment and by federal agencies on no fewer than 16 days in March of 1991. They exceeded the 24-hour levels in February of '91 seven days, in January three days, to mention but a few early last year. In April 1990 those levels were exceeded in that area 15 days; May, 18 days; June, 13 days; July, 16 days. It may not be Los Angeles, but it is a serious air pollution problem.

I think many of us believe that Calgary, that Edmonton, that our cities are so much cleaner than huge urban metropolises like Toronto. Statistics released by the federal government on ozone levels in 1989, Mr. Speaker, indicate that one air monitoring station in Calgary recorded a level of ozone excesses gauged by a number of 354. In Toronto the numbers at various stations are, comparatively, 73, 201, 320, 288; on one occasion higher, 421 and 283. What this says is that the city of Calgary has a much greater ozone air pollution problem than what we would consider to be a classic major urban metropolis, where we would think that those problems would be particularly excessive. These are problems that exist in Alberta today in our cities and in our rural areas. In March of 1991 hydrogen sulphide levels at Refinery Row in Edmonton exceeded the 24-hour limits on eight days.

Asthma. Alberta has the highest rate of death due to asthma in Canada today, higher than any other province. It has, Mr. Speaker, got worse. In the last 10 years the rate of death due to asthma has tripled. This doesn't happen by accident. It happens because there is a direct relationship between the nature of the air we breathe, what's in it – the pollutants, the irritants, the toxic gases that are in it – and the propensity for people to get asthma and to die from asthma attacks. Three percent of adults in Alberta and 10 percent of children in Alberta suffer from asthma in a province which has the highest rate of suffering from asthma in this country.

Carbon monoxide. On 127 occasions the accepted standard level of carbon monoxide in the air was exceeded in 1989 in Calgary. On 92 occasions and 40 occasions respectively at two monitoring stations in Edmonton those accepted levels of carbon monoxide were exceeded as well.

4:40

Mr. Speaker, this is not simply an urban problem. In fact, what is very interesting to note is that Canada's hourly maximum desirable level of ozone is exceeded 11 times more often at remote rural stations than at downtown urban centres. This can have something to do with wind currents, with valleys and mountains and how air can be trapped once it's blown from urban areas to rural areas. It's also interesting to note that ozone level concentrations measured in Edmonton and Calgary were lower than ozone level concentrations found at Fortress

Mountain in rural Alberta. So it is not simply an urban issue nor is it simply an issue of major urban metropolises. It goes quite a bit beyond that. It goes to rural areas, and it goes to cities like our cities – Edmonton, Calgary, Fort McMurray, and perhaps even others – which we have simply taken for granted are the environmentally cleanest cities perhaps in the world. They are not, and I believe that these statistics are startling and should be a motivation on the part of this government for action in a way that we have not seen.

This government, Mr. Speaker, has been derelict in its approach and its effort to overcome or to even address air pollution problems in this province. We have not embraced, as we should have, the objective of reducing 1988 carbon dioxide levels by 20 percent by the year 2005. That is a standard objective, becoming more accepted around the world. This government always talks about its objectives: its objective to balance the budget, and then it brags about how successful it was at balancing that budget. Well, if we accept their line on that for one moment, then it sets a precedent for establishing other objectives. No more important objective faces us today than reducing carbon dioxide in this province and around the world. It is so simple and so important to accept that 20 percent reduction objective, because it will focus not only the government's attention but the attention of every individual and every business in this province on something that is an issue and a concern to absolutely every one of us.

There are no ambient air standards in this province, believe it or not, Mr. Speaker, for hydrocarbons such as chlorine and benzene. VOC and H<sub>2</sub>S levels are higher on our Refinery Row in Edmonton than they are on an equivalent refinery row in Montreal. We have an insignificant commitment on the part of this government to alternate nonpolluting sources of energy. Last night we were debating the \$1 million that is going into southwestern Alberta's program for developing solar and wind energy sources. Great idea, but limited to southwestern Alberta and limited to an almost insignificant amount of money compared to the challenge that is faced in this particular area. We have seen no significant conservation initiatives. We hear from the Minister of Energy, who says he's got a bus that goes around and does some energy audits. None of these audits are called for, particularly in regulations; they're not required. We're not working with companies; with the electrical industry, for example, to look at investing in light bulbs and electric motors that actually pay for themselves in the amount of electrical energy that they will save and will reduce costs because we don't have to develop new power plants to produce energy that can be saved by simple, economic, and common-sense kinds of conservation initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, we see no initiatives with respect to tax schemes that might in fact promote more environmentally efficient and friendly fuels over less. In fact, in this budget, believe it or not, the tax increase on gasoline was less proportionately than the tax increase on propane. It is almost incomprehensible to believe that this government would do that, but they did do that.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, addresses a number of important steps. First of all, it introduces what we believe to be a very important concept, the airshed concept, for tabulating, monitoring, and dealing with air pollution problems. To this point this government has tended to focus almost entirely on the level of emission coming out of a given stack, a given source, a given company. Well, of course, that's the age-old problem. If one stack is all you've got to deal with, I suppose you can draw a relationship between the quality of its emissions and the ambient air quality. But if there are increasing numbers of stacks and industrial

enterprises, then of course what we have to contend with is a cumulative effect. We've seen this ignored in the case of northern pulp mills with respect to water, and we have seen it not even addressed, not even raised in the mind of this government with respect to air quality.

What this Bill calls for is the establishment of airsheds which recognize that air moves en masse, that there are concentrations over broad geographic areas where air can on the other hand be held, and that air quality must be monitored and dealt with at that level, not simply at the level of source emissions. This Bill, Mr. Speaker, also raises the idea of air pollution control regions, which in effect are an administrative translation of the airshed concept, the airshed notion.

The Bill also provides for a much more aggressive, a much more significant role by the Minister of Health in the establishment of air quality standards. Air pollution is, of course, an environmental concern, but it is an environmental concern in a large part because of air pollution's effect on human health. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health must play a direct and significant role in establishing these standards, and there is not evidence that that in fact has been the case.

This Bill also deals with an air quality index. Admittedly, the Department of the Environment in this province has established an air quality index. It has certain things to recommend it, Mr. Speaker, but it needs a number of improvements which are addressed in this Bill. It needs to be broadened in several respects, and it needs to be publicized so it can have an effect on public education, among other things. It should be broadened to include more pollutants; for example, hydrocarbons. Whether they can be integrated into a single air quality index is one question that would need to be answered. If not, then a separate air quality index for hydrocarbons could be established. We need to have this air quality index also monitor and record levels of carbon dioxide, levels of CFCs that are being produced in our society, levels of methane gas. Those three gases, of course, apply to the global warming, greenhouse effect problem.

We need to have these air quality index monitoring systems in more places. They are in relatively few places right now. There are three stations in Edmonton. It wouldn't hurt at all in a city like Edmonton to have more detailed monitoring data so that people who live in different areas could appreciate that, yes, their air may in fact be worse than the air of those who live somewhere else even within the same city.

Perhaps most importantly, Mr. Speaker, is that we must ensure that it is publicized. I can recall hearing a Calgary radio station, to its credit, announcing the level of the air quality index on a particular day that I was in Calgary listening to the radio in my car. It struck me that that was excellent. This doesn't happen, particularly in Edmonton. There is a phone number that you can call, very difficult to find in the phone book and very few people probably even know that it exists. What should happen at the very minimum is that the government should work with media outlets to see that this kind of information, the air quality index, is explained and announced to the people of Alberta as their weather report is now. It could become part of our daily lives to understand what this index means. When it is above the level that it should be above, when it is in the poor region – and it has been, believe me, on many, many days in a city like Edmonton – then people could begin to understand that that eight-cylinder car they're driving is contributing to that particular level of air quality problem.

4:50

Mr. Speaker, this Bill, in addition to addressing the matter of the air quality index, improving it, would establish a committee

that would reflect the environmental community as well as government, a range of experts to be established and chosen from an objective process. This committee would identify those pollutants which we should take action on, which we should begin to monitor if we haven't already been monitoring them. It would also focus and direct specific research studies into conservation techniques, alternative fuels, those kinds of research and development measures that would lead to improving the level of air quality in our province.

Ministerial action is required and is called for by this Bill. Among other things, this Bill would direct the minister to take action on reducing vehicle emissions. One possible consideration that could be made, for example, would be the testing of the efficiency of cars on a regular basis, perhaps at the time, for example, when registration is renewed. That would be one initiative that could be undertaken by the minister. It's also true that this Bill would focus the minister's attention on establishing economic incentives for people to drive more fuel-efficient cars. One possibility would be a sliding fee scale for the registration of automobiles. Those cars which pollute above a certain standard, an ever tightening standard, would require a much greater fee for registration than those cars that produce pollutants at a much lower standard. There are a number of variations on this particular approach that have been utilized elsewhere in the world, Mr. Speaker. None of them have ever been mentioned, I'm sure, or considered by this Minister of the Environment.

Secondly, this Bill would direct and require that the minister would undertake conservation measures on a broader scale. There's much to be gained, as I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, by having utility companies invest in light bulbs, invest in electrical motors, invest in, for example, insulation techniques that would actually reduce the amount of power that would be utilized by people and therefore reduce the need for these utility companies to invest in hugely expensive additional electrical production facilities. We should be considering tradable permits as a possibility for creating economic incentive on the part of companies to reduce their energy consumption and to reduce the amount of pollution that they produce as a result of the energy they consume or as a result of their industrial processes. There are many, many possible schemes in this regard. What this Bill does is require that the minister begin to address them in an aggressive, regularized, significant, and substantive way.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that what we must understand in this province is that we are not immune from the kinds of air pollution problems that we read about and that we see elsewhere in the world. We only need to look elsewhere in the world to begin to understand what the future can and very likely will be like in a province like this. What we have is a tremendous luxury. We need not experience the problems of a Los Angeles or a Mexico City or any number of other places around this world. We need not be confronted with the problem of having to reverse some of the damage that's been done in cities like that. We can, in fact, establish standards, establish monitoring processes, establish mechanisms and programs and policies that will head off those problems and, in doing so, can enhance and improve the air quality that we are experiencing in this province today. It is not a problem from which we are immune. There are startling statistics which demonstrate that we are suffering from these problems right now.

We have a moral obligation to ourselves, to our children, to generations in the future to begin to address this problem now. Bill 209 does exactly that, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask that the members of the Legislature support this Bill.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to compliment the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark for bringing Bill 209 forward. Upon first glance Bill 209 looks like a new and an innovative idea, something that will forever change how we monitor and control air quality in Alberta. This Air Quality Act will take a new approach to ensuring the future of the environment in this province.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this apparent innovation is a disappointment. There are no new ideas here. It contains no ways to improve our existing policies or proposed policies. Rather, the Bill shows only a repetition of the government's initiatives reworded to appear as new ideas from the hon. member opposite. It may be easiest to explain and display this redundancy and inefficacy of the Bill by analyzing it clause by clause. In each case the government is already pursuing both the practice and indeed the goal of clean air.

The Act calls for the establishment of an air quality index for this province. In fact, an index on the levels of pollution in Alberta was established back in 1979. It is called the index of the air quality in Alberta, the IQUA system. It has been measuring the quality of air in Alberta centres for approximately 12 years. I'd be happy to provide the member opposite with a pamphlet on the IQUA system, since apparently he's unaware that it exists. The Act also calls for an air quality index to provide a graduated scale against which the concentrations of various pollutants may be measured and related in order to assess the quality of air in the province. Interestingly enough, the IQUA system provides a graduated scale that corresponds to levels of pollutants and provides ratings that inform the public about the quality of the air. Perhaps the member opposite was unaware of all of the details of the IQUA system and by this Bill 209 is merely demonstrating a remarkable coincidence, what is called parallel development, albeit redundant. Further, Bill 209 refers to descriptive categories that should be used to reflect the concentration of various pollutants according to their effect on human health and our environment. By now you won't be surprised to know that the IQUA system also provides ratings that are grouped into descriptive categories for the ease of interpretation by the public at large.

This Bill 209 goes on to include a committee of experts to be established by the minister, whose mandate it will be to identify pollutants and to determine the effects of pollutants on our health and the environment. The minister then under section 6 of this Bill will make regulations on the maximum permissible quantities of pollutants. Well, under the current Clean Air Act, which will be continued under the new environmental legislation, the minister does make regulations which prescribe the maximum concentrations of contaminants in the air or the maximum concentration being released from a site. How does the minister do this? Surprise – he finds experts in the field who do research and advise him and his department on specific pollutants and recommend standards. That amounts to an effective committee of experts. Again Bill 209 is redundant and shows no real innovation.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

The Bill also requests that the information recorded by testing stations should be available to the public and to the media. Would you be surprised to know, Mr. Speaker, that the data generated by Alberta's continuous monitoring stations are in fact

released to the media and the public, and anyone may call to find out the most recent IQUA in either Calgary or Edmonton? Again I would be happy to share the telephone numbers with the hon. member.

The opposition would probably like to argue that our present system of recording readings twice per day in our centres is not enough. This Bill in fact calls for readings to be available to the public eight times per day. The new environmental legislation that this government is bringing forward, however, will look at that issue if the public calls for it and if the situation warrants it. We will not increase costs in administration until the need is determined, and the public consultation process will ensure that we will find out if Albertans want or need this increased service. The government will then act accordingly. The current Clean Air Act does provide, in cases of need, for increased monitoring.

5:00

Bill 209 also calls for the minister to make regulations encouraging the reduction of pollutant levels. This is a good idea. It makes sense that a minister of the environment find ways to encourage the reduction of pollution, and, surprise, that's exactly why the current Minister of the Environment is already doing it.

The member opposite has perhaps not had time to read the province's clean air strategy. For his benefit, then, I will summarize it. It's a collection of directives and initiatives designed to reduce this province's production of air pollutants. The public consultation process will encourage discussion on air emissions, particularly with reference to the production and use of energy in Alberta. It explores ways to encourage the reduction of air pollution on the part of industry and individuals.

Pass Bill 209 if you like, but many of its provisions exist in current law, which demonstrates that it is indeed an issue that is taken very seriously by this government. This Bill seems to be just an effort to hop on the bandwagon.

Mr. Speaker, the list of redundancies goes on. This Bill 209 would allow the minister to provide penalties for the contravention of an emission control order. Well, the issuance of environmental protection orders and penalties for their contravention are covered under current legislation and in considerable detail in the new environmental legislation proposed by this government. This new legislation goes even further than the vague suggestions contained in Bill 209. Rather, the minister has, with the help of input from Albertans, come up with firm, tough penalties that underscore our commitment to the environment in Alberta.

Most of the provisions of this Bill 209 are covered in one way or another by existing or pending legislation. Any additions would simply mean increased administrative costs and a diversion from the legislation that has been formulated with the input and support of Albertans.

I could go on at length about the provisions of Bill 209, as these provisions are, in fact, all based on good, sound ideas, and we're all in support of clean air initiatives, but one only needs to scratch the surface of this rather attractive Bill to realize that it's an interesting attempt to make it look like the opposition got there first. Mr. Speaker, as you know, imitation is known as the sincerest form of flattery, and this imitation is just that. It is also redundant, and one could continue with more examples to prove this point, but that would be redundant. Bill 209 is redundant enough all on its own.

Mr. Speaker, at the outset of this, my comments, I said that I'd like to compliment Edmonton-Meadowlark for bringing Bill 209 forward. I do, but I do so as it highlights what is contained

in the current Clean Air Act and it spotlights what is proposed in the Alberta environmental protection and enhancement legislation. Both of the latter are truly enlightened legislation.

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

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In rising to participate in the debate on Bill 209, I would like to congratulate the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark for bringing the very important issue of air quality and the related issue of global warming to this Assembly in the form of a private member's Bill so that we could have something of a debate on the issue. It's an important issue for most of the reasons that the member indicated. I think he did a good – I would say an excellent – job of describing the problem the way it exists: the various manifestations and some of the likely consequences to human health and to our environment of increased pollution by so-called greenhouse gases and other toxins that are in the air. That part is certainly to be commended.

This is one of those rare initiatives which is not patterned on anything else that I'm aware of. It seems like the Liberal caucus is flying solo on this one, and it shows, Mr. Speaker. In part, I suppose for some of the reasons indicated by the Member for Highwood, there is a certain similarity in the structure of this legislation to the structure of the legislation that we currently operate under. I think before I get to that point, I would like to deal with the government's response to the issues of air quality and global warming in particular. The response has gone over the past year from denial to delay, which, I suppose, should be interpreted as progress, but it's not very rapid progress.

Where we were three years ago: the Mulroney government committed Canada to achieve a 20 percent reduction in greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide emissions, by the year 2005. Well, after that conclusion was made, a group of people went to work studying the implementation of this commitment. That was a task force of energy ministers chaired and hosted by the Hon. Rick Orman, the Minister of Energy in this Assembly. That group issued a report on April 2, 1990, at a meeting held in the Kananaskis resort in the province of Alberta. They said in their report:

Ministers concluded that the issue of climate change requires a consultative international response and that Canada's efforts including actions to reduce domestic emissions should be cast within this context.

So they brought the broader international context. They went on to say:

While there is wide-spread agreement on the existence and potential importance of global warming, uncertainties remain about the role of the greenhouse gases, about the effects of fossil fuels on [this] climate change, about the magnitude and timing of this effect, and about the impact of atmospheric changes on the climate of individual countries and regions.

In other words, they just threw up a bunch of smoke. They threw up a bunch of questions. They said: we're not really convinced this is a problem at all. Lo and behold, following the issuance of this communiqué in April 1990, the federal government of Canada goes to an international conference on global warming and says that we're not committed any longer to a 20 percent reduction by the 2005. In fact, my understanding is that they said that they weren't committed even to hold the line on emissions of greenhouse gases.

That's an initiative sponsored and, I think, guided in many ways by the Alberta government and by Alberta members of the federal government. You look at who makes up the government

of Canada. By and large, it's a coalition of people from Quebec and Alberta, Tories admittedly. They are people who have led this country away from the direction of an international solution to the global warming problem. I think we have to recognize that the solution to these problems is international in scope. When you look at a world in which there are more than 400 million automobiles pumping out not just carbon dioxide, which is the number one culprit in global warming problems, but methane gas as well as nitrous oxides and volatile oxides, that's a major international problem. It's not one that we can solve totally within one jurisdiction.

I was amused to read the account of the greenhouse effect published by Alberta Environment, I believe in 1989, although I'm not certain; there's no date on it. It's amusing because while it's published on recycled paper, it's only printed on one side of the page. Pages are printed blank for reasons that are not clear to me. If you're serious about the problem of greenhouse gases, I think the last thing you do is publish a pamphlet on one side of the page with a lot of blank space. It goes through and kind of rewrites some of this history that I've talked about. It does deal with some information which I think is important that Albertans comprehend. It comes out of a study prepared by the Alberta Research Council in 1989 which attempts to forecast the effect of global warming in the province of Alberta.

It's a good news/bad news type of document, but the one thing that it does is confirm absolutely that global warming and greenhouse gases are a problem, that we've already experienced some degree of global warming. It projects another five to seven degrees of warming, far in excess of what the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark has been talking about. I think he's an optimist in comparison to the Alberta Research Council scientists. They forecast Alberta being a place like Colorado. Well, that doesn't sound too bad, because if you've been to Colorado, it has many pleasant things about it. What it means is that the drier areas of Alberta, southern Alberta, become much drier, and by contrast the wetter regions in northern Alberta become wetter. So you don't sort of get the beneficial; you get the negative effect both ways going. As the Alberta Environment publication puts it, in a very mild fashion they forecast

additional strain on water supplies in the southern part of the province;

Well, that puts it mildly.

. . . increased risk of forest fires in large tracts of the boreal forest; a drastic decline in waterfowl habitat in the southeastern part of the province; and an increase, not only in the number of pest species, but also in their rate of survival.

I think we're talking about grasshoppers here, primarily, in that particular quote. It's a problem that's real and that's with us.

### 5:10

Well, what is the response of the Alberta government? To date the response is entirely consistent with the minister's communiqué which I just read. It's more stall and delay: more consultation, more research, more we don't know. On March 15, 1990, a clean air consultative strategy was announced by the two ministers, Environment and Energy, and they're going on a long route to consult with all kinds of people and maybe determine whether or not they want to recognize politically that there's a problem and from there whether they want to recognize the necessity of a strategy to deal with it. Well, clearly the Bill before us today presupposes that there is a problem both on the human health side and on the global warming side, and it presupposes that there is a need for a program of action to deal with it. Now, I think the member can be forgiven for not

dealing with the national and international aspects of the problem, because this is, after all, a provincial Legislative Assembly, although I think we have to keep those fully in mind.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Now, the Member for Highwood quite rightly pointed out that air quality indices are not new in the province of Alberta. I think there may be some value in having the data published at more frequent intervals during the day; whether eight times is the right figure I don't know. It's curious that that level of detail is in the Bill when so many other things are left to not just cabinet regulation but ministerial regulation. Now, I suspect the reason for that is that the Bill may have been put together in something of a hurry. It's a little bit easier to set out broad objectives and leave them up to a minister to define later on than it is to actually nail these things down in legislation, but, my God, to make such important matters as developing a system for "tradable emission permits to industry" up to ministerial discretion is quite a frightening prospect in my opinion. I can see an argument for tradable permits if you have a cap on the system.

As was pointed out by this member in question period today, Alberta has no overall limits in terms of air pollution. The cabinet and other agencies can add to the total amount of pollution any day of the week. That system is wrong. It has to end. We have to have a total limit, and we have to have a stepwise reduction in that. Then to say that we're going to allow the Minister of the Environment to devise a system whereby pollution permits can be bought and sold is to me a very scary way to embrace a controversial and potentially fruitful solution to the problem, but not one that I think you can throw off that easily.

The minister also would have discretion to develop "measures to reduce emissions from the use of private gasoline burning motor vehicles." I don't know how an individual minister could do that short of perhaps banning the sale of certain automobiles in the province of Alberta, which is an interesting power to put in the hands of a single individual member of government. By make or by model or by year . . . I don't know. I mean, presumably you could make somebody's automobile worthless overnight by saying that it couldn't be sold in the province of Alberta, but that's a ministerial power within this particular legislation.

Now, there is also an authority on the part of the minister to issue an emission control order limiting the use of automobiles or point sources of emissions . . . within such geographical area and for such length of time as the Ministers . . .

Sorry; this is two ministers.

. . . may consider appropriate for the protection of public health. That's a far-reaching authority. It perhaps is one that may be necessary under some circumstances, but the thing that I can't figure out is if we're going to give the two ministers the authority to ban the use of automobiles, say in the city of Edmonton or in the city of Calgary – I'm reading from section 9 – why are there no penalties anywhere in this legislation? If you can issue a ban, if you've got the authority under legislation to say, "You can't drive your cars in downtown Edmonton today," and then there are no penalties, well, what happens if you do drive your car in downtown Edmonton today? It's an authority that probably doesn't belong in the hands of a politician in the first place. I think if we're going to have a system where air quality gets to a certain level and there are no cars, like they have in

Tokyo and other cities in the world, then it happens when it reaches that level or it doesn't.

That takes me to my major concern, which is that virtually all of the standards are ministerial regulation. If this legislation were to pass, we wouldn't know when we had reached the level when automobiles should be banned and when we hadn't. In fact, that could be changed. We wouldn't know what is an air pollutant, because that's defined by ministerial regulation. We wouldn't know what they are; we wouldn't know what standards they are; we wouldn't know the permissible levels of emission. Well, a lot of us have been saying that the way the government sets the levels of emissions from pulp mills, for example, in northern Alberta is arbitrary, and it's political, and it's an abuse of cabinet authority. Now we have legislation that says that a single member of cabinet can set those variables with respect to a whole range of air emissions from a whole range of sources. Not good enough, hon. member, and something I hope could be fixed up in a subsequent draft.

Again there's the question of a total ban on the release of certain substances. I believe that might be required, but I question the process of saying that two ministers can issue such orders. Monitoring systems, monitoring stations, and health standards: these are all elements which are to be determined by the authority of two ministers acting together. I think it's a very important principle that environmental standards need to be removed from that kind of day-to-day political to-and-fro if we're going to get to the point where we're seriously reversing the steps that are being made towards global warming.

I think we should talk about some ideas which are not as well developed in this legislation as I would like to see, particularly those that are within the provincial jurisdiction. I think the area of energy conservation is far and away the most fruitful way to not only reduce emission of greenhouse and dangerous gases but also to preserve our dwindling stocks of affordable energy into the future. I would like to see in a strategy like this some mention of upgrading provincial building codes, because I think energy efficiency in construction of new buildings is a major way in which we can reduce the overall consumption of energy. It would be nice, as well, if within buildings the various systems and the appliances and so forth could similarly be made to consume radically less energy than they do. My understanding is that the technology exists. It just isn't necessarily in the hands of the people who are making all of the money off the system the way it is, who are the suppliers of electricity and other forms of energy consumed in buildings and the suppliers of appliances, electric motors, and lighting systems which are currently in use and currently being sold. That's clearly an area in provincial jurisdiction and one that I think should be put in this legislation.

5:20

I'm a little surprised that the area of reforming electrical energy policies is dealt with very lightly in the legislation, because I know the member and I both attended a meeting with Amory Lovins where a great many exciting ideas were discussed in the field of reforming the regulatory regime for utility systems, items like requiring the elimination of declining block rate prices for electricity, requiring a greater use of small power operations within the system, allowing private energy service companies to bid to provide amounts of conserved electricity at the same cost or less as new supply. In other words, if you conserve energy in your business operation, you could sell it back to the utility at the same cost that they have to invest to bring new sources of electricity on stream.

The promotion of industrial energy efficiency: an area, I think, where through taxation and other policies we could impact major savings.

The question of alternative transportation systems. I think transportation is clearly recognized in the Bill as being part of the problem. Look at the hundreds of millions of automobiles. My friend here from Athabasca-Lac La Biche likes to talk about all of the cars in Edmonton. I agree with him; there are too many cars.

MR. CARDINAL: Four hundred and sixty thousand.

MR. McINNIS: He says 460,000 cars for a population of some 700,000 people. I think that's a major part of the solution to the problem. We're talking about strengthening public transportation, which is not as good as it ought to be in Edmonton, to be sure. It's a little better in Calgary, but it's absolutely abysmal when you go to other centres around the province, other cities, and in between cities as well. You try and take a Greyhound bus to get around the province, and you find that it's a very difficult way to travel. The service isn't there. The schedules don't match. It's an area which both urban and rural people in the province, I think, would get behind, and it's certainly something that's going to assist dramatically with the reduction of air pollution and greenhouse gases in particular. There's also the question of bicycle commuting and the development of bikeways both in urban and rural areas in the province. I think it's an issue that we need to take up in this Legislative Assembly.

In conclusion, I'd like to say that I do appreciate the effort of the member in putting this initiative forward and giving us an opportunity to debate this important issue. I think we all have to keep in mind the findings published just last year of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. I think that one panel as much as anything else put an end to the debate over whether there is such a thing as global warming or not. That was a false debate; it always was. Now, thankfully, a group of officials have . . . Well, if I can just quote one of the Canadians who was involved in the process, "It's going to put to rest all those goofballs who say there's no certainty." Now, the fact that the Minister of Energy and the Minister of the Environment said those things I think speaks for itself.

The deficiencies in the Bill are precisely those pointed out by the Member for Highwood. It's too much like a piece of legislation coming from this government. If it's an indication of what type of legislation we would get from a Liberal government, then I believe we New Democrats are going to have to work twice as hard.

MR. SPEAKER: Banff-Cochrane.

MR. EVANS: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. In the short time remaining I'll try to make my comments brief and to the point. I'd like to begin by suggesting that the three previous speakers and myself all agree on one point: air quality is an extremely important issue in this province, in this country, and around this globe. We no longer can presume that we live in an isolated situation. We are part of the global community, and we must respect that.

I must take issue, though, with the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark's comments about CO<sub>2</sub>. Not so much about the fact that yes, Alberta does create CO<sub>2</sub>: we are an energy producing province, and one-half of 1 percent, to use the member's statistics, of the CO<sub>2</sub> globally is created in Alberta and about 2 percent Canada-wide. I think what is missed in the

comments made by the hon. member is that nature itself, Mr. Speaker, creates substantial amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> from our oceans and from our forests, and the member consistently has forgotten to mention that fact. Well over 50 percent of the total CO<sub>2</sub> created around the world comes from nature itself. Now, again, that is not to downplay the importance of an air strategy, the importance of ensuring that we are responsible in this province and in this nation. However, it is reflective, I think, of selective information, and I think that is to the discredit of the hon. member: to not recognize and promote the entire picture.

Now, I think there are two main deficiencies in the legislative package that's before us today. The first is that it doesn't even contemplate public involvement and doesn't really take into effect what public involvement is all about. To his credit the member did appear before a committee that I was pleased to chair in the late fall and early winter of last year, the Environmental Legislation Review Panel, to make his points known when the panel met here in Edmonton. That is to his credit. There were many, many other Albertans who brought forward concerns to that panel, and those concerns, Mr. Speaker, are being brought forward in the legislative package that our colleague the hon. Minister of the Environment will be bringing forward in this spring sitting. Now, the member has a number of so-called initiatives, but from what I can gather, he's made no effort to acquire public input into those initiatives. As the Member for Highwood has so accurately pointed out, many of those initiatives are current government philosophy, current government initiatives such as the clean air strategy, such as the importance of shared responsibility that is inherent in the new environmental legislation.

The other point that I want to make, and again briefly, Mr. Speaker, is that the draft Bill that we have before us really just duplicates, as has been pointed out by the Member for Highwood, the legislation that we have today that is either in existence or contemplated. The hon. Member for Edmonton-

Meadowlark is well aware of that new legislation, the environmental protection and enhancement Act. It also duplicates some of the considerations that were brought forward by the energy ministers and the Minister of the Environment in the clean air strategy that has been before us now in excess of a year.

The last point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is on the matter of fiscal responsibility. We see a number of recommendations in this Bill that would increase paper flow, I think unnecessarily, would increase expenditures in terms of trying to ensure that information became available to the public, even though the member has indicated himself today that a Calgary radio station voluntarily is putting this information out. Certainly if their audience – and we hope that their audience becomes more aware of the issue – requests that kind of information, that will be done voluntarily. It won't cost the government, it won't cost the people of Alberta, money.

The last point I'd like to make is on the issue of penalties. Of course, as the Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place pointed out, there is no provision for penalties. So all of these grand ideas as to how to improve air quality, even though they are incorporated into this Bill, there's no way to enforce that grand plan.

Because of these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support the Bill, and given the hour, I would move that we adjourn debate.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

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

